Challenges of Changing Public Perception and Effective Leadership for Energy Policy:

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Depth Abstract

Three specific potential obstacles should be considered with respect to changing public policy: power elites, public opinion, and effective leadership. Those elements require an organization to have effective strategy that is flexible and the organization has to plan for contingencies (especially with respect to national level policy change). Effective leadership will align strategic support in various sectors of the population to gain public support and find power elites that can help perpetuate (raise the salience for) the public interest.

Public opinion is a matter of collective perception of issues and standards. Perception of issues is as much a cultural aspect as how one feels connected to the issue. A qualitative study about riparian buffer zones reveals that people with direct interest in changing may not realize their own impact upon the issue and may actually reject that idea in favor of a placing blame upon a so-called bigger entity (e.g. corporate elites, government or agricultural interests). Some may not realize or want to realize actual risk of the issues, and some will not trust outside sources or power influences.

Essentially, public perception can not be expected to change quickly, but rather perceptions can be changed through incremental efforts and a sense of urgency that allow for realization. Proposed eventual scarcity of fuel may require more decisive action and less ignorance of the risks because there are mutual interests in loss of lifestyle and collective technological prowess. The challenge for good leadership is to find economic interests that can directly compete against status quo pursuits that may be paths to inevitable failure. Doing this requires a strategic plan that engages networks across sectors and regions as well as effective leadership that can transcend community and

social strata in order to bring real sustainable energy policy to a strong public interest. That public realization must occur well before actual scarcity is the driver of price rather than the current undemocratic cartel that are more interested in padding foreign treasuries than American interests.

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Depth: Contemporary Challenges to Change and Public Perceptions

The breadth demonstration identified three major aspects to consider wth respect to public policy changes 1) power structure, 2) public opinion, and 3) leadership approaches (especially with respect to building cooperative and collaboration networks) (Wallner, 2008; Agranoff, 2003; Vaughan & Arsneault, 2008). Some contemporary research augments these basic foundations further to investigate culture and individual perceptions with respect to issues (Wilk, 2002; Baker, 2002; Vaughan & Arsneault, 2008).

This section will investigate some of the current research that discusses public perception of energy alternatives and potential strategies for encouraging more sustainable energy in the public. The discussion will review how other issue campaigns were able to lead and to organize efforts at local and eventually national levels to build effective policy. Those campaigns could be models for changing public perceptions of renewable energy options. As well, leadership facilitates a campaign and organization that realizes successful policy goals through active networks and education. Using the theories and concepts, we can strategically build a campaign that works to raise awareness and change public perception of energy policy alternatives.

The first part of this examination will review a description of energy culture and consumption (Wilk, 2002) as well as public perception of energy policy (Baker, 2002). These two papers help to characterize a public opinion that has formed around the issues in terms of culture as well as how public opinion has changed over the course of the decades. Again, since public opinion is a cornerstone to policy change, these characterizations may help this campaign develop broad and effective education to invoke public desire for change for sustainable energy policy.

This paper then will review studies that examine individual perceptions of individual affects and personal risk (Dutcher, Finley, Luloff, & Johnson, 2004; Smith et al, 1992). This study provides qualitative and quantitative insight to how some people view their roles in their environment as well as general viewpoints of elites and possible opinions for collaborative arrangements. These aspects can help shape campaigns to be more effective at gaining public support by addressing mutual concerns of the campaign and the people.

In addition, the breadth demonstration discussed the requirement for leadership to be effective in building relatable connections and communications between people within and around the organization using transformational or servant leadership approaches. Effective leadership will leverage networks, be flexible to changes and plan a strategy to handle various contingencies and issues while helping other organizations accomplish mutual goals. That leadership will guide the campaign and public towards a stronger public interest for broadening the sustainable energy policy and behaviors. Campaign leadership will be more effective with a strategy that effectively and sustainably uses resources, wields social motives, fosters collaboration and understands the complex human relationships (MacGregor Burns, 1978; Agranoff, 2003).

This depth demonstration will review how these ideas are founded in the three core principles, before illustrated, of public policy change. Public perceptions and leadership can greatly affect any campaign, public opinion and power elite to secure a policy change because they add to the complexity of the core principles. Thus, there are recognizable strategies that a campaign can employ to encourage success.

Culture and Energy Consumption

Wilk (2002) and Baker (2002) share some ideas about how the American public views energy policy and consumption issues. Wilk suggests that energy process is the service of meeting human wants and needs that are affected by cultural determinants, consumerism and consumption patterns. Wilk asserts the energy issues in America today stem from cultural designs and that “the key to culture is that it is learned” (2002: 110) through social groups or communities. Assumptions and what people take for granted is may be a cultural variable between the groups in this respect.

Wilk (2002) notes that the changes in household size correlates with energy use and efficiency where declines in the average household sizes have pushed home energy consumption higher. He suggests that materialistic opinions about possessions in richer countries (e.g. United States) allows for attitudes that consume more than poor societies. As well, he suggests that increases of energy use have correlated to improvements in general social standings and a rise of productivity (e.g. societies use more energy that produces more products).

The higher productivity with low-cost energy and higher sense of affluence has lifted people from survival and more frugal instincts into higher pleasures like music, literature, and education. The irony of low-cost energy, however, is that African farmers will yield more calories of food per calories spent while Americans use far more calories to yield a set of food calories (Wilk, 2002).

The culture and marketing systems have embraced obsolescence as intrinsic to growth and higher pleasures where people have become mass consumers (similar in some respect to Mill's mass society). Wilk (2002) claims that mass consumer societies are less connected to the production and goods are consumed by wider percentage of the population. He argues that this society extends around the world and mass media with marketing have become more important to turning luxuries into necessities as "needs" continue to expand since they are mutually motivated by profit rather than the public needs.

The mass consumer invokes a blame game where social destruction is occurring because of so called moral weaknesses, bad habits of poor people, or the rise of multinational corporations (elites). The "blame game" perpetuates a decline of rational, effective communities and social cohesion while self-absorbed individualism rises. To rise in the so-called status competition, people compete to get the newer or best items and they feel an increasing need for identity in an insecure world because they are attached to their possessions. As well, there is a preference towards comfort and convenience in order to pursue pleasures (Wilk, 2002). These are affected heavily by consumption that builds social networks as well as emulation of role model types that iconize these myths.

The affect of marketing campaigns and power elites can invoke these ideas to get people to change habits or tastes. Wilk (2002) cites Marxist ideology that suggests workers will become more alienated from the products and labors with a lingering unhappiness.

Cycles of consumption are, however, visible from an individual level as well as a macro-level where expansion and growth reach an inevitable bursting point. People that over consume and suddenly have to be frugal do not readily shed memories of extravagance they may have enjoyed. A round of the blame game may ensue to ask who is to blame, who should pay for solutions, who should sacrifice and what is fair without considering personal affect upon the issue. Additionally, a belief in a right to spend money one's own way, regardless of social consequence, is perpetuated as a democratic value rather than more of a selfish individual instinct.

This idea approaches a legitimate concern for public policy to intervene or reduce consumption when that consumption threatens self destructive behavior or the common good. Yet who is wiling to deny people so-called rights to spend one's own wealth? Perceived common good should take precedence over individual desires and sustainable behaviors and energy policy are a common good. The energy problems are a consequence of cultural problems as much as political or economic ones where consumption has been perpetuated as the means to a growing capitalism but has segregated social problems from individual impacts. In this case, Wilk argues that crisis may be the only way to force people to seriously address the issues when marketing is not effective.

Concurrently, Baker (2002) asks how would we know if we had or have an energy crisis. A partial glimpse of this argument was revealed in the Arab embargo of the 1970s, but that was an "oil crisis not an energy crisis" (Baker, 2002: 133) where the crisis had a limited effect upon other fuels despite the revelation of a fragile foreign dependency. We have to consider whether an energy crisis is one of commodity supply and scarcity or of price issues. Baker argues that oil price has actually lowered over the years and that the confrontation is over more generating capacity rather than moving towards renewable energy.

Baker points out that tax as part of oil price is much lower in the U.S. than other developed countries because Europeans have a “tradition of higher taxes” that tolerates higher rates. Thus, perception of taxes and wealth rights in the domestic markets are important to developing policy alternatives, and interestingly, Doak (2009) finds that younger generations do not have severe opposition to taxes as older generations. Europe also has a higher density, shorter journeys and feasible public transit systems Americans enjoy increasing vehicle sizes and rise of SUV. He argues however that transportation accounts for more than half of domestic oil imports which suggests corporate America is “not the only guilty party”.

Marginal uses (such as TVs always switched on), low efficiency of some fuels, and low density of residential areas contribute to larger energy dependency that is unused. As a security issue, France converted electricity generation to almost 70% nuclear power in response to the oil crisis while the United States did little to introduce alternative fuels once the hysteria over price shocks dissipated. The public found other issues and the perception of energy problems were “market imperfections”, and thus, the any initiatives to promote efficiency or sustainability were dwarfed by bigger interest to find more oil (Baker, 2002).

The conservation of mid to late 1970s faded into a fruitful market for highly inefficient, over-consuming SUVs and caravan vehicles. This begs the question of how did such crisis hysteria dwindle with no plans to address the issues that caused the crisis, how did conservation turn into consumption, and why were oil interests “bigger”. The costs associated with pursuing this option has to include use of military to secure supply (e.g Iraq wars or Iranian coups). There are sunk costs that influence industry away from investing in new technologies or invalidate existing infrastructure. As well, any more change away from fossil fuel infrastructure will have to be supported by a comparable renewable energy infrastructure at minimal cost to the producer (Baker, 2002; Hansen, 2009).

Despite the public resonance around President Carter's 1979 speech about sacrifice to get energy independent, there is currently strong resistance to taxes to support any development even though non-renewable energy is exhaustible and still depends upon risky foreign entanglements. Baker (2002) argues that the public is simply unwilling to accept anything looking like a tax increase, like a sacrifice, or like price distortions using public money (despite the many current agriculture or industry subsidies). Thus, we either prepare for a crisis or we deal with the event when the time comes.

In this discussion, Baker (2002) points out that energy policy often happens as a consequence of environment issues. Further, the challenge of sustainable energy proposals is to iterate that a problem exists since various messages and cynicism to the widespread information flow may provide an impression of imagined problem rather than actual one. If life appears to be just fine the way things are today or if the crisis is perceived as inevitable or uncorrectable (as is the rhetoric coming from some climate change proponents), people will resolve to do nothing.

The oil crisis revealed however that people will respond when there is significant change in prices or when extreme events (e.g. droughts, hurricanes) is connected to the issue. Baker advises that one would have a delusionary perception to distinguish an international issue of global supply or climate change from national issues since competitiveness of expanding energy systems and expanding supplies. Significant events may also reveal how isolated from the truth people are.

The problem is that policy can not be short term or emotional in approach that promotes “I before the community” mentality which has helped corporate elites profit from the status quo conditions for decades. Despite recent volatility in energy prices, there is, even today, softening pressure for a comprehensive energy policy that challenges myths or cultural assumptions about viable options (including the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009). Baker suggests that a “radical” policy would address economic productivity, oil supply vulnerability, system reliability, managing environmental change, controlling for extreme events, and continuity of lifestyle.

That policy is influenced by the broad cultural perception and the ability of the power elite to affect culture, but as well by one’s perception of the issue. Thus, the objective of campaigns is then to work with people to change perceptions and mentalities that serve only self-interests at the expense of community and long term needs.

Perceptions of Personal Affects and Improving Communications

Perception of policy and mutual needs can help to define the framework for the debate about the issues (Lakoff, 2004). Perceptions of risk and one’s role in the process are even sometimes interchangeable. With respect to energy policy, a sense of ambivalence and non-efficacy effect the way people perceive the issue as long as people can turn on the lights and fuel the vehicle without much despair. If the lights continue to work, ambivalence is also likely. As well, one opinion made to NPR (2009) suggests that movement in energy policy will be a consequence of movements in environmental policy due to a parallel connection of issues. Thus, studying how people perceive risk and issues in these other areas will help to define how people may perceive sustainable energy issues.

Further, the way campaigns use communication may impact or influence how people perceive the issues and the actual risks involved. In this section, a qualitative study about landowners' perceptions of riparian buffer zones provides unique perspectives for researchers and campaign developers. In addition, a study about people's perception of risk towards radon yields a quantitative window to how people generally perceive actual risks where the risk is invisible and seemingly non-imminent as is the case with radon. We can use both of these studies to review the types of communication to deliver the message for a campaign (Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher (1990), Johnson Tew & Havitz, 2002). Given the need for public opinion and winning elite support, designing effective communications will be critical to addressing perceptions and winning the general public opinion support.

Riparian buffer zones are important for maintaining water quality, controlling flooding, and providing natural ecology systems around streams and rivers (Llewellyn, n.d; Virginia Department of Forestry, 2009). The purpose of that study was to examine landowner perceptions of protecting and conserving riparian forests in central Pennsylvania. The study examines a dichotomy of expressed concerns to actual actions where people realized an importance of the riparian forests but did not see their own contribution to the issues. Reviewing statistical reviews and issues of riparian buffer decay as well the current situation, the authors present a qualitative study that interviews the landowners for their behaviors and responses to the issues. The study reveals implications of these types of perceptions towards environmental conditions, perceived responsibilities, and government intervention.

Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher (1990) reveal how people interpret risk and risk perception with respect to information about radon. Radon is an invisible, tasteless and odorless naturally occurring pollutant that can cause severe health issues when exposed to large quantities over time (US EPA, 2009; UI Healthcare, 2005; Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher, 1990). This particular study reviews methods of disseminating information and the context of which the message was presented. These methods were then gauged to understand whether risks perceptions changed over the course of time due to the particular communication pieces.

Additionally, Dutcher, Finley, Luloff & Johnson (2004) focused upon semi-structured interviews to gain a "direct understanding of the study population and hypothesis for testing" (330). The rationale for using qualitative methods authors believe that quantitative methods would not be able to present "contextual details" to truly understand the findings (Carey, as cited by Dutch, Finley, Luloff and Johnson, 2004: 332). In this way, they attempted to build and to conduct the interviews without preconception or hypothesis in order to gain a "discovery" of results or phenomena that may be present. In contrast, Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher (1990) study uses quantitative methods to study the differences between types of communication about the risk perceptions of radon.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection of the examples should be characterized by Trochim and Donnelly (2008) as unobtrusive measures of indirect and secondary analysis. As well, qualitative data is considered by Trochim and Donnelly (2008: 253) to be “descriptive non-numerical characteristic” of an event. This assumes that there are variables that can not be accurately measured in quantitative terms, and further, the focus away from preconceived measurements avoids potential induction problems (Sayer, 1992). Yet, quantitative methods can derive and predict behaviors based upon a sample. Using the two types of study we can build a better foundation for studying communication strategies for affecting public opinion (perceptions). As well, by using the two methods together avoids preconception or essentialism, which suggests one can obtain the absolute essence of the subject in question because we realize the inherent limitations of each method (Sayer, 1992).

Dutcher, Finley, Luloff & Johnson (2004) research based upon forty interviews of the landholders of the riparian zones in Pennsylvania in a qualitative study in order to discover attitudes rather than preclude with an assumed idea of those attitudes to measure. The sample consisted of landowners (with and without riparian buffers) that have various land use around the riparian zones (e.g. farming, residence, or woodlot) (Dutcher, Finley, Luloff & Johnson, 2004). A sample of 2300 homeowners (single-family, detached homes) agreed to participate in the Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher (1990) study. Here, three radon detectors were placed around the home: one to be tested in two months with the others remaining for a year in the basement and living areas. Interviews were then conducted there as follow ups to the readings, and the interviews were accompanied by information materials that explained the radon risks.

Finally, a questionnaire was mailed after the results of the annual readings were sent to the households to review the effect of the intervention-communication technique applied.

For the qualitative study, each respondent was presented with a series of questions by the interviewer, shown information about water quality issues, and then asked more questions to gain a reaction to the information. The questionnaire was developed as a lenient framework in order to allow for a more subjective focus upon the relationship between the landowner and the riparian buffer concerns as well as issues and descriptive information about the types of property. This quantitative study, in contrast, used information materials and interviews to study the variance between how material was presented (e.g. varied color code levels and action commands) and how the users perceived risk (Smith et al 1990).

The researchers were able to discover unique perspectives about perceptions and effective methods of communication. This study aligns with some of the ideas presented by Stein (2008) that suggest that people are environmentally conscious but only to a degree perhaps of convenience and as well to the realization of risk. There is a distinct feeling of “expressed concern” versus actual behavior that evident in the findings here and correlates with Stein’s assertions of dichotomies of the green movement in general. Further, actual risk may not directly translate perceived risk if the presentation does not use a proper technique.

The qualitative findings suggested that people are willing to point fingers at corporations, government or others without realizing or desiring to change one’s own impact upon the situation. The quantitative findings further this due to generally lower tendency to reduce the actual risk despite the information presented. Given reasons (aesthetic quality, lack of education, or peer pressure) for the resistance, the each study can generate potential recommendations to future community policies and information techniques for conveying impact or risk that address the concerns by the population. For example, Dutcher, Finley, Luloff & Johnson (2004) observe a general distrust and lack of confidence for outside information or the appearance of "meddling" especially by federal government in sustainable policy suggestions regardless of credentials presented. This may explain a similar resistance or ambivalence to information that may have impacted some of the responses in the radon study.

Variance of what is involved with a single issue, the risks, or the definitions is observed in these studies (Dutch, Finley, Luloff and Johnson, 2004; Smith, Desvousges, Johnson, & Fisher, 1990) The qualitative study showed clear examples where landowners had different ideas of what buffer systems were or the effects of runoff on water quality. There was a clear, definable interest in the reported responses against regulations and support of property rights despite a so-called social interest of having a well functioning riparian forest buffers. There was an emphasis upon tradition, legal paradox, and order especially with respect to those landowners that mowed or farmed right up to the streams because of ordinances for proper lawn care and perceptions of stream management. The study revealed different ideas of how to preserve the buffer zones since some people suggested that local wardens might useful for streams and some suggested to build a "framework" (Dutch, Finley, Luloff and Johnson, 2004: 338) instead of mandatory regulations. While frameworks may allow for flexibly of program application, they also allow people to avoid compliance despite any common good.

The quantitative radon study found that age and education level may impact some of those perceptions where they suggest that people are more concerned with risks as they age or educate and are more concerned when presented with the information at timely intervals that serve as reminders of the issues. This can be augmented with the communications mix advocated by Johnson Tew & Havitz (2002: 3) that asserts using “personal selling, customer service, advertising, promotion, instructional materials ... public relations and sponsorship.” They further suggest that formation of effective “promotional strategies” is important and must provide more than “just information” (Johnson Tew & Havitz, 2002:3). In fact, the radon risk study relied solely upon passive information techniques through distribution of brochures and fact sheets (despite discounting against fact sheets) to communicate the effectiveness of the information to changing risk perception belies the point of effective communication.

Passive information may not help people intrinsically understand the reality or the potential of the issue in relation to the personal situation. As well, passive information may be easily ignored versus more interactive, assertive, or personal means of communication that engage the senses and attention of the respondents (Johnson Tew & Havitz, 2002; Nathan, Joanning, Duckro, & Beal, 1978). The Johnson Tew & Havitz, (2002) own recommendations also realize that brochures should not be the only channel of information for a campaign aimed at changing public perceptions.

There is a clear interest in the buffer study against regulations while in support of property rights despite any social interest of having a well functioning ecosystem around the riparian forest buffers. There is an emphasis upon tradition and order especially with respect to in-town landowners that mowed lawns right up to the streams because of perceptions and ordinances for proper lawn care and stream management.

Observers of these studies may argue that a narrow qualitative study may not be representative of a whole population that is involved with energy systems. Yet, these fall into line with Baker's (2002) assertion that people's perception of policy will impact the level of change and salience of the issue in national policy. A study that yields these opinions can be further examined in full detail to see if some of the qualitative findings apply to others in other regions. As well, the use and reception of particular communication techniques are important to the ability of an organization to build a message. Using the expressed opinions of the qualitative study as well as findings of the radon study, an organization can build their effective communications strategy to affect public opinion for the issue campaigns towards actual risk perceptions.

These studies appear to showcase how important education and systemic action can be to developing a policy or policy alternative. Likewise, other researchers and policy analyst use review the results here for building a coordinated policy change effort. Given the level of distrust in government echoed by Baker (2002), Wilk (2002) and Dutcher et al (2004), these studies suggest that the federal policy makers as well as the policy organizations (particular special interest groups) will need to gain the trust and confidence of population by emphasizing a shared responsibility towards energy systems while promoting individual efficacy in the issues. Furthermore, McKenzie-Mohr and Smith (2008) suggest that emphasis has to be more than just an economic interest to move people to action.

Effective Leadership - Collaboration Affect Perceptions Towards a Common Goal

As mentioned in the breadth section, leadership that engages the participants and is responsive to the needs of the campaign or organization will be able to have a more successful outcome (Hansen, 2009). That outcome will heavily depend upon managing networks and collaborations in order to win popular support for issues especially radical proposals.   Schorr (1997) discusses how using the concept of "common purpose" can dramatically improve the results of organizations as well as to have a long-term view and plan with respect to project success.

This "common purpose" fits well with the transformational and servant leadership styles since they encourage development and motivation of the participants as much as the leadership. Vaughan and Arsneault (2008) analysis of two campaigns helps to further the importance of working to build a message through symbols and presentation of causal factor to change the policy image. They realize that groups may face economic interests in their respective policy areas (as is the case for energy industry and utilities). Further, discussions in Agranoff (2004), and Snyder and de Souza Briggs (2003) describe how a campaign's mission objectives (e.g. sustainable energy, wind power, conservation, smart grid) can be achieved using networks with strength and weakness critical analysis of the partnerships in addition to building the issue rhetoric. Each of the authors describe effective messages and collaborations between organizations to address their issue campaigns as public interest rather than special interest in order to leverage public opinion and power elite structures to advance agendas.

While Schorr and Vaughan & Arsneault (2008) focus upon grassroots coordinated efforts and messages with respect to poverty and child protection issues, the papers can help to emphasize successful tactics used towards successful campaigns. The common themes include education, honing the message as a public interest, leveraging networks and governance. This section discusses these themes as they were presented and what they suggest to development of an issue campaign energy sustainability and conservation.

Planning- Leading a Change Campaign Across Networks & Sectors

An organization does not always have to do everything alone (nor should) in order to succeed with the campaign mission (Schorr, 1997; Agranoff, 2003; Vaughan & Arsneault, 2008). Schorr (1997: 363) suggest that "successful initiatives draw extensively on outside resources…" and then argues that leadership has to be involved with the process as part of developing and leveraging some of those networks. Given the principles of running single organization require planning, organizing, human resources, delegating, reporting and budgeting where public managers have an increasing need to work across organizations and sectors to accomplish tasks and issue goals that exspand these basic functions (Agranoff, 2003: 62).

Successful campaigns have realized the dynamics of power structures (locally and nationally), education, media coverage, affect of public opinion cycles, and the dynamics of effective leadership approaches across various social structures between the organizations. Of the types of networks, coalitions (or a national organization) can tap into the various networks (especially local or regional networks) as an action network that works towards more successful and incremental implementation of policy reform engaging the power elite while educating the public opinion on several tiers of the risk and issues (Leiter, 2008).

With coalitions and networks, campaign leadership has an additional task load required to support the networks or to engage the network resources (especially with respect to broad and national policy reform goals like sustainable energy policy). The campaign leaders will have to remember that other decision makers in the network also have organizational responsibilities and duties where planning and implementation requires coordination of those assets and resources without negative impact upon them. Their issues and pressures (e.g. budget, funding or staffing) are common across organizations and leaders as previously noted by Agranoff (2003). Certain foundations, as suggested by Domhoff (2002) and Carnegie (1889), may impose restrictions of action upon an organization's ability to act. Yet, beneficial partnerships occur when there is normal exercise of the network as well as a sense of reciprocity for labors among the various participants (Schorr, 1997; Agranoff, 2003). Legitimacy of common issues as well as the partnerships will have to be promoted in order to yield support for the primary initiative or any initiative (Wallner, 2008).

Trust and action are mutually binding within these collaborations as is with supported politicians in the decision-maker areas. Without faith in abilities or willingness to conduct a full campaign, the network degrades to a supply chain of organization and vendors where members become disillusioned with the process and the network. In this respect, networks should observe the guidelines suggested by Agranoff (2003). These guidelines enumerate how to represent the campaign, to have a plan, as well as how to delegate responsibilities, patience, and recognition. This recommendation parallels sentiments from Carnegie's guidelines about philanthropy where gifts can help the community, but philanthropists should not help community organizations that do not have a plan to further the community good. Networks can provide opportunities for specialization towards achieving a public good and expansion of the public good to other communities (Carnegie, 1889).

Thus, a coalition of organizations with an interest in sustainable energy can form among organizations that encourage weatherization, wind power, solar advocates, responsible land use and conservationists. Each partner has a specialization that can be included in the whole effort. As we see with the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, the list of supporters is a broad sample of the public and private sectors working seemingly independent of each other. With a coordinated message and campaign, they may have a better chance of success at effective legislation since some of the supporters include corporate elite companies and utilities (e.g Duke Energy, GE, John Deere and Exelon) as well as special interest groups (e.g. Center for American Progress and United Methodist Church). Using GE's media channels, a coordinated effort have a communications network with the public if they choose to use this.

Yet, dependency upon specific relations can doom a campaign and network. Snyder and de Souza Briggs (2003) suggest that some of the program suffered setbacks due to inability to recreate models that depended upon personal relations or specific community supporters (some elite influence affects). Wallner (2008) argued that some campaigns like health care efforts fail due to performance shortfalls and inefficiency as well as improper dependencies. Therefore, servant leadership styles may be most useful in order to build relationships with other strong willed leaders and gain subsequent campaign success.

Thus, the stewardship of campaigns requires engaging leadership that works strategically, efficiently, consistently and that appreciates the possibilities within the collaboration (e.g. expansion of support, leaders, liaisons, logistics, and infrastructure) while continuing to educate the public about the issues as a public interest. Yet, those relationships are restricted to the trust and reciprocity within the networks that is expected from each network participant. This also coincides with Schorr (1997) statement about keeping duplication models independent of personalities and interaction requirements. Thus, the impact of a dependency upon wavering power elite support to succeed can be minimized. The campaign and relationships should focus upon incremental successes that provide a roadmap for overall reform rather than massive changes that may shock the public (Hansen, 2009). In order to change completely, massive reform, as is with sustainable energy policy, would require a serious and unquestionable crisis or a sustained strategy that uses active people with networks to build messages and change public opinion that compels new strategies to deploy. The sustained strategy offers the ability to plan where crisis may leaves few choices.

Community and Participatory Government

To affect change in a positive manner for the community, we have to educate the public, we have to involve the public and we have to promote active participatory governance rather than wait for good government to simply happen (Baker, 2002). Snyder and de Souza Briggs (2003: 239) identify a need for "philosophical commitment to participatory government" (Mills might refer to this as the "public"). They suggest that a so-called community of practice becomes more difficult as more collaboration, communication, ideas and practices develop due to the increasing ability to make mistakes and conflicts. Despite any growing difficulty, cultivation of the public to affect public policy across diverse organizations can be mutually beneficial, if planned and lead effectively, because more people are engaged in democratic processes that favor more government accountability and obligate the elite to support the actions (Schorr, 1997). As well, leadership rooted in ethics, and values will be received by the public in more honorable and willing reception.

Distancing of the public from the issue and lack of education has resulted in either failed policy initiatives like the Clinton's health care reform, perpetuation of resource exploitation (rather than expansion of renewable energy) under Carter, or complicated privatization of Medicare Part D during George W. Bush (Wallner, 2008; Domhoff, 2002; Hansen, 2009). Therefore, the collaborative efforts within and around campaigns can greatly increase the successful chances of reform if pursued in a methodical, efficient and respectable manner to all participants while engaging the public interest.

Depth Discussion

Given the basic elements of change (e.g. power, public and leadership), the task for any significant campaign is to use those elements together to create or to build a change environment. Culture affects perceptions as much as personal efficacy towards an issue. Policy entrepreneurs, as termed by Wallner (2008), have to build a strategy that goes deep into personal and cultural perceptions of issues in order to build an effective method and messages. The message will help leadership engage other sectors and collaborative arrangements due to a common goal in a mutual or public interest.

American Clean Energy Act of 2009 represents, in theory, some of the ambitious goals since there is a heavy emphasis upon encouraging renewable energy and putting a market value upon emissions. If this is going to cost money or change lifestyles for people, proponents will need to invest in raising public opinion to get the bill passed.

According to Morin (2009), a majority of the middle class is feeling satisfied with their current lifestyle and may be initially resistant to change without the proper motivation. The middle class is also the largest segment of the population and can sway the support and eventual policy options that get considered if enough are active in the process. Through education and incremental development, the middle classes can be a significant source of public opinion as well as any real conservation effort.

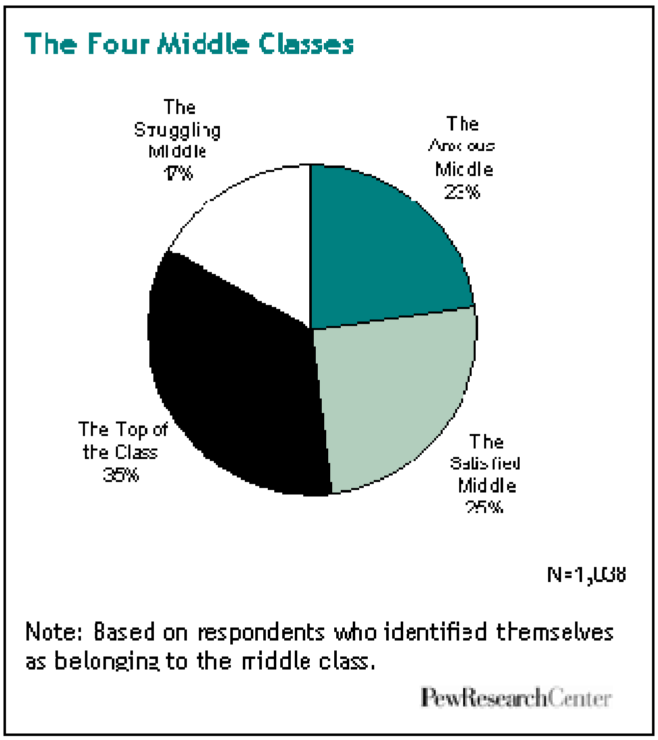

Figure 1: Diagram of Middle Class (Morin, 2009)

Wilk (2002) and Baker (2002) make a significant point about how and what people perceive as needs has evolved over the decades where once luxuries are considered to be necessities. Their assertions are substantiated by another Morin &

Taylor (2009) study that observed changes in perceived necessities are generational as well as the whole society in general. They further suggest that people with larger incomes will have a broader definition of necessities than those with lower income households. Given the timing of the study as prior to and after the financial collapses in 2007 and high unemployment that ensued, one might ask if the recession altered these perceptions. This materialism and rise in consumption, as whole, is a critical part of the energy issues that have to be addressed (whether painful or not) as noted by Baker (2002) and Wilk (2002).

The cultural aspects here and the need to gain public opinion support for the policy alternative requires that the leadership of organizations and the political officials are willing to 1) educate the pubic, 2) engage the public, and 3) take action even if that may appear to shirk public opinion when necessary to achieve the long term public interest rather than the short term narrow interests. The leadership will have to leverage networks, work communications, and build a consistent message that addresses some intimate needs of the public rather than rely simply upon economic interests since eventual economic interests may not influence people to move without an actual crisis. Further, leadership by organizations will greatly increase the risks as one moves issues from an isolated region to national attention where stronger and larger interests can impact the success of the campaign. That message will have to resonate with different middle class needs and lifestyles.

Depth Conclusion

In the breadth section, three specific obstacles should be considered with respect to changing public policy: power elites, public opinion, and effective leadership. These elements affect public and individual perception, culture, and possible cooperative arrangements as well as an understanding of the population attributes. Those elements require an organization to have effective strategy that is flexible and considers various contingencies (especially with respect to national level policy change). Effective leadership will align strategic support in various sectors of the population to gain public support and find power elites that can help perpetuate (and raise the salience for) the public interest in the issue.

Public perception and individual perception of issues is as much a cultural aspect as how one feels connected to the issue. A qualitative study about riparian buffer zones shows that people with direct interest in changing may not realize their own impact upon the issue and may actually reject that idea in favor of placing blame upon a bigger entity (corporate elites, government, or agricultural interests) (Dutcher et al, 2004). Some may not realize or understand the actual risks involved with the issues, and some will not trust outside sources or power influences. Essentially, public perception can not be expected to change quickly, but through a sense of urgency and incremental efforts that allow for adjustment and realization of the issues, perceptions can be changed.

With respect to energy issues, however, the United States is in an awkward position if the supply is indeed going to become severely scarce or depleted within next 30 to 50 years (Baker, 2002). Public perception needs to change to a sense of urgency in order to avoid a potential eventual cataclysmic destruction of the economy and society rather than an ignorance of the real issues. Katrina, oil crises, and the Iraqi wars have provided instances where people lifted the blinds of cultural norms for the real situation that demands attention since vulnerabilities were revealed in those stark examples. Yet, there are institutions and economic interests (domestic and foreign) that are invested or sunk costs in the current way of things, and there are intricate networks to help push a message that supports a status quo policy despite the actual risk of depletion (Domhoff, 2002; Baker, 2002).

The challenge for good leadership is to find economic interests that can directly compete against status quo pursuits. The information provided by the Morin reports can give the campaign an idea of population layers that will impact the long-term objectives of sustainability. Doing this requires a strategic plan that engages networks across sectors and regions as well as effective leadership that can transcend community and social strata in order to bring real sustainable energy policy into the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 as a strong public interest before actual scarcity is the driver of price rather than an undemocratic cartel that are more interested in padding foreign treasuries than American interests.

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