



Taking your research out of the lab: Working across disciplines & with stakeholders to create impact

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Centre for **Climate Change**
and **Social Transformations**

Who are we?

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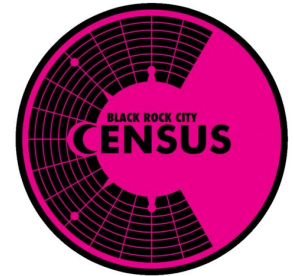
Final-Year PhD Student in Social, Moral and Environmental Psychology at the University of Bath

A Selection of Our Experience



Bath & North East Somerset Council

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN



bsi.



Environmental Psychology: problem-oriented science




- JEP debate on **impact vs. theory** in env psych (Nielsen et al., 2021; van Valkengoed et al., 2021)

- Is there a tension between rigour and impact?
 - Timescales of science slower than practice/policy
 - How ‘objective’ can or should we be (in a climate crisis)? *Climate scientists fly more – and this undermines our credibility!*

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The case for impact-focused environmental psychology

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Journal of Environmental Psychology

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Letter to the Editor

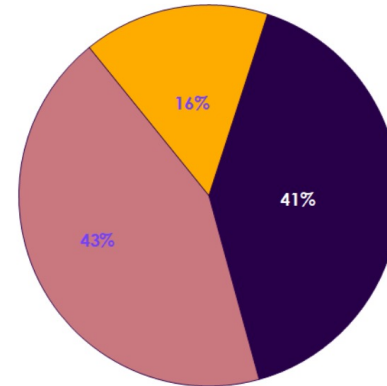
Theory enhances impact. Reply to: ‘The case for impact-focused environmental psychology’

Nielsen et al. (2021) make the case for ‘impact-focused’ environmental psychology, arguing that environmental psychology can ‘if [researchers] focus primarily on environmental impact and secondarily on psychological theory’ (p. 1). We agree it is imp

Social & tech change critical for net zero

Radical societal transformation is required
– including new technologies and
widespread behavioural change

Reduction of average UK carbon footprint
by 2030 from **8.5t to 2.5t** CO₂ to stay within
1.5°C warming (Akenji et al., 2021)



- Low-carbon technologies or fuels, not societal/behavioural changes
- Measures with a combination of low-carbon technologies and societal/behaviour changes
- Largely societal or behaviour changes



Inter/trans-disciplinarity is essential



Working across disciplines (interdisciplinarity)...

- No single discipline can address a complex issue like climate change; need complementary insights from across social/other sciences, as well as exploring creative frictions between disciplines that can lead to innovation (Barry et al., 2008).
- Interdisciplinarity can be rewarding (a lot of env psychs get funding from EPSRC, NERC, MRC etc.), but also challenging (different paradigms and language; careers and publishing; etc.)

...and with societal stakeholders (transdisciplinarity)

- Importance of research co-design and co-delivery, working with research users from private, public and third sectors, as well as individuals and communities, to ensure profound and wide-reaching impact.
- Development of participatory science models (Gibbons et al., 1994; Funtowiz & Ravetz, 1990), recognising the need for diverse forms of knowledge to address climate change as a complex and value-laden ('wicked') issue, and in which non-academic stakeholders work with researchers to identify, test, and embed novel solutions (action research).

Initiating partnerships

- Academics / colleagues who are working with industry/policy organisations (casual work, postdoc, via KE leads)
- Funding opportunities – esp. impact-focussed schemes (e.g. IAA, Policy Support Fund)
- Placement schemes and policy fellowships (e.g. ESRC)
- Events and networking
- Disseminate your work widely and accessibly – blogs, briefings, social media, podcasts, talks ...



Funding opportunity

ESRC policy fellowships 2021

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) , Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
Co-funders:	Government host organisations
Funding type:	Fellowship
Maximum award:	£135,000
Publication date:	10 June 2021
Opening date:	8 July 2021
Closing date:	14 September 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 25 August 2021

Apply to spend up to 18 months collaborating with a UK or devolved government host organisation.

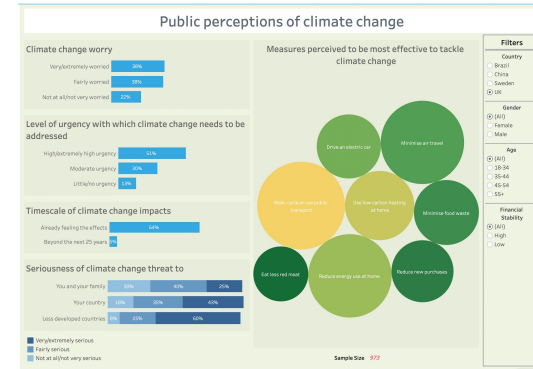
Timeline

- 8 July 2021
Opening date
- Week commencing 26 July 2021
Applicant webinar
- 14 September 2021
Closing date
- Mid-October
Shortlisting panel
- October 2021
Decision

Public engagement

Dissemination and dialogue:

- Media and social media
- Interactive toolkits, apps, etc.
- Events, e.g. festivals of (social) science, COP
- Public spaces, e.g. museums
- Youth panel – input to research strategy and design



Getting research into policy

- Challenges are well-documented: Complex political *systems* – difficult to influence; politics; timeframes; access to evidence ...
- Systematic review on how best to get research into policy (Cairney & Oliver, 2018):
 1. Do high-quality research
 2. Make your research relevant and readable
 3. Understand policy process, policymaking context, key actors
 4. Be 'accessible' to policymakers: engage routinely, flexibly, humbly
 5. Decide if you want to be 'issue advocate' or 'honest broker
 6. Build relationships (and ground rules) with policymakers
 7. Be 'entrepreneurial' or find someone who is
 8. Reflect continuously: should you engage, do you want to, and is it working?

CAST BRIEFING 09 - OCTOBER 2021



UK Public Support for Net Zero Policies

This briefing is intended as a useful resource for practitioners and researchers who are interested in public climate change opinions and societal responses to climate change.

Key points

- New research by the Climate Engagement Partnership shows that, in the run-up to the historic COP26 summit in Glasgow, there is a clear sense of urgency among the UK public about the need to reach net zero.
- There is widespread support for a range of net zero policies which mean far-reaching changes to how we travel, what we eat, what we buy and how we heat our homes.

Aligning research with policy needs?

- But need to recognise limits to improving individual advice
 - Policy-makers (as humans) aren't rational – use heuristics: *'seeking 'computationally cheap' ways to **ignore** almost all evidence to allow them to make choices decisively'*

- Systemic approach:
 - Engaging via **multiple mechanisms/actors** and **coalition building**,
 - **Framing** (to dominant policy language)

- Dilemmas, e.g.: advocacy, co-production, getting *'balance between tailoring advice and pandering to the ideology of our audience'* (Cairney & Oliver, 2018)

Aligning research with policy needs?

- Specific challenges for env psych:
 - **Ideology** (e.g. squeamishness about ‘behaviour change’)
 - ... can we reframe (cf. ‘levelling up’)?
 - E.g., business/job opportunities (e.g. shared mobility, ICT innovation for virtual interaction)?
 - Limited good quality real-world **intervention studies**... but needs funding and partnership working
 - Need for more **interdisciplinary** working – e.g. interaction between technological & behavioural innovation – and **systems thinking**



HM Government

TOGETHER FOR OUR PLANET

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

Foreword from the Prime Minister



Over the last three decades we have already reduced our emissions by 44 per cent - while growing our economy by over 75 per cent - and this strategy sets out our plan for going the rest of the way. We will meet the global climate emergency but not with panicked, short-term or self-destructive measures as some have urged. Instead we will unleash the unique creative power of capitalism to drive the innovation that will bring down the costs of going green, so we make net zero a net win for people, for industry, for the UK and for the planet.

This strategy sets out how we will make historic transitions to remove carbon from our power, retire the internal combustion engine from our vehicles and start to phase out gas boilers from our homes. But it also shows

How to engage outside of academia

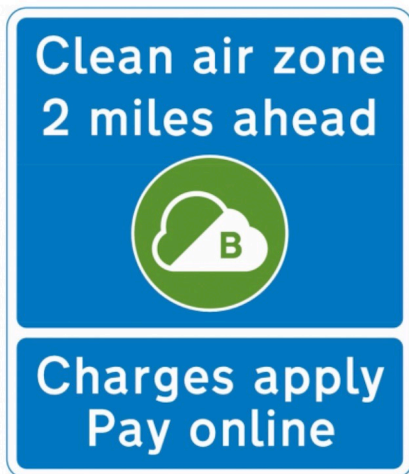


- Academics can engage with people outside of academia in two main ways:
 - As an outsider (Someone employed externally/contracted)
 - Examples: Academic, PhD Student, Research consultant
 - Initiated through: Grant, partnership, Invitation to tender
 - As an insider (Someone employed by the organisation)
 - Examples: Policy researcher, Research Officer, Survey Manager
 - Initiated through: Formal Interview Process

My Experiences Working With Policy-Makers



Outsider- Research Associate

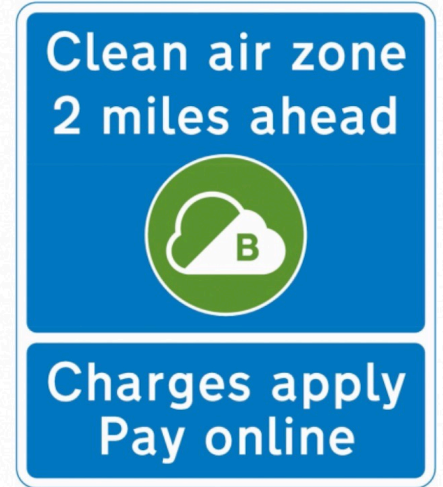


Insider - Policy Researcher



Working as an Outsider: Clean Air Zone Implementation Project

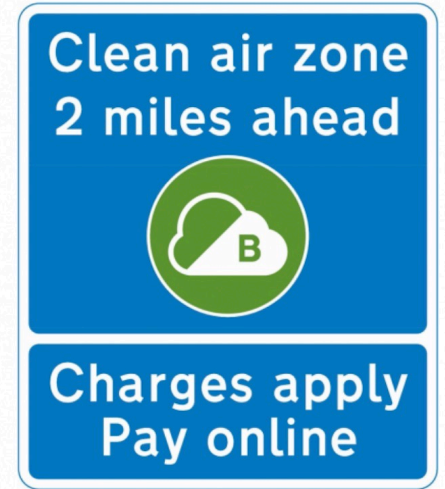
- ❑ Project created in collaboration with the University of Bath and Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES)
- ❑ Funded by BANES
- ❑ Primary Research on the effects of the Clean Air Zone on public attitudes
- ❑ Nine month duration (fast for academics!)



**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

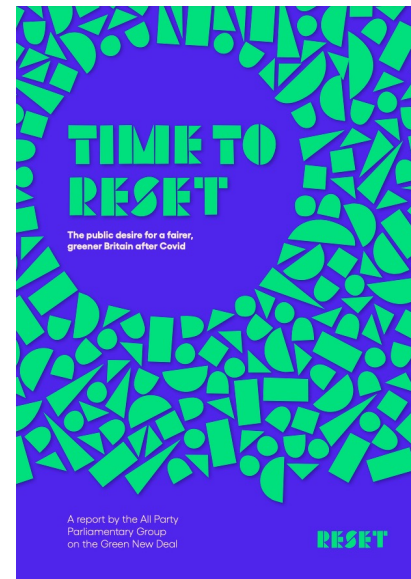
Priorities for Outsiders

- Managing expectations (on both sides)
- Maintaining a positive relationship
 - Bending, but not breaking
- Clarifying the output and timeline
 - What is most helpful for researchers may not be most helpful for policymakers
 - Ensuring the project keeps to budget



Working as an Insider- The Reset Initiative

- ❑ Project created by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the Green New Deal
- ❑ Funded by a variety of sources
- ❑ My role funded by a policy placement stipend-SWDTP
- ❑ Polling, focus groups, and policy reviews of the impact of COVID-19 on all areas of life.
- ❑ Three-month duration (fast for policymakers!)



Priorities for Insiders

- Time to deliverables
 - ▣ Having a timeline with clear deadlines
- Reporting to superiors and stakeholders
- Media Coverage
- Pinch points
 - ▣ Working around events you can, and can't control



Key questions to ask yourself before a project

Do you want to do this?

- If it's not an enthusiastic yes, it's a NO.

Key questions to ask your partner before a project



Why do you want to work with us on this project?

What skills do we have that you don't have in house



What do you expect us to achieve in the time we have?

What is the ideal, acceptable, and minimum viable product you want?



Do you have expectations about the results of our work?

What will happen if we find something different?



Do you want this work published in an academic journal?



What will happen if we need to change the project?



COMMUNICATION IS KEY
Make your assumptions explicit!

Never assume you speak the same language!

Policymakers

- Percentages
- Reports
- Practice
- Immediate Impact
- Intellectual Property
- Plain Language
- Consultation Data

Academics

- Inferential Statistics
- Publications
- Theory
- Peer Review
- Open Science
- Jargon
- Clean Data

Never assume you speak the same language!
Compare translations throughout the partnership!

Further Reading on Collaboration

<https://doi.org/10.47967/QKTY9216>

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COLLABORATION: EXPLORING THE PGR SUPERPOWER FOR ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES WITHIN ACADEMIA

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Abstract

Inequalities within academia are rampant. Sexism, racism, classism and discrimination impose huge barriers to those entering academic work or study. These issues are amplified in times of crisis, such as COVID-19. As postgraduate researchers, we can often feel powerless to address these inequalities. We possess little status in academic power structures, and as such it can be difficult to 'rock the boat' or diverge from normalised patterns of discrimination within our fields. In this essay, I argue that while we may lack status, we can adapt and diversify our collaborations with others to effectively address inequality. I outline how collaboration can be a vital tool for elevating underrepresented voices within and outside academia and examine how students with funding in particular can play an important role in this. In diversifying our citations, networks and methods of collaboration, we can ensure increasing opportunities are available for underrepresented groups throughout the academic pipeline. As the next generation of scholars, postgraduate researchers can change the game for underrepresented groups, and ensuring we collaborate diversely is our superpower for doing so.

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<https://psyarxiv.com/d8et9/>



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