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Superbug Failure: A Political Antidote to Free Market Fundamentalism?

Campaigners and advocates for rational use of state-intervention (by which I mean where the free market obviously fails to act in the public interest) have long struggled with the situation where many politicians realise only too well that the 'market' often fails, indeed often gets propped up with financial billions which are siphoned off into private profits, but run scared of saying so because they fear the voting public trust them even less. A major reason, if not the only one, is the rear-view-mirror nature of media convictions that - in Anglo countries at least - leads the media to frame almost any proposed state action as hopelessly old fashioned. Such convictions were formed when today's generation of senior media execs were at college: the days when capitalism triumphed over communism and the 1980s credit-fuelled asset boom looked like the pain-free benefit of neoliberal economics and deregulation.

These convictions have proved highly durable in the face of evidence that the free-market is not very good at delivering in the public interest: for example credit crunches; global banking failures; the mixed results of capitalism in post-Communist countries; the actuality of climate change and inadequate responses to it; the global destruction of biodiversity; and spiralling inequality. Through all this, there has been no big Public Interest Moment in the way that the appearance of the 'ozone hole' in the heavens once created a generational object lesson in messing with the global environment.

Until perhaps now. Having all the cash in the world, or the biggest pension pot in your Golf Club, is not going to save your family if they get a cut finger on the beach that turns nasty and there are no longer any effective antibiotics. The point being, in case you've not already noticed, that the reason there are very few new antibiotics of the traditional type, or alternatives, is that it's not profitable to invest in them.

A few journalists such as [Deborah Mackenzie at New Scientist](#), some medics, and a spattering of rationalists have been trying to warn about the impending catastrophe for 'modern civilisation' for decades but to little avail. However, governments and the [WHO](#) are now ramping up to a quiet mass panic and only state intervention in the public interest looks like it could save the day.

We need medical and health campaigns to make sure the current government-pharma talks get somewhere quickly but for any campaign group concerned with changing mind-sets over how economics ought to work, this impending catastrophe may offer a silver lining. The free-market failure to deliver against antibiotic resistance looks like politically undeniable proof that government must sometimes intervene to uphold the public interest.

New Scientist probably isn't the favoured reading of the 99% lobby or those into new economics or social inequality but as its Leader '[Big pharma market forces won't save us from superbugs](#)' said on May 21st: "*Antibiotics don't make much money but we desperately need new ones. That means transforming pharma companies into public goods producers*". Maybe time for alternative-economy wonks to get into the politics of superbugs?

Rise of the CSPs

For decades the worlds of government, politics, business and media have been joined by 'civil society' in the form of institutionalised NGOs. While some are service providers, many are mainly 'voices' for the public, pressure groups, campaign groups and so on. They exist where formal political mechanisms, the established media and the operation of markets do not meet the need for 'public politics'.

The latest arrivals in this world are often called 'NGOs' and indeed they are non-governmental organisations but are they really equivalent to the 'NGOs' that proliferated in the last three decades of the twentieth century or something else? In an ['online campaigning' issue](#) of this *Newsletter* back in 2010 I suggested that groups like [Avaaz](#) and [38 Degrees](#) are in some ways more like the 'campaigning media' (mainly newspapers) which used to 'take up causes' back in the C20th than they are like conventional NGOs. Most of all they are creatures of the online world: they seem to me to be more like 'Campaign Service Providers' (CSPs) than 'NGOs' as they evolved in the pre-online world.

In 2010 I estimated that Avaaz, 38 Degrees, GetUp and MoveOn engaged some 10 million people and speculated that it might increase tenfold within a decade. In mid-2014 Avaaz says it has 36 million 'members' internationally (but a lot in the US), and 38 Degrees 2.5 million in the UK, MoveOn counts 8 million Americans and GetUp, 670,000 Australians, and there must be others. My guess is that these people are overwhelmingly Pioneers, and we do know from CDSM surveys and qualitative research that the Pioneers are leading the way in moving online for most of their news (and more), leaving regular TV and newspaper consumption increasingly Prospector-Settler dominated. Certainly organisations like 38 Degrees and Avaaz act as effective aggregators for concerns, such as human rights, which Pioneers feel most strongly.

Back in 2010 there was a lot of hand-wringing amongst 'activists' about 'clicktivism', and some grumbling from conventional NGOs that groups like Avaaz and 38 Degrees were fronting campaigns which they had spent years researching and doing often dull, complicated 'issue work on. That's one similarity between the old-media-old-NGO relationship and the old-NGO-online campaign group relationship.

The two sides seem to have developed a better working relationship, and with an increasing realisation that 'online campaigning' alone is not as effective as 'mobilisation' and 'engagement' which is also offline. The likes of Avaaz and 38 Degrees have started to manifest themselves 'on the streets' and are keen to talk about themselves as having 'members' and being a 'community'. I wonder if that's what many of their supporters really want?

A year or so ago *The Guardian* newspaper, faced with falling readership and income, toyed with the idea of 'crowd sourcing' more content: getting readers to write the 'paper. It seemed to me that this was a silly idea because what makes it and other newspapers worth reading (on or offline) is the time and effort put into sourcing and checking stories and the ability of its journalists and other professionals to make that attractive. I don't want to have to write the thing myself just because it is possible for me, you and others to do so.

I wonder if what the CSPs give to most (not all) of those who sign up to their online actions, and thus get counted as 'members', is a campaign service akin to other online brands rather than a sense of membership? To take a political parallel, in many democratic countries the political parties provide a political service to voters by creating packages of policies to vote for at elections which, however imperfect, give some form of structured choice about how to

run the country and where it might go. This avoids the need to think it all out for yourself and then negotiate 1:1 with the rest of the population. Relatively few tend to become *members* of political parties. When '38', MoveOn, GetUp or Avaaz talk about 'members' are they really talking about 'voters'?

Of course there are lots of differences. Online campaign groups tend to be much more assiduous than conventional political parties in seeking active input from their 'members' about 'what to work on next'. This partly reflects their organisational youth and partly their online-culture (used to crowd sourcing etc.). If part of the appeal to 'users' is that the 'service' is simple, easy and not very involving, it may be that attempts to make them more of a community could be off-putting to some. By the same token, many of us who rather liked Google the search engine but are less keen on Google taking over our other online activities and 'devices' probably wouldn't want to start being a Google Person, with Google Glasses, Google Clothes, Google Thoughts and Opinions and Google Families.

Competition to represent a legitimate public view of what is in the public interest obviously lies at the centre of the tension between conventional politicians, the news media, NGOs, and now these new entities. Hence the importance of demonstrating that substance lies behind the opportunity to speak and be heard. Whether taking online brands offline is the way to do that will no doubt be tested by experiment.

Uplift in Support for Action of Climate and Environment through Framing Which Matches Values (Report)

Results from a series of UK values surveys reported in [this blog post](#) and a new paper '[Broadening the Appeal of Environmental Action through Values-Framing Uplift](#)' published at <http://www.campaignstrategy.org>, show how the gap between the views of committed 'greens' and the national population on climate change is closed from as much as 45% to just 7% depending on the choice of framing for propositions.

The study shows that the gap-closing effect is down to increased support for action amongst Settlers and Prospectors as opposed to Pioneers if it is predicated on being 'for children' and through 'small and easy steps' rather than simply a question of agreeing to 'believe in' climate change. The underlying reasons for this are most likely due to relative differences between values groups in the importance of children and family in self-identity and greater or lesser sense of self-agency.

Other questions show a similar effect on support for general environmental action, and for 'nature', if people are stimulated to think about children as opposed to 'environment', or 'money' and environment. In a Greenpeace survey, 41% disagreed with the statement "It's only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money", and 60% disagreed with "The environment – I'm not concerned, it doesn't bother me". However 78% agreed with the statement "We must take care of the environment so that children inherit a world worth living in".

A CDSM values survey for the [Fairyland Trust](#), whose audience strategy is based on appealing across values groups, found that 85.2% of the UK adult population (parents being the decision making audience for small children) agreed with the statement: "It is vital to introduce young children to nature" (see also item below 'Nature Blindness'). This compares to just 46% who in comparable CDSM surveys agreed that 'we should all protect nature'.

The report argues that, as generating agreement with these propositions is not an end in itself for campaigns, it makes sense for campaigners to use the ones which have widest appeal, in 'conversations' intended to lead to useful action.

Strategic Reasons Why Values Matching is a Good Idea

The paper discussed above demonstrates how different framings for action on climate change and nature/environment gain more-or-less traction across the UK population depending on whether they mainly just appeal to Pioneers, or also to Prospectors and Settlers. This could be described as uplift for propositions, gained by 'values matching'.

However some pundits, academics and campaigners argue that matching action-propositions to people's values is not a good idea. For example writer George Monbiot has recently published two blogs (<http://bit.ly/1pbFLum> and <http://bit.ly/1ucn5f3>) in *The Guardian*, both based on the work of group 'Common Cause', which takes this position.

They (invariably Pioneers) are concerned that it might reinforce "the wrong" (Prospector or Settler) values. They fear that this, in turn, might affect 'society's values'. The "wrong values" they identify are typically about a desire for power, acquiring material wealth, and 'self-interest'. Better then to try and change people's values so that they are "good": altruistic, global, benevolent, universalist? From this mind-set, matching offers or asks to people's values is a bad idea if it includes the "bad" values. They do not accept that, as Saul Alinsky famously said, 'with very rare exceptions, the right things are done for the wrong reasons, and that 'it is futile to demand that men do the right thing for the right reason – this is a fight with a windmill'. It then follows that they do not accept that the right outcomes can sometimes only be obtained by getting support of people who do not share your own values.

I do not agree and have written about why in previous Newsletters. This can become a tedious and tangled debate. Common Cause and their supporters like to talk about 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' values, whereas CDSM divides any population into three Maslow Groups (Settler – Security Drive; Prospector, Outer Directed; Pioneer, Inner Directed, and within them, 12 Values Modes). It is not always clear whether we are talking about the same thing and certainly not in the same terms. Both sides acknowledge the work of Shalom Schwartz but draw different conclusions from it. CDSM's approach is mainly empirical; Common Cause is more theoretical. We believe the evidence suggests Maslow was right and that if people meet their unmet needs they change (in improving conditions/ good life experiences, from Settler to Prospector to Pioneer). Common Cause seems to think not.

In addition, Common Cause seems to advocate talking about values to change them, whereas we have found this will tend to lead to disagreements which entrench values differences rather than change them. We have found that people are largely unaware of their motivational values: they feel like 'common sense'. Common Cause wants to talk about values to change behaviours. We think that you cannot do that very easily, if at all, and it is more effective to change the behaviours. And so on.

Myself, the people at Common Cause and Mr Monbiot are all environmentalists. We probably have a similar idea of how the world really ought to be in terms of environmental quality and impacts. We just have a different view about how to get there.

All that said, I usually try to avoid this debate for two reasons. First, unlike some of the potential antagonists, nobody is paying me to take part in it and I can't afford the time. Second, the main proponents of the 'improve the people' argument are themselves articulating a set of values most clearly expressed in the [Concerned Ethical Values Mode](#),

and no amount of analytical evidence is likely to make any difference. Although they might not accept it, what I have seen of the many research projects we have conducted using the CDSM 'Values Modes' system convinces me that they are driven by a largely unconscious need to find 'ethical clarity' and so will want to reject any route to change which is not ethically the best possible option.

I'd suggest there are a number of practical strategic reasons why values-matching is a fundamentally sensible strategy in the circumstances faced by most campaign groups today.

1. The Maths

Most campaign groups are dominated by Pioneers (Inner Directed) and are operating in societies where the majority of people do not share their values. In China, for example, over 70% of the population measured by the CDSM values segmentation (which includes use of Shalom Schwartz's internationally verified question-set) is Outer Directed i.e. in CDSM's parlance, Prospectors, which groups like Common Cause and advocates like George Monbiot would see as having 'extrinsic values'.

This 'Maslow Group' is the largest in every one of ten societies we have surveyed for Greenpeace, except the US.

| MGs | Settler | Prospec | Pioneer |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| THAI | 23.6 | 64.1 | 12.2 |
| CHINA | 13.7 | 71.5 | 14.8 |
| INDIA | 14.4 | 68.6 | 17 |
| PHIL | 17.9 | 63.2 | 19 |
| TURKEY | 21.7 | 54.3 | 24 |
| BRAZIL | 21.6 | 52.5 | 25.3 |
| INDO | 13.9 | 55 | 31 |
| ARG | 26.9 | 42 | 31.1 |
| UK | 31 | 37 | 32 |
| US | 17.8 | 32.3 | 49.9 |

The 'Pioneers' on the other hand are in a minority in every country and in all cases (except the US) make up less than a third of the population. To take a rudimentary example, if there was a need to gain majority support for an idea, just appealing to 'Pioneer' values such as self-direction, universalism, benevolence, ethics and a global view of the importance of nature, would be a recipe for failure. There are of course many instances in which a majority of some sort is a desirable objective.

2. Signals of Feasibility

In democracies, and indeed in societies which are not 'properly' democratic but where rulers and decision-makers are aware that they need to have or appear to have 'popular support', many important policy decisions depend on showing that an idea is broadly supported, whether actively so, or simply accepted without much opposition. Achieving this typically means going beyond the Pioneers.

In contrast, generating a values-divided public debate generally sends the opposite message: that this is an intractable problem. Instead campaigns need to generate signs that the change they advocate is feasible, achievable and so offer decision-makers some sort of popularity reward.

3. The Decision-makers

Not all decision-makers are Pioneers. In the UK, for example, most people working full time for companies or other organisations are Prospectors. Nor are all politicians or officials Pioneers. For an idea to feel right and work for them, it needs to resonate with their values. Being told they are wrong-people and should adopt your demands based on your conflicting values is not likely to work but it will give them confidence that your proposal is wanting.

4. The Doers

Contrary to what some Pioneers may assume, some of those most likely to act to support the changes they want are not Pioneers but Prospectors. Of these, the [Now People Prospectors](#) are the 'bridge' for new ideas or behaviours between the Pioneers and the Prospectors: they pick up these ideas from the 'Transcender' Pioneers.

This transfer is the point at which 'mainstreaming' takes place (as an idea becomes fashionable before becoming 'normal'). A good example in the UK is renewable energy. For decades almost the only people actively advocating or adopting it (e.g. solar) were Pioneers. Now it is being mainstreamed by Prospectors, in businesses such as [Gentoo Group](#) (whose values we have surveyed – it is a mainly Prospector but very 'green' company with [27,000](#) solar panels on 2,000 properties in Sunderland and plans for 3,000 more solar homes). While Pioneers tend to agree with 'good things' but are so interested in debate and ideas that they may not do much to implement them, Prospectors are the principal doers and implementers of change.

Once change mainstreams, Settlers too take it up. So, for example, you can now find homes sporting both solar pv and UKIP posters ([UKIP's core voters](#) are Settler), like [this one](#).

5. Outcomes

Campaigns should be planned backwards from analysing situations and identifying a strategic objective, and then working out a critical path of changes that will get you there. It's along this path that the need to engage particular audiences, in ways that work with them, arises. Campaigns should not be projected forwards with rhetoric and polemic to advocate a desired outcome.

Many of the 'moral hazard' outcomes posited by critics of values-matching only arise if there is no strategy for change beyond advocacy and proselytizing. In reality, rather few campaigns can be won that way. An instrumental campaign built around a strategic critical path should have an objective which, once achieved, makes a strategic difference: a political decision between countries in the form of a treaty; an increase in the sales of a 'good' technology to the point where market forces make it inevitable that it will become dominant; or a change in infrastructure or a system that then determines which behaviours are possible or likely. In such cases, the motivations behind the actions become, at best, secondary.

6. Time and Resources

Even if it were true that people strongly driven to achieve power and material wealth were permanently locked into that values set, and even if you could 'change' these people without them meeting those needs (neither of which we think is true), campaigners dealing with urgent problems often do not have the time or resources to adopt a change-through-changing-the-people strategy. We have actually measured the values of the populations noted above. In China there are 26.4% who are 'Golden Dreamers', the people who most espouse the material + power values that some campaigners see as very 'wrong'. In India 29.3% are Golden Dreamers and in the UK 15%. In all three countries they are the largest

single Values Mode. This means that there are about 360m Chinese and a similar number of Indians who some see as having very much the 'wrong values'.

Even if there was a way to 'change' these people (and some advocate 1:1 encounters), it seems somewhat unlikely that campaign organisations have the means to do so. Take for example, getting a car, or a 'better' car. For GDs this is likely to be a priority. Persuading Indian Golden Dreamers to want their 'next car to be an electric one' rather than a fossil-fuel driven one is not difficult: we know from asking them that 68% say 'yes' (probably because 'electric' is now 'fashionable', seen as desirable and a sign of success). Persuading them to forgo a car altogether would be a very different matter but, from a climate-change point of view, electric cars are a change that the world needs to see, and quickly.

Finally, it sometimes seems that those opposed to 'values-matching' think that it means advocating that people should consume more or be more "materialistic". The examples given in ['Broadening the Appeal of Environmental Action through Values-Framing Uplift'](#) show that this need not be the case in practice.

For example, the proposition "It is vital to introduce young children to nature" out-scores "we should all care for nature" by attracting more agreement from Settlers and Prospectors (i.e. better matches their values). But this is because it is 'about children' and being a (good/better) parent rather than just promoting 'nature' and implying personal action. It is not gaining power or material wealth which is the promise here but social success and reinforcement of self-identity. For these groups, being-a-parent does this whereas global ethical universalist care for nature does not.

Similarly, "There's still time to address climate change if we all make quite small and easy changes" better matches Prospector and Settler values than just asking them to be "bothered" and "concerned" about the environment because agreement requires less self-agency. That's another way to better match Prospector and Settler values but also does not require endorsement of 'materialism'.

The main implication for Pioneers is one of self-restraint. Values matching requires them not to lecture or harangue Prospectors and Settlers to see things as Pioneers do, for example to embrace 'huge and difficult' changes with little evidence that they can be achieved, or to put 'nature' before their children.

Nightingales Update

In the last Newsletter I asked you to support my rather esoteric English petition for the BBC to re-start its former tradition of an annual live outside broadcast of a singing Nightingale. A recap on what happened is [here](#).

Bryony from 38 Degrees and I handed in the petition. Over 1400 signed it in the end. The BBC never did a live Nightingale Broadcast but did a pre-recorded programme. The RSPB set up a live broadcast from Kent and got lots of amazing bird noises but the Nightingale failed to sing! So we had half a success, raised a lot of awareness and generated evidence of how much people care about these wonderful and threatened birds. Thank you to all who signed and contributed some wonderful comments and recordings. You can still listen to some of the recordings at www.soundcloud.com/nightingale-night

I hope to encourage bird and conservation groups to back a National Nightingale Night next May, 2015. I will email the signatories of the petition to keep them informed. Meanwhile if

you hear a 'Nightingale' in the UK between now and next may, it is probably a Robin or a Song Thrush. Robins often sing at night, even in winter, where there are town streetlights. This is not really good for birds as it is disrupting their natural behaviour but Robin song is beautiful.

Nature Blindness

In Britain as well as the United States and probably many other developed countries, there is increasing concern that today's children are disconnected with nature. [Richard Louv](#) has become famous in America through his books about 'nature deficit disorder' and a host of research shows that exposure to 'nature' helps children learn, develop and be happier. The same goes for adults and we now have several generations who are suffering from a disconnect.

This has led to many well-intentioned campaigns, for example in the UK, the National Trust's [Natural Childhood project](#) which grew into the [Wild Network](#), and this year's [National Children's Day](#) which focused on 'connecting children with nature'. Project Wildthing, a movie which led to the Wild Network, created a proposition and an app aimed at parents for '[swapping screen time for wild time](#)' which boils down to going outside. This is all very good but if there is no nature there once you go out-doors (or nobody who can see it and explain it) there may be no real re-connection with nature. Perhaps worse, people think they are seeing nature when they are not.

In a paper posted a month or so ago - [Why Our Children Are Not Being Connected With Nature](#) – I showed that many UK parents agree with the idea of 'introducing youngsters to nature' ([85% of them agree](#) it is 'vital'), the likelihood of it happening is very low because the parents themselves cannot tell a diverse, nature-rich place from a synthetic-but-green environment from which real nature has been largely eliminated.

Evidence for this 'blindness', or more pompously 'nature illiteracy', is everywhere. Take popular culture: contemporary media images trying to show farm brands as 'natural' depict flower-free green grass monocultures whereas in the 1930s commercial artists painted real and identifiable flowers, for example, on London Transport posters encouraging people to visit the countryside. This merely reflects a changing reality. Most of the British countryside is now very green but almost flower-free. Over-fertilisation with nitrogen, bad management and herbicides have seen to that. It is the [blanding of Britain](#), in which there are still places called things like 'Primrose Corner' which no longer have any primroses.

It's not just a British problem. Ecologists studying the unique floras of oceanic islands have called it "McDonaldization": the floras and faunas are being replaced by introduced 'generalist' species which can survive in intensive man-made environments leading to a global homogenization of 'nature'.

Because most parents, like most children, cannot now tell more than a handful of trees, wild plants or animals from one another, this dumbed-down nature is accepted as 'real' and, being better than nothing, may even satisfy like a white-bread-only diet can stop you feeling hungry. Blogs and current adverts celebrating Britain's countryside often feature yellow fields of oil-seed rape, an industrial monoculture, which the photographers clearly mistake for a 'flower meadow'.

For outdoor educationalists, whose objective is better personal development for kinaesthetic learners, this doesn't necessarily matter. For conservationists, hoping that 'outdoors' leads to

people actually helping protect and restore nature, it matters a lot. Or it should. In campaign design terms, there is a failure to identify an objective which will make a strategic difference.

While there are many environmental drivers destroying nature, the conservation movement – including organisations like WWF, IUCN, UNEP and national conservation NGOs – need to make much greater efforts to communicate with the wider public, not just the few who still can identify plants and animals as their great-grandparents generations could. But many have a targeting problem: they mainly talk to their members. Addressing only those who visit special nature reserves is like running a literacy drive that only reaches those who already visit a public library.

Such groups often now have an internal problem too. As [Why Our Children Are Not Being Connected With Nature](#) describes, college biology students and their teachers know less natural history than they used to. I have even come across ‘education officers’ in a UK Wildlife Trust who could not identify common native trees and staff of a government conservation agency who regarded basic natural history as a ‘specialism’. When the supposed doctors have the disease, you are in real trouble.

With effort, it is a soluble problem. We need multi-faceted campaigns of remedial nature education, and not just delivered in a formal didactic way. It is a public health and quality of life issue and merits the same sort of marketing and communication skills as are used in public health campaigns. It’s not fair or realistic to expect an entomologist or even a project-manager to be a communications expert, any more than to expect it of a haematologist or a health manager.

[Read more here.](#)

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To offer contributions or comments contact the author chris@campaignstrategy.co.uk

Books By Chris Rose:

[How to Win Campaigns: Communications For Change](#) (edn 2) Earthscan/Taylor and Francis 2010

What Makes People Tick: The Three Hidden Worlds of Settlers, Prospectors, and Pioneers, Troubador (2011) at <http://www.campaignstrategy.org/threeworlds/> post and packaging free in the UK ([contact me](#) for costs outside the UK), or [UK Amazon](#) or in [Kindle](#), [iTunes](#) or from the [publisher](#)

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