

Communication Strategies

Art: The Missing Link

Co-Authors: Yky (Artist)

The difficulty for most people to understand the deep changes in our environment converges towards an indisputable conclusion: a link is missing in how to empower urban citizens as full stakeholders in the process of adaptation that should improve their well-living and well-being. This has been highlighted in two publications: The first — *To Survive Climate Change, We'll Need a Better Story* — was an article about the Viable Cities programme, the largest research and innovation initiative taken in Sweden in the field of sustainable cities. Their conclusion is beyond dispute: the scientific community may understand the complex concepts of the Anthropocene, but without an appropriate storytelling it will fail to engage people for a simple reason: facts are not enough; we need the right narrative. The second — *How climate-related tipping points can trigger mass migration and social chaos* — was written by François Gemenne, director of the Hugo Observatory at the University of Liège, Belgium. He points out that facts and perceptions are independent tipping points, in particular when assessing the social consequences of climate change. Commonly, a tipping point is a tiny perturbation that may alter the whole stability of a system. The theory of tipping points has been recently used to refer to climate change, but as explained by the author, it often overlooks the role of inequalities, perceptions, governance, solidarity networks, and cultural values in their evaluation of the future social impacts of climate change. Paradoxically, experts recognize the importance of including civil society as stakeholders, as shown by the emergence of 'Citizen Science'. Though laudable, this approach is most of the time 'thought by experts for experts' with no obvious operational application at the citizen's level. Some independent initiatives gathering either experts or artists have been shown to play an active role in developing community awareness on matters related to urban resilience. But few have brought experts and artists together. The attached "paper" argues in favor of a joint commitment between artists and experts to improve a common understanding of urban resilience and adaptation.

Communicating Climate Change and Human Mobility

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People leave their homes for many complex reasons -- including climate change. In popular media, people who move in the context of climate change are often simply referred to as "climate refugees", which may sound compelling, but is both legally inaccurate and often not how impacted communities wish to be represented. As a result, practitioners and communicators alike need new ways to discuss and center this crucial emerging climate dynamic. Practitioners, advocates, activists, academics, and community leaders share their experiences, insights and work on the best practices to clearly communicate the challenges, opportunities, and reality of climate change and related human movements. Sharing insights from reports, research, experience, and through storytelling, this session will help those in the field of climate change and all forms of human mobility to connect with new audiences and support the leadership of communities facing displacement.

Critical Perspectives on Managed Retreat at the Intersection of Psychology & Environmental Justice

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Contributions from a wide range of academic and professional fields are needed in order to address the challenges of anthropogenic climate change. To that end, this presentation will introduce psychological perspectives on one critical aspect of climate policy: managed retreat. The presenters will cover several areas via which psychology has contributed to the burgeoning managed retreat field, and especially how they intersect with environmental justice frameworks. Resilient approaches to flood risk management require substantial pre-disaster action, inclusive policy design processes, and true community buy-in; these are complex needs that are ripe for cognitive (generally focused on conscious and subconscious decision-making processes) and affective (generally focused on emotions- and identity-based behavior) approaches. The presentation will be an accessible and engaging review of recent research and recommendations for future directions. To our knowledge, this is the first review of managed retreat from a behavioral science perspective, and we hope that it will launch further discussion and research. Our areas for review fall into a two-by-two matrix: cognitive vs. affective psychological characteristics, and household vs. policymaker behavior. Although these categories are overlapping, they offer a helpful framework for categorizing contemporary research. Our first category is cognitive characteristics among households who are at high flood risk, and how those characteristics might influence households' pre- and post-disaster behavior. Such characteristics have been explored extensively in the context of general pro-environmental behavior – particularly when it comes to easily measured behaviors such as reducing energy consumption, increasing recycling, and generating active political participation (Gifford, 2011). To some extent, this line of inquiry has also been applied to flood risk more specifically. For example, there is evidence of a dangerous “optimism bias” among coastal households who had more exposure to flood risk (Dachary-Bernard et al., 2019), while certain types of “near-misses” can lead to similar overly optimistic behaviors (Dillon et al., 2014). In addition, households can exhibit “single action bias”, whereby they are less likely to relocate if they have already taken modest, risk-reducing home improvement measures (Buchanan et al., 2019). Substantial future work is needed to determine whether there are common flooding-related behavioral differences among households in the US based on demographics such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, primary language spoken, and much more. This leads into our second category: affective (emotions- and identity-based) characteristics that may influence household behavior. These include “in-group bias”, “pluralistic ignorance”, and social norms. For example, perceived social norms have been found to be a stronger predictor of flood insurance uptake among households than perceived flood risk, suggesting the crucial role of in-group behavior (Lo, 2013). Relatedly, individuals' misperceptions about peers' concern about climate change can lead to a culture of silence around these issues that can hinder action – a phenomenon called pluralistic ignorance (Geiger, 2016). Other critical perspectives include work on place attachment and resistance to moving (Bonaiuto et al., 2016); climate grief, especially in relation to the destruction of traditional ecosystems or place-based traditions (Mah et al., 2020); community trust in new government policies (Lacey et al., 2018); and group ideologies and social identities that influence decision-making (Pearson et al., 2017).

These affective characteristics must be further explored in the context of historical/contemporary social inequities and environmental racism (Ajibade, 2019), including the siting of polluting industries in BIPOC communities, racial-based neighborhood redlining, past horrors of unethical experimental research (e.g., the Tuskegee Syphilis Study), and the overarching, noxious legacies of indigenous genocide and Black slavery on which the US was built. Given these histories, the beliefs, decision-making processes, and behaviors of policymakers are also critically important in how they influence policy design. Thus the third and fourth categories we will cover are cognitive and affective characteristics influencing policymaker behavior. Many of the same types of cognitive biases and other psychological characteristics exist among flood risk management teams as among households in a community. Roberts & Wernstedt (2019), for example, lay out myriad cognitive biases found among emergency managers, which limit resilient decision-making at the time of crisis; preventative measures such as pre-disaster training and establishing “nudges” to influence managers’ behaviors are key. In addition, elected officials are also highly susceptible to electoral incentives, whereby the pressure to focus on successful election campaigns overpowers candidates’ individual ideologies and may foreshorten the time horizons of decisions. Furthermore, these perceived pressures may actually be misaligned with the concerns of constituencies (Mildenberger & Tingley, 2019). Anthropogenic climate change has become a polarized political issue in the US, with elected officials voting for/against environmental policies in line with party platforms or small-but-vocal opposition groups (Stokes, 2016). This political polarization might also be apparent with flood risk, possibly evidenced by policymakers’ resistance to champion managed retreat. Policymakers, community organizations, and local activists can harness insights from the described categories (cognitive and affective psychological characteristics among both households and policymakers) in order to better communicate with households about flood risk and to collectively move toward managed retreat options. Successful communication can lead to more “adaptive coping” (Mah et al., 2020) with regard to household uptake of buyout options and policymaker willingness to publicly advocate managed retreat. Importantly, we will demonstrate that such adaptive coping will only be possible with meaningful recognition of environmental justice frameworks in policy development. We acknowledge that many of the factors that have given rise to the need for managed retreat result from racial and socioeconomic inequities, which have often been perpetuated by government policies. Cognitive and affective dimensions used to develop successful managed retreat policies must be coupled with social policies aimed at ameliorating these historic injustices. We hope to demonstrate how environmental behavioral sciences can do much more to foreground social justice in research and policy recommendations.

Empowering Climigration: a new communications playbook co-created with lived experience experts

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Uprooting in the face of climate change is difficult to talk about no matter what words are used. Managed retreat, resettlement and buyouts, some of the most common policy terms, tend to shut down conversations, let alone action. To grapple with this, the Climigration Network has been working with a creative team to develop a playbook rooted in empowering, proactive, and empathetic narratives to

shape engagement and policy. An initiative first envisioned as “rebranding managed retreat” has evolved to be more inclusive of historical inequities and current conflicts. It was imperative to move beyond the practitioner and academic perspectives overrepresented in policy conversations (and in the Network itself) to meaningfully engage with frontline communities. To this end, the Network engaged a distributed collective of organizers, designers, storytellers, and artists from a diverse range of backgrounds who share a personal connection to the climate crisis. Working with community co-creators, the collective has sought to understand the stories and insights that come from the lived experience of communities often hit first and worst including Black, Indigenous, Chicano, other POC, LGBTQI+, immigrant, rural, farmers, and activists as well as conservative and evangelical voices. The playbook aims to mobilize underrepresented narratives and visions in local and national conversations about climate-related migration. The active guide for practitioners and communities, completed in April 2021, is just gaining a foothold. This session is an opportunity to learn about the process that gave rise to the playbook and gain insight into perspectives on migration from a range of frontline communities. Most importantly, this playbook is just a beginning, so this is a chance to discuss how it can be put into practice, how you as community leaders, practitioners, activists, and policy-makers can incorporate this work in building toward more just and sustainable climate migration.

Underwater HOA: Using socially engaged art to problem-solve in an imperiled, polarized and imperfect world

Co-Authors: Xavier Cortada (University of Miami Department of Art and Art History), Adam Roberti (Cortada Socially Engaged Art Lab & Studio (CSEALS)), Ryan Deering (Cortada Socially Engaged Art Lab & Studio (CSEALS))

Underwater HOA: Using socially engaged art to problem-solve in an imperiled, polarized and imperfect world by Cortada, X., Roberti, A. & Deering, R. Cortada Socially Engaged Art Lab & Studio (CSEALS) Despite the scientific consensus that a changing climate will negatively impact the lives of residents across Miami-Dade County, current approaches to informing these constituents and developing prudent, climate-related policies have largely failed. To address this disconnect, artist Xavier Cortada created the Underwater Homeowners Association (UHOA) - a socially engaged art project designed to build a cadre of engaged citizens who learn and work together to make the issue of sea level rise impossible to ignore. While many scientists, scholars, and non-profit organizations attempt to communicate the science to the general public, the UHOA instead strives to engage the public in experiential learning and problem solving through an interdisciplinary framework that piques curiosity and engenders a sense of responsibility. Engaged participation is the basis of Cortada’s UHOA project. House by house, block by block, participants display their property elevations across the community: Using an app, residents discover their property’s elevation above sea level and then install a “UHOA marker” (a yard sign that has the number depicting their house’s elevation) in their front yard. In addition to the personalized signs, the UHOA partnered with the Village of Pinecrest and local public high schools to paint elevation markers on four major intersections along Pinecrest’s Killian Drive. Cortada’s Antarctic Ice Paintings serve as the markers’ backdrop, a literal depiction of melted Antarctic ice. The introduction of such drastic imagery

and symbolism further emphasizes the urgency of the issues at hand. Mapping the topography of their community, neighbors reveal the imperiled nature of Miami-Dade County: Declining property values, increased flood insurance costs, failing septic tanks, compromised infrastructure, climate gentrification, and collapsing economies and ecosystems. Making the "invisible visible" also challenges preconceived notions; being farther from the coastline doesn't always correspond with lessened vulnerability to sea level rise. While the Underwater HOA yard signs work to communicate scientific fact, they simultaneously utilize property elevations as common ground in an extremely polarized society. These markers function as a catalyst for conversation by prompting passersby to initially question the signs' purpose, learn about the rationale for its existence, and ideally prompt further involvement in the project. As opposed to political yard signs which can be divisive and alienating, the UHOA markers provide a shared problem (future property values) as a social engagement mechanism for neighbors to learn about and solve together. To facilitate the sociopolitical changes that are necessary to meaningfully address current myopic and isolated governance systems, the UHOA's monthly meetings provide a collaborative platform for problem-solving. A social practice effort, the Underwater HOA uses art's elasticity to bring perspectives from different disciplines together to create an ambiguous space where innovative ideas can emerge. Through this process the project empowers its participants with agency, their involvement influenced by their own self-interest. As the UHOA evolves through time, its ultimate goal is to perfect how this socially engaged art project develops a cadre of empathetic, creative, science-literate and engaged citizens who learn and work together to plan for a future impacted by climate change and sea level rise.

Waves of Grief and Anger: Communicating Through the "End of the World" as We Knew It

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Many are stymied by the challenge of how to talk about and "message" managed retreat or relocation. This communication challenge is most pressing for coastal managers, extension/outreach staff, and other professionals working with and in coastal communities. The leading questions to date have focused on finding "the right words" to use, rather than taking a more comprehensive look at relocation and the human needs throughout that process. The communication challenge is rooted in, and further complicated by, underlying sociopolitical dynamics and local histories, as well as people's socioeconomic realities, attachments to place, and their emotional responses to an overwhelming, intractable, seemingly unstoppable problem like a rising sea. In this presentation, I will draw on an extensive review of 20 years of coastal retreat literature to identify the deeply human, psychological needs that an effective communication effort would need to address. This type of holistic communication has not been well studied nor practiced and evaluated. Consequently, this chapter cannot pull together "best practices." Rather, the presentation will build on a discussion of communicative tasks in the midst and in support of transformative change (previously proposed in a publication) and apply this framework to relocation. As such, the paper may help to chart a future research agenda on the communication challenges that must be explored more deeply to inform an empathetic and effective communication practice that supports coastal residents undergoing one of the biggest changes they will ever have to go

through. The presentation is based on a book chapter accepted for publication (edited by A. Siders and Jola Ajibade). While the emphasis is on coastal retreat (as it is my area of expertise), the paper's suggested approaches to retreat communication is hypothesized to apply to non-coastal locations. This would be an interesting discussion to have with conference participants.