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Corporate Discourse on Climate Change

Sharon Beder

Politicians in the many nations have not been responsive to community concerns about global warming because of a highly successful corporate campaign of misinformation and persuasion. Corporations that would be affected by measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions set out to confuse and deceive the public and policy-makers on the issue. They used corporate front groups, public relations firms and conservative think tanks to cast doubt on predictions of global warming and its impacts, to imply that governments do not know enough to act, and to argue that the cost of reducing greenhouse gases is prohibitively expensive and to promote doubtful solutions such as 'clean' coal.

Since the 1970s corporations have increasingly set the political and the public agenda of democratic nations through their use of business organizations, public relations, lobbying, and funding of third parties such as media, think tanks and advocacy groups. This is particularly true of environmental issues and global warming provides a good illustration of how these promotional activities have determined public policy.

Public respect for business was at an all time low during the 1970s and 'for the first time since the Great Depression, the legitimacy of big business was being called into question by large sectors of the public' (Parenti, 1986, 67). Public interest groups were challenging the authority of business and seeking government controls over business activities. The first-wave of modern environmentalists were blaming development and the growth of industrial activities for environmental degradation. Their warnings were capturing the popular attention, resonating as they did with the experiences of communities facing obvious pollution in their neighbourhoods. Worst of all, from a business point of view, governments were responding with new environmental legislation (Beder, 1996, xii).

For business, the new regulations and the increasingly vocal public interest groups meant that new ways had to be found to get what they needed from government, shout down the opposition, and harness the power of interest groups for their own benefit (Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985, 153). Individual companies and trade associations established 'public affairs' departments. Chief Executive Officers also devoted increasing amounts of their time to government relations. A survey of four hundred public affairs units in large and medium-sized firms in 1981 found that most received more than half a million dollars each year in funding and more than half were set up after 1970 (Saloma, 1984, 67; Vogel, 1989, 195-7).

Corporations also put large amounts of money into advertising and sponsorships aimed at improving the corporate image and putting forward corporate views. Much of this advertising was on environmental issues. One 1974 survey of 114 large companies 'found that 30 to 35 percent of corporate advertising addressed environmentalism, energy-related issues, or the capitalist system.' Over \$100 million dollars was being spent each year on this sort of advocacy advertising during the mid-1970s particularly by oil companies, electrical utility companies and the chemical industry (Vogel, 1989, 217).

Businesses began to cooperate in a way that was unprecedented, building coalitions and alliances and putting aside competitive rivalries (Beder, 2006b). Neoliberal theories that had long been espoused by fringe economists and think tanks were embraced by big business because they provided a legitimation for their pursuit of self-interest and avenues for business expansion. The policy prescriptions that suited business best—including reductions in taxes, minimal regulations,

and freedom to trade and invest anywhere in the world—were justified by this body of economic theory that represented such policies as being in the public interest (Beder, 2006a).

In the US, throughout the 1970s, conservative foundations and large corporations established and funded ‘a veritable constellation of think tanks, pressure groups, special interest foundations, litigation centers, scholarly research and funding endowments, publishing and TV production houses, media attack operations, political consultancies, polling mills, and public relations operations’ that promoted neoliberal ideology and attacked government regulation (Landay, 2004). They ‘developed the social and political networks necessary to tie this nascent empire together. The end product was a tidal wave of money, ideas, and self-promotion that carried the Reaganites to power’ (Alterman, 1994, 59).

Oil industry money was invested through business people like billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife (Gulf Oil) and companies like Koch Industries and Mobil Oil. Chemical industry money was invested through foundations such as the Olin Foundation. Lynde and Harry Bradley invested manufacturing money, Smith Richardson invested pharmaceutical money. (Landay, 2004; Sale, 1993, 49).

Around the world, particularly in English speaking nations, think tanks not only played a primary role in the propagation of neoliberal policies (Beder, 2006a). They became essential vehicles of business propaganda and policy marketing. Rather than just react to proposed government policies, in the 1970s US corporations began to more actively initiate policies and shepherd them through the policy-making process till they became government policy. Think tanks enabled them to do this. The more government was attacked and its role reduced, the more freedom and opportunities were provided to business (Beder, 2006b). These ‘second-hand dealers in ideas’... ‘were typically not intellectual originators but served to collect, distil and preserve certain strands of ideas and to diffuse them more widely, not least as detailed interventions in current policy debates’ (Desai, 1994, 31).

It was the Heritage Foundation that initially perfected the art of marketing ideas and forging networks of corporate allies to promote favoured policies. Its policy analysts were assigned policy specialities and ‘expected to develop contacts’ on key congressional committees; to cultivate Congressional staff with lunches; and to keep track of the progress of bills in Congress. More than half its budget was spent on marketing and fund raising, including 35-40 per cent of its budget on public relations. All this marketing enabled the Foundation to successfully attract mass media coverage for its publications and policy proposals. The Foundation achieved 200 or more media stories nationwide from each of the position papers it published. (Blumenthal, 1986, 48; Gellner, 1995, 502; Georges, 1995; Smith, 1991, 287; Weaver, 1989, 572)

The Foundation produced hundreds of publications every year including books and a quarterly journal, *Policy Review*. Its speciality was its ‘backgrounders’ or ‘bulletins’ which are short essays (between 2 and 20 pages) on current issues — ‘brief enough to read in a limousine ride from National Airport to Capitol Hill.’ These were provided to government officials, employees and journalists without charge, and usually personally delivered. The Heritage Foundation, like other think tanks, conducted public opinion polls as a means of — as a Foundation employee put it — ‘influencing public opinion, not just reflecting it.’ (Abelson, 1995, 106; Katz, 1992; Weaver, 1989, 161-2)

Today dozens of think tanks with similar corporate-funded agendas influence government by insinuating themselves into the networks of people who are influential in a variety of policy arenas. They do this by organising conferences, seminars and workshops and by publishing books, briefing papers, school kits, journals and media releases for policy-makers, journalists and people able to sway those policy makers. They liaise with bureaucrats, consultants, interest groups, lobbyists and others. They take advantage of informal social networks — clubs, business, family, school/university. They seek to provide advice directly to the government officials in policy networks and to government agencies and committees, through consultancies or through testimony at hearings. Ultimately think tank employees become policy-makers themselves, having established their credentials as a vital part of the relevant issue network (Beder, 2006b).

Conservative think tanks, having been instrumental in bringing Ronald Reagan to power in the US and Margaret Thatcher to power in the UK, turned their attention to environmental issues, and the rolling back of environmental regulations, in the 1990s. They sought to cast doubt on the very features of the environmental crisis that had heightened public concerns at the end of the 1980s including ozone depletion, global warming and industrial pollution (Beder, 1997, 91-105). They were aided in this by a proliferation of advocacy groups created by public relations firms on behalf of their clients.

Public relations had become a multi-billion dollar industry by the 1990s. The industry employed almost 200,000 people in the US, meaning there were more public relations personnel than news reporters. More than 5,400 companies and 500 trade associations had public relations departments and there are over 5000 public relations agencies in the US alone. (Brody, 1992, 351; Carlisle, 1993, 22; Montague, 1993; Seitel, 1995, 2, 40; Sherrill, 1990, 389) Public relations also boomed elsewhere in the English speaking world. The public relations industry in the UK, one of the largest outside the US, employed more than 48,000 people during the early 1990s, most of them based in London (Josephs & Josephs, 1994).

It was during the 1990s that the application of public relations to environmental concerns really came into its own. Environmentalism was labelled 'the life and death PR battle of the 1990s' and 'the issue of the decade' by public relations personnel (Nelson, 1993, 27). By 1995 US firms were spending about \$1 billion a year on public relations advice on how to green their own image and deal with environmental opposition (Stauber & Rampton, 1995, 173). Whereas, in the past public relations had been mainly about publicity, environmental public relations was increasingly about strategic counselling—shaping public and government perceptions of environmental problems and finding ways to counter environmentalists and environmental regulations (Greenberg, 1994).

THINK TANKS – FOSTERING DOUBT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the past two decades many corporate-funded think tanks in various parts of the world have sought to undermine the case for global warming preventative measures, initially by portraying global warming as little more than a theory that scientists can't agree on and subsequently by downplaying the consequences of global warming. They played a key role in providing 'credible experts', usually not atmospheric or climate scientists, to claim there was 'widespread disagreement within the scientific community' about global warming and, more recently, that any possible future warming would be slight and might even have beneficial effects and so does not justify the proposed international treaties and national regulations.

Fostering doubt is a well known public relations tactic. Phil Lesly, author of a handbook on public relations and communications, advised corporations:

People generally do not favor action on a non-alarming situation when arguments seem to be balanced on both sides and there is a clear doubt. The weight of impressions on the public must be balanced so people will have doubts and lack motivation to take action. Accordingly, means are needed to get balancing information into the stream from sources that the public will find credible. There is no need for a clear-cut 'victory.'...Nurturing public doubts by demonstrating that this is not a clear-cut situation in support of the opponents usually is all that is necessary. (Lesly, 1992, 331)

In October 1997 the Heritage Foundation, which receives funding from vested corporate interests such as Koch Industries and ExxonMobil (Greenpeace, 2010; Shulman, 2007), published a backgrounder entitled 'The Road to Kyoto: How the Global Climate Treaty Fosters Economic Impoverishment and Endangers US Security.' It began:

Chicken Little is back and the sky is falling. Or so suggests the Clinton Administration ... By championing the global warming treaty, the Administration seeks to pacify a vociferous lobby which frequently has made unsubstantiated predictions of environmental doom (Antonelli, Shaefer, & Annett, 1997).

In 2007 the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) sent letters to scientists, economists and policy analysts offering \$10,000 plus travel expenses to any who would write articles pointing out the shortcomings of an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (Sample, 2009). The AEI had close ties with the administration of George W. Bush and has received more than \$1.9 million from ExxonMobil (MediaMatters, 2010a). Former ExxonMobil CEO, Lee Raymond, was vice chairman of AEI's board of trustees in 2007 when the letters were sent.

There are also a swathe of smaller, less mainstream think tanks that attack climate science. For example, the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) was established in 1984 by Fred Smith, Jr, a former employee of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The CEI is a small Washington-based conservative think tank with a staff of over 40 people (CEI, 2010a). CEI has consistently opposed environmental regulations. The CEI has a budget and income of around \$4 million much of which comes from wealthy foundations and corporations including the American Petroleum Institute, Cigna Corporation, Dow Chemical, ExxonMobil, Koch family foundations, General Motors, and IBM (MediaMatters, 2010b).

However the most important role that think tanks have played is to give a respectable platform and provide a funding channel to a small group of scientists who oppose the general scientific consensus on global warming. These scientists are then repeatedly cited by the many corporate front groups that have been set up to attack the mainstream scientific consensus on climate change. These few scientists have, in this way, had their voices greatly amplified and often receive funding directly or indirectly from vested interests but they do not disclose this when talking to the media or before government hearings.

For example, the Cato Institute's greenhouse policy is written by Patrick Michaels, a Senior Fellow at the Institute. The Cato Institute is another of the Washington-based think tank that has received funding from the likes of Koch Industries and ExxonMobil (Greenpeace, 2010; Shulman, 2007). It campaigns for reduced government and deregulation of the economy. Patrick Michaels is one of the best known of the skeptic scientists championing the case against global warming science. The Institute paid Michaels' firm, New Hope Environmental Services, \$242,900 for environmental policy services in 2006 and 2007, which Michaels claims was for research for his book *Climate of Extremes: The Global Warming Science They Don't Want You to Know*, which Cato published in 2009 (Burton, 2009).

Michaels is also associated with various corporate-funded think tanks and advocacy groups. He is a visiting scientist with the George C. Marshall Institute and was on the advisory boards of the Greening Earth Society (a front group for Western Fuels Association, an association of electricity utilities with coal-fired power stations), The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition (TASSC), the Information Council on the Environment and the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, which co-organised a climate skeptics conference in Copenhagen to coincide with the 2009 meeting of government leaders on climate change.

In 2006 a leaked memo from the General Manager of Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) in Colorado, a cooperative owning coal-fired power stations, stated that 'Dr. Michaels has been supported by electric cooperatives in the past and also receives financial support from other sources... In February of this year, IREA alone contributed \$100,000 to Dr. Michaels' (Lewandowski, 2006). Yet Michaels is generally described in the media as being from the University of Virginia without any reference to the corporate funding he receives.

THE ECHO CHAMBER

In 2007 the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) reported that Exxon Mobil had given around \$16 million to some 43 advocacy organizations (including think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute) between 1998 and 2005 ‘to deceive the public about the reality of global warming’ and cast doubt on the idea (Shulman, 2007, 5). In 2010 Greenpeace USA documented the donations of over \$48 million between 1997 and 2008 by Koch foundations to advocacy organizations that have disputed global warming. Koch Industries is a private conglomerate of oil and chemical interests, (Greenpeace, 2010).

As well as think tanks corporate money went to a variety of corporate front groups. When a corporation wants to oppose environmental regulations or support an environmentally damaging development it may do so openly and in its own name. But it is far more effective to have a group of citizen’s or a group of experts—preferably a coalition of such groups—which can publicly promote the outcomes desired by the corporation whilst claiming to represent the public interest. When such groups do not already exist, the modern corporation can pay a public relations firm to create them (Beder, 1997, chapter 2).

These front groups, like the think tanks, have in turn utilised a handful of dissident scientists to give credibility to their arguments. For example, the Information Council on the Environment was a coal industry front group formed in 1991 to ‘reposition global warming as theory (not fact)’. It had a large advertising budget and, in a media strategy detailed its plan to target ‘older, less-educated males from larger households who were not typically active information seekers’, and to use scientists as spokespeople as they are more credible with the public (Ozone Action, 1997, 5). It promoted the views of well-known skeptics Patrick Michaels, Robert Balling and Sherwood Idso in television and radio broadcasts, newspaper opinion pieces, and newspaper interviews.

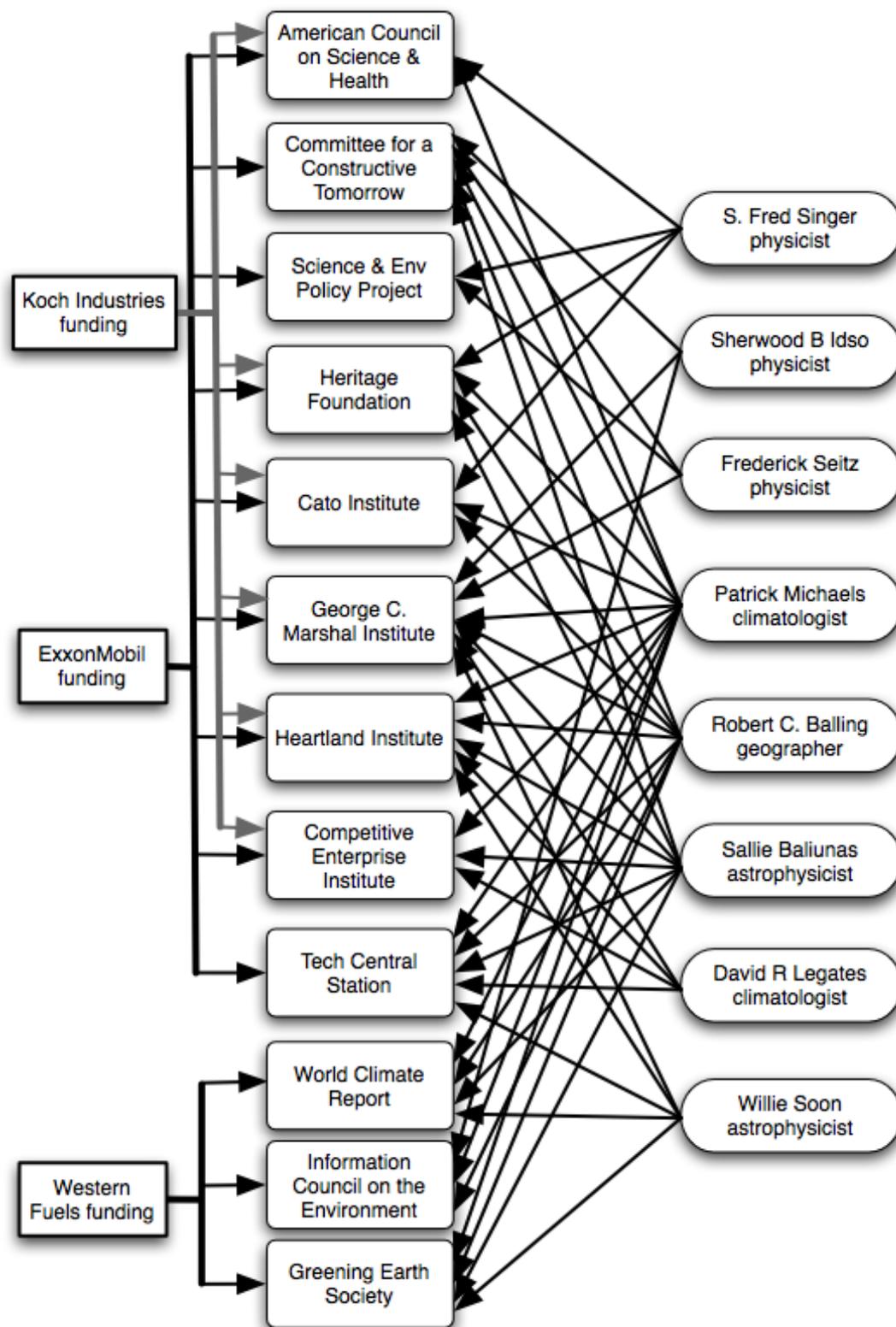
The diagram below shows how a group of eight scientists served as scientific advisors, fellows, book and report authors, or featured experts for a number of think tanks and corporate front groups that had been funded by ExxonMobil, Koch foundations or Western Fuels Association. The diagram is by no means exhaustive but only indicative. Many more corporate-funded think tanks and front groups have been involved.

The UCS points out that by funding so many groups with shared staff and scientific advisors, corporations like ExxonMobil are able to ‘provide the appearance of a broad platform for a tight-knit group of vocal climate science contrarians. The seeming diversity of organizations creates an ‘echo chamber’ that amplifies and sustains scientific disinformation’ (Shulman, 2007, 11).

When these few science skeptics had become household names because they were quoted so frequently in the media, the oil industry sought to ‘recruit and train a team of five independent scientists to participate in media outreach’. It intended that those recruited would be ‘new faces who will add their voices to those recognized scientists who already are vocal’ (American Petroleum Institute, 1998).

This was part of an American Petroleum Institute (API) plan to raise \$US5 million over two years to establish a Global Climate Science Data Center as a non-profit ‘educational’ foundation to help meet their goal of ensuring that the media and the public recognise the uncertainties in climate science. Internal documents stated that ‘victory’ would ‘be achieved when’ the media, industry leaders and average citizens recognised the uncertainties in climate science and those ‘promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extent science appear to be out of touch with reality’ (American Petroleum Institute, 1998).

More than a decade later there are still only a relatively small number of scientists arguing against the mainstream consensus on global warming.



Information from: Seth Shulman et. al., 'Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air: How ExxonMobil Uses Big Tobacco's Tactics to Manufacture Uncertainty on Climate Science'. Union of Concerned Scientists, January 2007, pp. 34-5; 'Koch Industries: Secretly Funding the Climate Denial Machine'. Washington, DC: Greenpeace USA, March 2010, p. 4.

IN THE FACE OF GROWING EVIDENCE

Initially, vested interests used their armoury of persuasion and propaganda to cast doubt on the whole idea of human-induced global warming, as detailed above. However as the evidence of global warming accumulated most corporations admitted the veracity of global warming, at least publicly, as did the 'respectable' think tanks. Mainstream think tanks shifted their argument from denying global warming to claiming that it would not have such bad consequences and there was no reason to introduce draconian regulations to prevent it. They therefore continue to use advertising, public relations and propaganda to oppose greenhouse gas reduction treaties and legislation and exaggerate the costs of such measures.

In 2008 the Heritage Foundation's efforts were aimed at defeating the Climate Security Act by arguing that it would mean 'substantial hardship for the economy overall, for jobs, and for energy costs' with little environmental benefit: 'Global warming is a concern, not a crisis. Both the seriousness and the imminence of the threat are overstated... Overall, current and expected future temperatures are far from unprecedented, and are highly unlikely to lead to catastrophes' (Lieberman, 2008).

The Cato Institute now admits that 'Global warming is indeed real, and human activity has been a contributor since 1975' but it argues that warming has been small and Congress should 'pass no legislation restricting emissions of carbon dioxide' (Cato Institute, 2009a, chapter 45). In 2009 the Cato Institute paid for full page advertisements in key US newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, saying that 'the case for alarm regarding climate change is grossly overstated'. The advertisement was signed by 100 'scientists', the term being used loosely for anyone with a PhD, even if it was in management (Cato Institute, 2009b). The advertisement was refuted by many genuine and recognised climate scientists (RealClimate, 2009).

The CEI also no longer argues that global warming is a hoax but focuses on the costs of proposed measures to combat it: 'Global warming is happening, and humans are responsible for at least some of it. Yet this fact does not mean that global warming will cause enough damage to Earth and to humanity to require drastic cuts in energy use, a policy that would have damaging consequences of its own' (Murray, 2008).

Nevertheless a 2008 book by the CEI's Senior Fellow Christopher C. Horner was entitled *Red Hot Lies: How Global Warming Alarmists Use Threats, Fraud, and Deception to Keep You Misinformed*. Horner, who is a lawyer, and counsel for the climate-skeptic front group Cooler Heads Coalition, is a good example of how a few selected individuals can have enormous and disproportionate media and internet impact because of the marketing efforts of the think tanks and front groups they represent.

Mr. Horner has provided legal, policy and political commentary several hundred times each on both television and radio, in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia, including scores of visits each on the Fox News Channel, Court TV, MSNBC with repeat visits on The News Hour with Jim Lehrer, BBC, CNN, CNN International, ITN, CBC, Bloomberg and Reuters Television... He has guest hosted television commentary programs and makes weekly appearances on and regularly guest hosts nationally and regionally syndicated radio shows in America (CEI, 2010b).

Despite the shifting public stance of corporations and 'respectable' think tanks about the veracity of human-induced global warming, the public is still being influenced by the confusion industry. Even in 2009 a national survey found only 35 percent of Americans thought global warming was a serious problem compared with 44 percent the year before and only 57 percent thought there was 'solid evidence the earth is warming' compared with 71 percent the year before (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2009). The mounting evidence of climate change has not stopped the ongoing corporate funding of front groups, skeptic scientists and fringe think tanks that continue to deny human-induced global warming. The *Guardian* newspaper reported in

July 2009 that Exxon was still funding groups promoting global warming scepticism despite its public stance to the contrary (Adam, 2009).

PUBLIC RELATIONS

As it became more difficult to present global warming as a fanciful theory pushed by environmentalists and scientists seeking research dollars, corporations and their lobby groups moved their efforts to delaying treaties and legislation and shaping those that were finally agreed and passed. In particular they sought to promote voluntary actions by presenting themselves as environmentally responsible and committed to finding solutions.

The coal industry, in particular has been desperately pushing the idea of clean coal as a way of heading off moves to phase out coal burning because of its carbon dioxide emissions. Clean coal is not a present day reality but refers to the hope that one day the carbon from burning coal will be able to be captured and stored underground — carbon capture and storage (CCS). However even the most optimistic analysts, for example the MIT authors of the report, *The Future of Coal*, admit that such technology would not be available on a commercial scale before 2030. In 2007 the association for electric power generators, the Edison Electric Institute, told a House Select Committee that CCS on a commercial scale would take 25 years of research and \$20 billion in funding (Pearce, 2008).

Even if it could be developed in this time, it is unlikely the technology could be retrofitted to existing coal-fired power plants without enormous expense and so a whole new generation of carbon capturing coal-fired power plants would have to be built (Wilkenfeld, Hamilton, & Saddler, 2007, 4). In the meantime, coal-fired power stations would be emitting massive amounts of carbon dioxide for decades. Even if carbon could be captured there is no sure way to store it permanently without possibility of leakage, which would defeat the purpose. Moreover it would take a significant amount of energy to achieve CCS (up to 40% of the power generated by the power plant) and the cost of CCS would make coal more expensive than other fuel sources including renewables (Rochon, 2008, 5).

However by promoting 'clean coal' as if it is just around the corner, the industry is ensuring that it can continue to thrive and expand. The Australian Coal Association is spending \$1.5 million on advertisements and \$1 million on a New Generation Coal website to promote the idea of clean coal which it claims will be commercially viable by 2017 (Colebatch, 2008).

In the US a number of coal industry front groups have been promoting coal as 'clean' and 'green'. The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) was formed in 2008. Its president, Steven Miller, noted in a memo to the CEO of Peabody Energy in 2004: 'Our belief is that, on climate change like other issues, you must be for something rather than against everything. The combination of carbon sequestration and technology is what we preach and we are looking for more members in the choir' (Miller, 2004).

The ACCCE spent \$38 million in 2008 promoting the concept of clean coal and engaged public relations consultants, The Hawthorn Group, to run an astroturf (artificial grassroots) campaign for that purpose (Davenport, 2009). A Hawthorn newsletter stated: 'Our challenge was to get the candidates, media, and opinion "influencers" to start talking about the importance of American coal to our energy future and the need to fund clean coal technology.' It claimed that the campaign resulted in presidential candidates supporting clean coal technology and increased the percentage of people supporting coal-fired power stations from 46 percent in September 2007 to 72 percent in September 2008 with opposition dropping from 50 percent to 22 percent (Hammelman, 2008).

Building on our existing 200,000-strong grassroots citizen army, we leveraged the presidential candidates' own supporters, finding advocates for clean coal among the crowd to carry our message. We got these on-the-spot advocates to show strong public support to the candidates and to the media, and enhanced that visibility by integrating

online media that created even more of a buzz. We did this by sending ‘clean coal’ branded teams to hundreds of presidential candidate events, carrying a positive message (we can be part of the solution to climate change) which was reinforced by giving away free t-shirts and hats emblazoned with our branding: Clean Coal (Hammelman, 2008).

A YouTube channel under the name Citizens for Clean Coal, as well as a Facebook site, blog and Flickr Photostream under the name America's Power were established as part of the campaign.

As part of its PR efforts, the Hawthorn group hired Bonner & Associates in 2009. Bonner & Associates was paid \$43,000 to identify minority and senior citizen groups who would write to their local representatives opposing the global warming legislation. Bonner & Associates were subsequently caught out sending fake letters to members of congress, purporting to be from various citizen groups (Anon., 2009; Fernholz, 2009).

In 2009 ACCCE again hired the Hawthorne group to organise attendance at town hall meetings, fairs and other gatherings in a million dollar campaign to influence Democrat Senators not to pass emissions trading legislation (Mulkern, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The new neoliberal order saw the rise of new mechanisms of influence; the use of public relations, marketing and promotional activities to alter public opinion, influence policy makers and set political agendas. Nations became business-managed democracies, that is, democracies where the politics and cultural life of nations are managed in the interests of business. This is particularly evident with the issue of climate change.

The champions of neoliberalism, the corporate-funded think tanks, became an essential element in the corporate campaign to undermine the effectiveness and timeliness of government responses to climate change. Their agenda of deregulation and reduced government intervention accorded with interests of corporations, in this case their desire to avoid greenhouse gas reduction regulations. To this end they successfully used their skills in marketing, persuasion and media access to give credibility to and amplify the voices of a few climate contrarian ‘experts’ to spread confusion.

The efforts of the think tanks to firstly cast doubt on the phenomenon of global warming and then play down its consequences were supplemented by a public relations orchestrated campaign that included mass advertising, publicity, front groups and astroturf campaigns to oppose international treaties, to play up the token and inadequate voluntary actions of guilty corporations, and to falsely suggest that technological solutions such as clean coal were imminent.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Do you think global warming skeptic scientists genuinely hold the views they propagate or have their opinions been purchased by corporate interests?
2. Do you think politicians are persuaded by the arguments of skeptics or do they use those arguments and the general confusion created by them as a rationale for not introducing legislation that their corporate donors are opposed to?
3. To what extent is the corporate campaign against climate change prompted or aided by neoliberalism?
4. What sort of impact will procrastination on greenhouse gas reduction measures have on the global economy in the long-term?
5. Do you think corporate obfuscation of climate science serves the public interest?

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