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Can (a football) community tackle climate change?

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By

Richard Baldwin

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CAN (A FOOTBALL) COMMUNITY TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF IPSWICH TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB'S CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AMONGST ITS FANS.

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ABSTRACT

Academics and policymakers claim that community-based organisations may be able to encourage individuals to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes; however at present there is limited research-based evidence to support this assertion. This paper sets out to provide a contribution to the evidence base by examining the role that community can play in tackling climate change. It does this through a case study analysis of a community-based pro-environmental behavioural change campaign – Ipswich Town Football Club's 'Save Your Energy for the Blues' campaign. The paper examines existing theories on encouraging behavioural change based on a range of cognitive and contextual constraints. Based on the findings of this research the paper goes on to suggest that by focussing on the individual as the appropriate unit of change much current policy fails to incorporate or acknowledge the contextual constraints that may limit an individual's ability to adopt behavioural change regardless of their willingness to do so. The case study analysis indicates how framing of appropriate responses to climate change in a largely positive light, with a range of individual, collective and environmental benefits is shown to have resonated strongly with many participants in the campaign – including a significant number whose participation was not based on pro-environmental values. However questions remain as to the Campaign's overall effectiveness due to the relatively minor behavioural changes that participants adopted.

KEYWORDS

Pro-environmental behavioural change; community; football; context

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1. INTRODUCTION

In response to the challenges that climate change presents, successive UK Governments have established a range of top-down policy initiatives aimed at encouraging individuals and businesses to change their behaviour and adopt less carbon-intensive practices. These policies have included social-marketing campaigns such as 'Helping the Earth Begins at Home' and 'Act on CO_2' which have been based on the rationalist assumption that the primary cause of environmentally unsound behaviour is an information deficit amongst individuals in the population, and that by providing appropriate messages such behaviours can be corrected (Burgess *et al.* 2003). However research suggests that pro-environmental campaigns based on this assumption have been unsuccessful (Hinchcliffe 1996, Collins *et al.* 2003, HM Government 2005, Owens & Driffill 2006), with a possible causal explanation being that they failed to address the complex social networks and communities in which people exist and the influence that may have on behaviour (Shove 2003).

By way of contrast it is thought that community-based organisations such as schools, places of worship and sports clubs may be able to mobilise their members toward pro-environmentally friendly behaviour as they have important influences on how members of the community lead their lives (Putnam 2000, Gardner & Stern 2002, Jackson 2005a). however to date there has been little empirical research on either sustainable development or climate change related issues to verify such a suggestion (Jackson 2005a, CSE 2007, Middlemiss 2008). The research presented in this paper is an attempt to provide a contribution to addressing the gap that has been identified in the literature. I do this by conducting a case study analysis of a pro-environmental behavioural change campaign conducted by Ipswich Town Football Club during the 2006-7 English football season. The campaign aimed to make the club 'carbon-neutral' by offsetting fans behavioural change pledges against the club's own emissions. I follow a mixed-methodology based on a quantitative survey analysis followed by the qualitative analysis of a series of semi-structured interviews.

The paper begins with a brief review of the existing knowledge on encouraging individuals to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes before I go on to discuss what role 'community' may play in tackling climate change. An outline of the case study follows along with a brief description of my chosen methodology before I present and discuss my results. I conclude the paper with a discussion of the implications of my research findings within the wider context of the research aims and objectives.

2. ENCOURAGING CHANGE

Public awareness of climate change has increased dramatically over the past two decades (Corbett & Durfee 2004) with many people recognising and supporting the need to take action to mitigate its effects (Lorenzoni & Hulme 2009). The UK Government has also recognised the need to tackle the issues that climate change presents, and has placed it as a central element within its wider sustainable development policy framework (HM Government 2005). To date however attempts at encouraging behavioural change to mitigate the effects of climate change have been largely unsuccessful (Hinchcliffe

1996, Collins *et al.* 2003, Owens & Driffill 2006) – a fact that even the UK Government has recognised based on analysis of its awareness raising campaigns (HM Government 2005).

By adopting a cognitive-based approach and focussing on providing information to individuals as the mechanism by which their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours will change has resulted in behavioural-change campaigns failing to address the complex social networks and communities in which people exist and the influence that may have on behaviour (Crow & Allen 1994 p3, Shove 2003). It is therefore necessary to move beyond the individual to examine the *context* in which an individual exists in order to identify a wider range of factors that may prove useful in analysing and explaining the limited success of behavioural-change campaigns based on a cognitive approach (see Table 1 for summary).

Table 1 Summary of cognitive and contextual approaches to behavioural change

Cognitive	**Contextual**
• Economic models – see individuals as self-interested, rational utility maximisers • Attitudinal – provision of information to change attitudes and hence behaviours to bridge the 'attitude-behaviour' gap • Value-based – morals / ethics as indicator of behaviour – although not always so as an individual's values do not necessarily lead to actions – the 'Value-Action Gap' • Needs/Motivation – why do we consume as we do? Are material goods being consumed to meet non-material needs? **Key points:** • Cognitive approaches see individuals as following a conscious, rational, linear decision-making process based on the quality and quantity of information they receive • Largely unsuccessful in achieving pro-environmental behavioural change. (adapted from Burgess *et al.*, 2003)	• Discourses – how the climate change message is constructed and presented (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2007). • Lifestyles – a more or less integrated set of practices an individual embraces to give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). • Technologies/Systems of provision – technological 'lock-in' as a result of infrastructural constraints. e.g. electricity provision (Spaargaren, 2004) **Key points:** • Context is not necessarily voluntary – individuals may be constrained or limited (consciously or unconsciously) in their ability to alter their behaviour by factors beyond their control (Giddens, 1991; Spaargaren, 2004). • Contexts interact – e.g. discourses of climate change do not exist independently of lifestyles – indeed they may well help shape them.

The key difference between the two approaches is that the cognitive approach views pro-environmental behaviour 'as the outcome of a linear and ultimately rational process' (Burgess *et al.* 2003 p271) resulting in policy that seeks to provide the 'correct' information in order to change behaviour, whereas contextual approaches recognise the fact that individuals do not exist in isolation of their social surroundings and are instead subject to a range of influences and constraints on their behaviour.

Contextual factors include the dominant discourses of climate change, social norms, the habits, routines and consumption patterns involved in the achievement of a 'lifestyle' and the socio-technical networks that both restrict and reinforce some environmentally unfriendly behaviours such as how we use electricity or the ability to recycle waste.

From a contextual perspective individuals are not rational thinking free agents but instead the product of a range of conscious and unconscious influences on their behaviour resulting from the social structures in which they exist. Spaargaren and Van Vliet's social practices model (2000) provides a useful framework for visualising these influences (Fig 1). The model, derived from Anthony Gidden's structuration theory (Giddens 1984) shows how social practices are influenced by the structures of society in the form of systems of provision as well as the actions of the individual and their lifestyle choices. The model neatly illustrates some of the contextual constraints on an individual's ability to adopt pro-environmental behaviours regardless of their knowledge, attitude towards or experience of an issue such as climate change and further highlights how information alone is unlikely to be sufficient to facilitate the society-wide change that is called for in order to tackle climate change. The attitude-behaviour gap thus becomes insurmountable, and the focus on the individual as the appropriate level of interest becomes obsolete without an understanding of the wider social context in which they exist. Pro-environmental behavioural-change campaigns should instead consider the broader social settings in which individuals exist in an attempt to achieve lasting change.

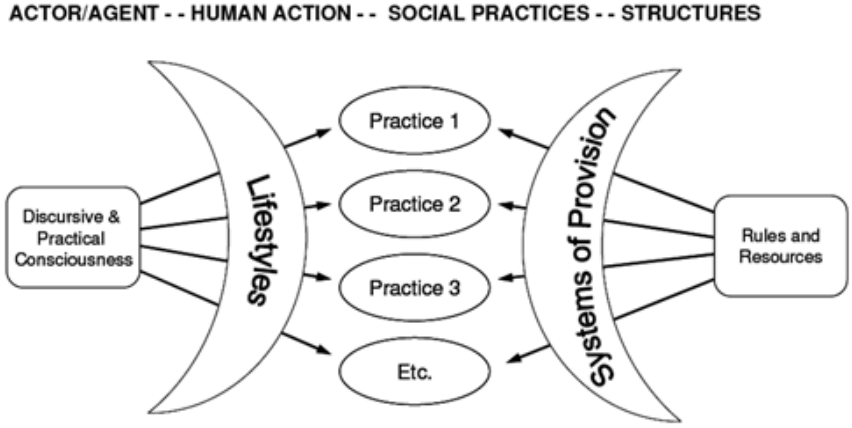

Figure 1 Spaargaren and Van Vliet's Social Practices Model (Adapted from Spaargaren & Van Vliet 2000)

Whilst there is some debate in the literature as to the meaning of, or indeed the very existence of 'community' (discussed in the following section) others see it as a social setting that has as yet unexplored potential for encouraging lasting pro-environmental behavioural change. Jackson (2005b p4) states:

'Negotiating change is best pursued at the level of groups and communities. Social support is particularly vital in breaking habits, and in devising new social norms.'

Therefore, as a minimum, Jackson suggests efforts to achieve lasting pro-environmental behavioural change should include 'community-based social marketing, social learning, participatory problem-solving and the discursive unfreezing of embedded, routine behaviours' (Jackson 2005a, p119-120). He also sees Government as having the potential to play a vital role in encouraging and supporting community-based social change (Jackson 2005a).

As part of its 'Securing the Future' policy (HM Government 2005), the UK Government set out an integrated approach to achieving sustainable development that included community action as a specific aim of policy intervention. The policy focuses on 'the need to enable, encourage and engage people and communities in the move toward sustainability; recognising that Government needs to lead by example' (HM Government 2005, p26). More recently, the Government published a framework for encouraging pro-environmental behaviours (DEFRA 2008a) that splits the UK population into seven ideal types ranging from 'positive greens' to 'honestly disengaged' according to their perceived attitude towards the environment. The framework is extended to display matrices of the ability and potential to act against the willingness to do so for each ideal type grouping, with the ultimate aim of the framework being 'to protect and improve the environment by increasing the contribution from individual and community action' (DEFRA 2008a, p13). A policy framework for engaging and encouraging communities towards pro-environmental behavioural change would therefore appear to be in place. However Government policy tends to define community in a narrow, geographically defined manner and as such it fails to consider how – or if – the individuals living within its boundaries interact with one another. This suggests that policy approaches based on a geographical definition of community may not fully capture the potential community membership offers in encouraging pro-environmental behavioural change.

3. COMMUNITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Community and climate change are both well researched topics; however the lack of research to assess the role that the former may play in addressing the latter appears to be a gap in the literature. By contrast the sustainable development literature has a growing, if still limited body of research assessing how communities may influence individual sustainable lifestyles.

Reviewing that literature Middlemiss (2008) applies a methodological framework based on Pawson and Tilley's (1997) work on programme evaluation in which the concepts of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes are used to develop theories as to what works for whom and under what circumstances in order to encourage pro-environmental behavioural change.

Middlemiss identifies a range of *contexts* at both the individual and community level which stimulate individual behavioural change such as an individual having a broadly positive attitude toward and understanding of environmental issues (e.g. Georg 1999, Maiteny 2002) and the community group being cohesive with a strong sense of identity

(e.g. Robbins & Rowe 2002); *mechanisms* such as social support in which group members support each other in achieving a common goal (e.g. Georg 1999, Staats *et al.* 2004) and benefits recognition in which the group nature of the activity is perceived by group members to result in personal, financial or social gain for the group (e.g. Hobson 2001); and *outcomes* for the environment such as maintained behavioural change (e.g. Staats *et al.* 2004), for the community-based organisation in the form of innovative solutions that individuals working alone may not have been able to develop (e.g. Jackson & Michaelis 2003) and for the individual in the form of education on environmental issues (e.g. Stocker & Barnett 1998) and improved social connections within the community concerned (e.g. Church & Elster 2002).

Whilst insights from the sustainable development literature are relevant to this study they offer only one interpretation or framing of the issue of climate change. Policy-makers and academics may see addressing climate change as an integral element of sustainable development policies (e.g. HM Government 2005, IPCC 2007) however it cannot be assumed that amongst the public there is a similar association of one with the other. Indeed the very concept of sustainable development is as ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations as that of community. Equally, as the current evidence base on community-based pro-environmental behavioural change campaigns is limited more research to discover potentially unidentified contexts, mechanisms and outcomes is required. As such, community-based initiatives aimed at 'tackling climate change' are in need of investigation as a stand-alone entity that may in turn provide further contributions to the sustainable development literature.

The numerous attempts to provide a definitive taxonomy of 'community' have led some authors to question the validity of such an approach, as well as the analytical use of the concept altogether (Amit 2002). Hillery (1955) for example detailed no fewer than ninety-four definitions. However the ongoing interest in the concept of community suggests that whilst there may be difficulty in defining exactly what community is, it has not been an insurmountable academic barrier to prevent numerous authors from attempting to explain the role that it plays in our lives.

Within the multitude of definitions of community that exist those of particular interest to this research are interest communities, where community is seen to involve a shared sense of identity such as ethnic origin, religion, or which football club you support, and local social systems that involve individuals being linked together via their various social networks (Lee & Newby 1983, Willmott 1986). These forms of community can be seen as both a social construct in that they are the product of the active involvement of individuals and groups in their construction (Suttles 1972) and also a symbolic construct as they revolve around a concern with meaning and identity (Cohen 1985). The characteristics of the commitments that bind people in their differing degrees to a specific community - and by association what actions they are willing to take to maintain their relationship to that community - can therefore be interpreted as being both socially and symbolically constructed. These definitions of community provide a much broader analytical lens through which to observe community than those based on locality or shared geographical location. As previously noted, defining community based on geographical location fails to consider the individuals living there or of how – or indeed if – they interact with one another at all (Lee & Newby 1983).

3.1 Football and community

Despite the strong association that football clubs have with their geographical location, from at least the 1930s football supporter communities were not drawn exclusively from the immediate neighbourhoods of the club. Rather they were made up of people from a much wider geographical spread in which fans made *a choice* to engage in a particular club. This is significant as it allows for a much broader conceptualization of what constitutes a football supporter community that moves away from the assumption of geography as the primary influence on support to include community as a social system, a shared sense of identity or belonging and community as an ideology (Brown *et al.* 2008).

Anthony Cohen's theory of symbolic community (Cohen 1985) is of particular interest in explaining the nature of football communities. Football clubs become symbols around which community boundaries are drawn, and from which individuals gain a sense of collective identity. By making the choice to engage in a particular club individuals are involved in the social construction of the supporter community (Suttles 1972) whilst at the same time basing that community on the symbols associated with their chosen club (Cohen 1985). Once that choice is made, membership of a football community can become a key means by which people structure their lives (Brown *et al.* 2008).

Whilst acknowledging the potential negative impacts of being a member of a football community may facilitate, such as the rise of hooliganism in the 1980s, football supporter communities can be considered as providing an opportunity for generating positive social change. Within the UK numerous examples of this can be seen, with some of the higher profile examples including Glasgow's Rangers and Celtic football clubs who have been involved in community-based initiatives aimed at tackling sectarianism, racism and promoting healthy eating (Glasgow Rangers FC n.d.), and the equality and inclusion campaign 'Lets Kick Racism Out of Football' (available at www.kickitout.org).

Football supporter communities may also encourage the creation of social capital. Putnam's view of social capital creation through sport is one based on sport participation (Putnam 2000); however by adopting the broader approach outlined by Nicholson and Hoye (2008, p11) who suggest that participation alone is too narrow a delineator, and instead focus on sport *engagement* as the appropriate scale of enquiry the areas available for the creation of social capital are broadened to include facilitating and watching sport.

The idea that sport is a means for the development and maintenance of social capital is, at the very least, intuitively correct (Bridger & Luloff 2001, Nicholson & Hoye 2008). In one of the few attempts to identify it in action, Palmer and Thompson (2007) observed a supporter community of Australian Rules Football fans in South Australia over the course of a season. They noted how the group shared not only a strong sense of identity as fans of the club, but also advice, information and psychological support on a range of football and non-football related issues. This occurred at the games they attended where the sense of identity was most strongly felt in ritualistic displays of devotion to their team and also via internet forums which allowed those members of the group who did not share the same geographical location to participate. The case study shows the presence not only of social capital, but also elements of the symbolism involved in the creation of supporter communities and the lack of defining geographical boundaries. The community

facilitates the creation of bonding social capital through a shared sense of identity, and as it is the fact that they are fans of the club that unites them and not their social status in other settings the potential for bridging social capital creation is also present. As Putnam states:

> *'To build bridging social capital requires that we transcend our social and political and professional identities to connect with people unlike ourselves. This is why team sports provide good venues for social-capital creation.'* (Putnam 2000, p411)

Sport in general and football in particular can therefore be seen as a mobilising force for change: with fans willing to 'throw themselves' into supporting their club via a strong sense of shared identity, the context for positive social change would appear to be present.

3.2 The 'Save Your Energy for the Blues' campaign

The Save Your Energy for the Blues campaign ('the Campaign') was initiated by Ipswich Borough Council and Community Carbon Reduction (CRed – available at http://www.cred-uk.org/) who approached Ipswich Town Football Club to suggest the idea of hosting the UK's first 'carbon-neutral'[1] football match. With support from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the club's principal sponsor E-on the project was expanded into a season-long initiative under the title of 'Save Your Energy for the Blues'.

The Campaign is an example of a 'top-down' community-based initiative where community can be seen as the instrument of change, rather than the agent. Top-down community-based behavioural change initiatives are not well represented in the existing literature (Middlemiss 2008, 2009) and as such the Campaign presents an opportunity to learn new insights into the contextual factors and mechanisms that affect the outcomes of such campaigns.

The campaign was launched in October 2006 and was promoted via match day programmes, branding around the club's Portman Road ground, a dedicated website and extensive local media coverage and advertising. The club instigated a series of energy efficiency measures and asked fans to do likewise by pledging to take actions ranging from switching to low energy light bulbs to buying a hybrid car. The intention being that by combining the club's own energy-usage reduction with the energy saving pledges made by fans the club would be able to state that it had become carbon-neutral.

The Campaign presented fans with minimal scientific information on the causes or likely effects of climate change. Climate change was framed as an energy issue that does not involve major changes in lifestyle in order to help mitigate its effects, as a socio-economic issue – save energy, save money – a discourse mirroring the UK Government's 'Act on CO_2' campaign, and as an opportunity for collective action towards a common goal. Appropriate responses to climate change were framed around what

[1] There are numerous issues with the concept of 'carbon-neutral' and carbon offsetting schemes in general however I have chosen not to discuss them at length here as the primary focus of this paper is on the role of 'community' in encouraging pro-environmental behavioural change.

fans could do for their club, with the Campaign's title bearing this out – Save *your* energy *for* the Blues (emphasis added). The message being that if we (as fans) all do this together, we can all save money, save energy, help the environment *and* get money for new players to improve the Club's squad through the sponsors pledge to donate £300,000 to the club if we become 'carbon-neutral'.

Over and above any environmental concerns, fans were encouraged to participate in the Campaign by the offer of incentives such as free season tickets and the chance to be a match day mascot. The club reached its goal of becoming 'carbon neutral' on 4th May 2007 with over three thousand fans participating in the Campaign pledging carbon emission reductions totalling more than three thousand tonnes per annum.

Research into the campaign was conducted in two stages. The first stage was conducted during September and October 2007 and involved a mixed-methodology combining a quantitative survey of club fans (n = 268, 217 participants (P) in the Campaign, 57 non-participants (NP)) with a series of ten semi-structured interviews (P = 7, NP = 3). Quantitative analysis of participants led to the identification of a group of 'issue-neutrals' whose stated attitude towards the environment in general and climate change in particular was 'neither concerned nor not concerned' and whose stated primary reason for participating in the Campaign was from loyalty to the club.

Identification of the 'issue-neutrals' and the exploration of the role of club loyalty on participation in the semi-structured interviews conducted during the first stage of research (S1) formed the basis of the research conducted during the second stage (S2). This was conducted during June 2009 and comprised a series of thirteen semi-structured interviews (P = 10, NP = 3) with the goal of further exploring the role of 'community' in fans participation, along with the influence of the framing of the message presented to them by the Campaign.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 How community is manifested within Ipswich Town Football Club's fans

Community manifests itself in many ways for the interviewed fans. For example several interviewees spoke of the comforting familiarity of being surrounded by the same faces in the stand at every home game that helps to create a sense of shared experience, yet at the same time their allegiance to Ipswich Town provides them with common ground when meeting other fans whether travelling or at work. Interviews revealed how many fans had made an active choice to support Ipswich Town, indicating their involvement in the social construction of the supporter community (Suttles, 1972), as well as the importance to them of the symbols associated with the club. Many interviewees also expressed a strong sense of allegiance to the club, with it providing them with a sense of belonging in the world that football support can produce, as well as contributing in varying degrees to their sense of identity (Brown 2008).

Most interviewees related examples of where they had met other fans of the club and instantly had common ground around which to bond – a bond often founded on the

wearing of one of the key symbols involved in the self-proclamation of supporter identity, the replica shirt. Examples included:

> *'There is some feel of being part of a community. It manifests itself in odd things like taking your grandchildren to the zoo in Australia and being stopped by somebody saying 'eh they're wearing Ipswich shirts' and then having a long conversation with them.'* (S2 Participant)

The fans interviewed see themselves as being part of a community from which they gain a sense of identity and belonging from their support of the club, along with showing elements of social capital creation via their bonding with fellow fans and the use of online message boards to facilitate information exchange amongst the group. Ipswich Town Football Club fans do therefore constitute a community in both a physical sense – united around Portman Road on match days – and also in the much broader symbolic sense of community as part of their identity and lifestyle.

As previously noted, not all of the participants in the Campaign had a broadly positive attitude toward the environment and/or understanding of the environmental issues associated with climate change; however what they did appear to have is the enthusiasm and motivation to engage with the issue as a result of their identification with the club. The Campaign therefore had a very clear community to target with its pro-environmental behavioural change message, and appropriate contexts and mechanisms for it to succeed.

4.2 The fans' response to the Campaign

Climate change is a social construction as much as a physical one and how individuals respond to it as an issue is influenced by how it is presented to them. The fan community represents only one of the many social settings and contextual resources that will influence how individuals learn about and respond to the issue of climate change. For example, for many people their primary source of information on climate change is the media (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004) suggesting that as nearly all of the interviewed fans – both participants and non-participants in the Campaign - identified greenhouse gas emissions as the primary cause of climate change it is likely that they acquired that knowledge from a source other than the Campaign website. When considered in light of the 'science-lite' approach of the Campaign organisers framing of the science of climate change this is perhaps not surprising. Few interviewees claimed any increase in knowledge as a result of the Campaign. Representative responses from the interview analysis highlighting this include:

> *'I'm not sure I learned anything about climate change…it was more something positive I could for my football club.'* (S1 Participant)

> *'I can't say that the campaign led to any sort of increase in knowledge. I mean I basically just got involved because I support Ipswich Town.'* (S1 Participant)

However the Campaign appears more influential when the analytical focus switches to how the fan community construct their *response* to climate change as an issue. For example, many of the fans interviewed equated addressing climate change with

reducing energy consumption, a message that mirrors that of the Campaign's title and messaging content. Several of the participants interviewed made the link between energy use and carbon dioxide emissions, deducing that reducing both via their pledges is a positive thing for the environment as well as their wallets.

The 'Save Energy, Save Money' framing of the Campaign – a discourse that mirrors the socio-economic discourse of the Government's 'Act on CO_2' campaign – was also a recurring theme within the interviews. For many interviewees this was another positive aspect of the Campaign, highlighting what they saw as being relatively straightforward lifestyle changes such as changing their light bulbs or not over-filling the kettle that would have a positive impact on their wallets as well as the environment and their club. Appealing to an individual's desire to save money appears, in this instance, to have been an effective means by which to generate a message with sufficient resonance to encourage them to act. The Campaign was therefore able to link a message that is primarily associated with individual benefits with wider social and environmental benefits. For example:

> *'We were doing all the other things that we were asked to do, like all the light things, but more from a cost saving point of view rather than an environmental point of view. I think before it used to be mainly a cost issue but now there's a balance being struck between the environmental issue and the cost saving as well.'* (S1 Participant)

Many interviewees also described how the Campaign had reinforced the benefits of collective action in achieving a common or shared goal. That for many participants the principal focus of the common goal was the club and not the environment indicates once more the influence of the club on fans willingness to change their behaviour regardless of their attitude towards the issue of climate change:

> *'I thought that by doing that [participating] maybe everybody else, if they're doing it as well…it's going to make a difference'* (S1 Participant)

> *'It would be difficult to say that it made much difference at all but I guess if we all go down that road and take a little step here and a little step there it's got to help in the long term.*' (S2 Participant)

The Campaign appears to have played a dual role in encouraging fans to participate. For some, it appears to have fulfilled the role of the 'trusted messenger' (Moser & Dilling 2004 p41), providing a legitimate, creditable framework within which they could act on their concerns over climate change with the framing of the message providing sufficient resonance for them to act, whilst for others the message behind the Campaign was not as important as the fact that it was the club saying it.

For participants who were genuinely concerned about climate change the framing of the Campaign appears to have sufficiently elevated, and maintained their motivation to change their behaviour, as well as providing them with the means by which to do so. The combination of elevating and maintaining motivation is, as Moser and Dilling (2007) identify, one of the keys to effective communication strategies. Yet as has been noted, for many participants their behavioural change does not appear to have been based on concerns over climate change at all, and the potential of them buying low-energy light bulbs on the same shopping trip that they buy a new four wheel drive appears:

behavioural change pledges based on club loyalty or without a genuine engagement with the issues surrounding climate change may be of little long-term value, and as such are in need of further research.

For some fans the Campaign occurred at a time when they were actively debating their energy usage – for example as a result of renovating or moving home or having less need for a car having recently retired, whilst for others the Campaign brought the issue of climate change and energy usage to the level of their discursive consciousness to be actively considered as an issue. For these fans, the context of the Campaign, and manner in which the issue of climate change was framed were central to their involvement. By presenting the positive aspects of behavioural change, the framing of the Campaign was not solely about avoiding environmental negatives; and by conducting their own energy audit and having club players as spokespeople for the Campaign the message clearly resonated with many fans:

> *'I just felt with their push for energy saving they were doing something for the country – they were one of the first club's to actually bring that to the fore, and to do something about it. I haven't really heard of any clubs that have done anything similar'* (S2 Participant)

> *'I think because Ipswich Town were doing it* [saving energy] *that would encourage other supporters to do that as well – I think that it had a positive impact on everyone really…I went out and bought energy saving light bulbs and things like that because I heard players were'* (S2 Participant)

The Campaign's framing of climate change can be seen throughout the responses of fans interviewed for this research. However other interpretations of climate change that the Campaign avoided in its efforts to maintain a straightforward, largely positive framing of the appropriate response to climate change were also present. The most common of these alternate framings was that of the risks it poses to future generations:

> *'I don't like to be a pessimist but the weather is changing…I've got two kids. I want them to grow up in a world that is not heating up…if we can turn it around now, if I can educate my kids, then it will only get better...'* (S1 Participant)

A number of interviewees were also aware of the difficulties or limitations in encouraging behavioural change – even their own. For example:

> *'We're doing something to help the environment rather than make it worse. But I mean it's like you're never going to get everybody to do everything to reduce their* [carbon] *footprint…I mean people still drive their cars. I still drive my car and it's not energy efficient.'* (S1 Participant)

> *'I suppose if I'm completely honest I would think I'm one person – what kind of difference am I going to make? I went online the other day to do the size of your* [sic] *carbon footprint. I must admit although I joked about it at the time I couldn't believe the size of my carbon footprint…I drive around in a 2.2 litre diesel car, I live in a village so it's impossible to do public transport so when I saw that I thought, oh my god that's big but then I don't necessarily do anything about it which is I suppose, pure lethargy on my part. I answered it completely honestly and then when it came up like this is what it should be and this is the size of it. It*

should have sparked me into action but I just sat there thinking 'bloody hell' and then got back into my two litre car and drove off.' (S2 Non-participant)

This sense of conflict between helping the environment by adopting pro-environmental behavioural changes and continuing to knowingly damage it through a (perceived?) lack of options further reinforces the need for pro-environmental behavioural change campaigns to look beyond the individual as the appropriate scale of messaging and instead consider explicitly the contextual barriers to change people face.

Many interviewed fans expressed varying degrees of doubt as to whether they would participate in similar campaigns if they were run by the Government due to a sense of distrust and disengagement with the political process. This would indicate that Government should adhere to Jackson's advice on engaging community groups to encourage pro-environmental behavioural change (Jackson 2005) as on the evidence of this research campaigns such as the Government's 'Act on CO_2' lack the necessary resonance for many people, as typified by the following quotes:

'To be honest I don't think people really trust the Government at the moment and whatever the Government says people will take with a pinch of salt or whatever' (S2 Non-participant)

'By and large I'm suspicious of anything produced by the Government. I would think twice about taking part in anything they organised' (S2 Participant)

This further highlights the role of the club as a trusted messenger, indicating that when it comes to encouraging pro-environmental behavioural changes it is as much about the messenger as the message. The participation of the 'issue-neutrals' whose involvement in the Campaign was based largely on their support for the club also shows the power that community ties such as those built around football clubs may have in encouraging the less environmentally aware or motivated ideal-types such as the 'honestly disengaged' identified by DEFRA (2008) to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes. On this evidence trust in the messenger, loyalty to the community, and power relations within the community itself should all be considered as additional mechanisms to those already identified by Middlemiss (2008) by which such campaigns can achieve successful outcomes.

4.3 Measuring the success of the Campaign

Defined by its achievement of the goal of helping Ipswich Town Football Club to become 'carbon-neutral' the Campaign was a success. In achieving that goal the Campaign has led to lasting behavioural changes for the majority of interviewed fans, as well as encouraging some of them to adopt additional changes to their lifestyles. It has also resulted in attitudinal changes towards the environment amongst some participants and engaged previously uninformed or disengaged people with environment and sustainability issues. The sense of pride and achievement that many fans interviewed felt once the club had reached its 'carbon-neutral' goal also suggests the presence of increased community spirit. The group nature of the Campaign, with its focus on the club's fan community, also presented an innovative means by which to engage

individuals with the issue of climate change. Appealing to the sense of shared identity and community that many fans feel towards the club persuaded over three-thousand of them to participate in the Campaign - including the 'issue-neutrals'. However the vast majority of fans did not participate in the campaign despite their apparently similar levels of commitment and loyalty to the club. The Campaign's framing of climate change that resonated with many participants was clearly not as effective at removing the barriers to adopting pro-environmental behavioural changes for other fans.

This apparent contradiction in behaviour amongst individuals holding broadly similar attitudes towards the community of which they are a member indicates the complexity of creating effective communication campaigns aimed at tackling climate change, regardless of the context in which they are set. In as large a community as that which the Campaign was targeting – upwards of twenty-thousand on home match days alone - it is naïve to expect that a 'one-size fits all' message can be created that will resonate with every member; particularly as the community in question does not have an environmental focus as the basis for its existence such as grassroots initiatives like the Transition Town movement (Transition Town, n.d.). Yet the club as the context of the Campaign was clearly a significant factor to its success. Whilst 'community' was seen to have different meanings for many fans, the unifying factor was that through their identification with the club over three thousand of them were willing to adopt and maintain pro-environmental behavioural changes - in some cases regardless of their lack of engagement with climate change as an issue.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Individuals exist in a complex world of interwoven social domains (Layder 1997), systems of provision and lifestyle choices that influence how they behave in relation to the environment in general and climate change in particular. These may serve to enable or constrain an individual's ability to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes, regardless of their ability or willingness to do so (Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2000). The case study analysis presented here has shown this to be true for the Ipswich Town Football Club fan community, with a range of factors appearing to influence whether they did or did not participate in the Campaign.

The Campaign successfully achieved its principal aim of encouraging behavioural changes amongst Ipswich Town Football Club fans to reduce their personal carbon emissions, thereby enabling the club to make the claim that it was the UK's first carbon-neutral football club. The club did this by conducting its own energy audit which set the standard for many fans to follow, and then provided them with the clear target of becoming carbon neutral on which to collectively focus, and the means by which to achieve it via the behavioural change pledges.

The Campaign framed appropriate responses to climate change in a largely positive light, with an emphasis on multiple positive outcomes for individuals, the environment and the club. This was successful in elevating and maintaining the motivation for over three thousand fans to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes – in some cases regardless of their attitude towards the issue of climate change.

However an issue of concern is the Campaign's failure to engage with the vast majority of the club's fans. Why did only three-thousand fans participate out of a fan base of well over twenty-thousand people? And yet despite its arguably limited success the Campaign did have the significant impact of encouraging the 'issue-neutrals' participation regardless of their lack of engagement with environmental issues in general and climate change in particular. It is this finding that suggests the potential impact top-down community-based campaigns may have in encouraging wider sections of society to voluntarily engage in pro-environmental behavioural change than those organised from the grassroots up.

Whilst research such as that by DEFRA (2008) has tried to explain the psychological barriers that may limit an individual's ability to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes this paper has shown that the focus on the individual as the appropriate scale of interest fails to consider the broad range of social factors that may limit *or* encourage them to adopt pro-environmental behavioural changes. Therefore more research effort should be directed towards identifying the contexts and mechanisms by which to remove the barriers that individuals face in adopting pro-environmental behavioural changes in order to achieve positive environmental outcomes, with Pawson and Tilley's evaluation framework providing a useful framework through which to do so.

The multiple interpretations and framings of climate change as an issue discussed in this paper also suggests the need for a more wide-ranging and applied set of behavioural change policy responses to the issue from Government rather than maintaining rationalist based policy tools. By placing greater emphasis on community engagement with the issue similar results to those of the Campaign could be achieved – in particular engaging with sections of society for whom climate change is not a current issue of concern. Other sports clubs, religious organisations or business corporations are a few examples of organisations where a top-down approach to community engagement may prove successful.

Research based on a single case study cannot provide the 'unequivocal proof' that academics seek of the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in meeting environmental and social objectives (Jackson 2005a p133); however the research presented in this paper has provided a contribution to the growing evidence base of their potential to do so. The challenge for the research community is to continue adding to the evidence base by conducting further research into the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes associated with community-based pro-environmental behavioural change initiatives with the goal of helping Government to develop appropriate policy through which to fully harness their potential.

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