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| <b>Institution: Keele University</b>  |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: C21 Politics and International Studies</b>   |
| <b>Title of case study: Environmental Citizenship, environmentalism and ecologism, and pro-environment behaviour</b>  |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Professor Andrew Dobson's research into environmental politics and, in particular, the nature, meaning, and policy relevance of the idea of 'environmental citizenship', spans 25 years. This research has had, and continues to have, particular impact on two key areas:</p> <p>(1) environmental campaigns for social, economic and political change, including being lead writer of the Green Party's 2010 General Election manifesto</p> <p>(2) the portfolio of policies available to the Government, and to a range of bodies and organisations (including Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial organisations), for encouraging more pro-environmental behaviour</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Professor Dobson's work on environmental politics and environmental citizenship has led to two strands of research that underpin his claimed impact: (1) developments in his notion of 'ecologism', first espoused in 1990 in his groundbreaking <i>Green Political Thought</i>, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of which appeared in 2007, and (2) an original conception of the relationship between citizenship and the environment called 'ecological citizenship'.</p> <p>(1) 'Ecologism' is distinguished from 'environmentalism' in Dobson's work, in that the former 'holds that a sustainable and fulfilling existence presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the non-human natural world, and in our mode of social and political life', while the latter 'argues for a managerial approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption' (2007: 2-3). The rise of environmental politics up the political agenda has ensured that 'environmentalism' is now a part of everyday political life, but Dobson's 'ecologism' is a challenge to the conventional consensus that sustainability can be seamlessly woven into any political party's manifesto. He argues that it is as much a self-contained ideology as socialism, liberalism or conservatism. Dobson has been engaged in research establishing 'ecologism' as an ideology in its own right for over 20 years, and recent interventions have focused on the role of ecologism in the 'we are all environmentalists now' conditions of the new millennium (2009).</p> <p>(2) The second strand of research – ecological citizenship (2003) – has developed out of Dobson's long-standing interest in the effect that the 'ecological turn' has had on enduring themes in political theory. His work in this field includes books and articles on democracy and on justice, and 'citizenship' is the third concept towards which he has turned his attention. The result was/is an original notion of citizenship, different from those that dominate the conceptual landscape, such as liberal, republican and cosmopolitan citizenship. Ecological citizenship is a particular inflection of what Dobson calls 'post-cosmopolitan' citizenship. Its defining characteristics are 1: non-territoriality – i.e. the obligations of the ecological citizen transcend national boundaries, 2: taking responsibility for the size of one's ecological footprint is a key duty for the environmental citizen, 3: the obligations of ecological citizenship are not owed reciprocally, 4: the principal virtue of ecological citizenship is justice and 5: the obligation of the ecological citizen is to reduce the size of one's ecological footprint where appropriate, in the name of a just distribution of ecological space.</p> |
| <p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>Dobson, A. (2000) 'Ecological Citizenship: a disruptive influence?', in C Pierson and S Tormey (eds), <i>Politics at the Edge: The PSA Yearbook 1999</i>. London, Macmillan.</p>   |

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Dobson, A. (2003) *Citizenship and the Environment*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Dobson, A. (2007) *Green Political Thought* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Routledge, London. 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1990/2<sup>nd</sup> 1995/3<sup>rd</sup> 2000.

Dobson, A. (2009) 'All I left behind; The mainstreaming of ecologism', *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 8, 319-328. DOI: 10.1057/cpt.2009.11

Dobson, A. (2012) 'Ecological Citizenship Revisited', in *Handbook Of Global Environmental Politics*. (2nd ed.). Cheltenham, UK, and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar

**Evidence of Quality:** The journal, yearbook and handbook articles were subject to anonymous peer review; Both monographs have been cited very extensively.

Professor Dobson was employed at Keele 1987-December 2001, and April 2006-present. All publications were written or substantially prepared/researched at Keele, including (2003).

#### 4. Details of the impact

The two areas of impact referred to in (1) correspond almost exactly to the two fields of underpinning research described in (2). Thus the work on ecologism informs the impact on campaigns for social, economic and political change, while the research on ecological citizenship underpins the development of citizenship-based policies for encouraging pro-environmental behaviour. Inevitably there is overlap between these two strands of research and the corresponding impact.

(1) Impact based on research on ecologism has been achieved through engagement with national political organisations. This takes two principal forms: (a) Dobson's role as a lead writer on the 2010 Green Party Manifesto, and (b) his role as a founder-member of the Green House think tank.

(a) In relation to the 2010 Green Party Manifesto, the Green Party parliamentary office attests that: 'The manifesto is a statement of the Party's discourse and its political project as well as its policy proposals and Andrew Dobson was asked to write it because the Green Party was confident in his ability to frame this project based on knowledge of his previous published research and its deep influence on their activists' [source 1]. Dobson's role was to set the order and tone and to write the main text. It draws on Dobson's research on the relationship between citizenship and sustainability: 'As citizens we think of the good of everyone and of the future, and not just what we think is good for ourselves, now. Creating a fair and sustainable society is a job for government at all levels – but it is also a job for us as citizens' (Green Party 2010, pp. 28-9), and, 'We would initiate a revolution in trust...The Green Party will trust citizens and workers, not over-regulate them' (p.29). Dobson discussed the text in various face-to-face and online forums and it went through a number of iterations until the final version was ready for use in the 2010 General Election campaign. The manifesto launch was reported across the national print and broadcast media, including by the BBC and Channel 4 News (April 15<sup>th</sup> 2010). It was central to the Green Party's campaign for the General Election 2010, the Local Elections in 2011, and the European Parliament Elections in 2013. 264,243 people voted for the Green Party in the General election 2010, with the party gaining its first parliamentary seat (Brighton Pavilion) in the election, 130 Green Party seats on 43 Principal Authorities were won in the 2011 Local Election, and two Green European Members of Parliament were elected in May 2013. A Green Party Policy Co-ordinator has confirmed the continuing significance of the manifesto, stating that it is still very much a live document, available on the Party website, that he refers to on a daily basis, and that he directs those with policy enquiries to it.

(b) Discussions after the 2010 General Election led to the creation of the Green House think tank of which Dobson is a founder member. The significance of Green House to the policy environment is indicated by the reporting of its launch by the Government Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), where Green Party Leader Caroline Lucas was quoted as saying that

Green House was an important step in bringing Green politics into the mainstream (see DEFRA 2011). Dobson wrote Green House's first report, 'Sustainability Citizenship' (2011) (downloaded 1,112 times by 10 October 2013), and he was a key organiser and speaker at a major Green House conference on the 'Future of Green Politics' on 13 October 2012, attended by over 100 people.

2) The impact of Professor Dobson's research on environmental citizenship is evident through the attention given to his ideas by a number of public organizations. Dobson's work on environmental citizenship suggests a strategy based on people's capacity for co-operative, other-regarding behaviour. This is an alternative to current Government policy for encouraging pro-environment behaviour, which is dominated by fiscal incentives/disincentives such as congestion charges and fines for rubbish. This policy is preferred by Government because evidence suggests that it works, in the short-term at least, and because it flows from the standard economic behavioural view that people are motivated by self-interest. However, there is increasing empirical evidence, some of which is based on Professor Dobson's work, which suggests that people do indeed have the capacity to act as 'environmental citizens', and that this should be reflected in policy design.

(a) In the light of this, Professor Dobson was asked by the Sustainable Development Research Network (SDRN, which is funded by DEFRA, and of which Professor Dobson was a member from its founding until 2012) to conduct a systematic review of the environmental citizenship evidence. The review was published in November 2010. It argued that environmental citizenship should be regarded by government as a legitimate and effective policy tool for pro-sustainability behaviour change, along with more established approaches based on financial incentives and behavioural economics ('nudge'). The report and briefing was distributed via the SDRN mailing, reaching over 2,500 members of the network representing those with a policy or research interest in sustainable development. It also went out via *SD Scene*, which goes to about 25,000 policymakers across government. The launch event in November 2010 was attended by members of the policy community, and the report was the subject of the closing plenary of the SDRN's annual conference in December 2010, with DEFRA's chief social scientist giving a keynote response. The annual conference attracted 150 policy makers from across government and the voluntary/third sector.

One Natural England social science specialist gives an indication of the report's impact by saying: 'Your review and conceptualisation on "environmental citizenship" have informed our understanding and thinking in relation to behavioural social science and the economics of incentives...particularly useful – for instance in relation to thinking around how a landscape-scale or group based agri-environment option might best be designed. The work also helpfully informs how NE can best engage in partnership working with stakeholders and communities'.

(b) Following the publication of Dobson's review by the SDRN, he was asked by the Development Education Association charity Think Global to join a House of Lords roundtable discussion on 'Nudge' and changing environmental behaviour. A Think Global executive comments that Dobson's document 'was on the Think Global and Involve websites and widely circulated to policy thinkers and influencers. There is obviously a big discussion about behaviour change, and ... the note was part of this debate'. Dobson's SDRN review, and his presentation at the roundtable event, led to other invitations and references to his work. For instance, Ofgem invited Dobson to give a presentation to their senior management, one member of which commented, 'I felt that your presentation on environmental citizenship was very relevant to some of the issues we are thinking about in Ofgem'. Dobson's work was quoted in a Fabian Society report 'Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption: What Do the Public Think Is Fair', and he was listed as one of several experts they consulted. Dobson's review is also cited in the final report of the 'Fishing for the Markets' evaluation to DEFRA in April 2011: 'Evidence shows that fiscal incentives may not be as important as we think they are and that people will choose to purchase a product that is environmentally sustainable as they perceive there is some common good in doing so' (Evaluation Strategies Matrix, 2011, p. 11).

Dobson's research on environmental citizenship challenges the currently dominant assumptions that govern most public policy in this area, and the repeated invitations and citations referred to

above are indicative of the impact this work has had.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Green Party Parliamentary Office.
2. Policy Co-ordinator, Green Party of England and Wales.
3. The Green Party Manifesto 2010:  
[http://greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/resources/Manifesto\\_web\\_file.pdf](http://greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/resources/Manifesto_web_file.pdf).
4. DEFRA, Sustainable Development in Government, *Sustainable Development Scene*, 'Green House: A New Think Tank', 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2011/07/green-house-a-new-green-think-tank/>
5. Dobson, A. (2011) *Sustainability Citizenship*, published by Green House Think Tank:  
[http://www.greenhousethinktank.org/files/greenhouse/private/Sustainability\\_Citizenship\\_insider.pdf](http://www.greenhousethinktank.org/files/greenhouse/private/Sustainability_Citizenship_insider.pdf)
6. Natural England.
7. Sustainable Development Research Network (DEFRA): Dobson's report on 'Environmental Citizenship': [http://www.sd-research.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sdrn\\_environmentalcitizenshippreview\\_formatted\\_final.pdf](http://www.sd-research.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sdrn_environmentalcitizenshippreview_formatted_final.pdf)
8. Think Global.
9. Sustainable Development Research Network (SDRN/DEFRA).
10. Fabian Society (2011) 'Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption: What do the public think is fair?'  
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/sustainability-attitudes-fairness-full.pdf>.
11. Fishing for the Markets (2011) *Evaluation Strategies*. Funded by and produced for DEFRA:  
<http://www.fishingforthemarkets.com/results.html>