

The political economy of climate change advocacy

“Well, I think there is a very deep denialism in the environmental movement among the Big Green groups. And to be very honest with you, I think it’s been more damaging than the right-wing denialism in terms of how much ground we’ve lost.”

Naomi Klein,
Interview in *Earth Island Journal*

“Seriously, who is more to blame? The people who put this issue on the national agenda in the first place by persisting for decades against a largely indifferent political elite and media — and who have tried to rally action, however non-optimally? Or the people who have spread lies, funded disinformation campaigns, poisoned the public dialogue, and blocked even the most modest action?”

Joe Romm, *Climate Progress*

This is an old debate

“Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but...groups tend to be more immoral than individuals. We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

Martin Luther King,
Letter from a Birmingham Jail



This is an old debate

“I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who constantly says: 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action' ...”

Martin Luther King,
Letter from a Birmingham Jail



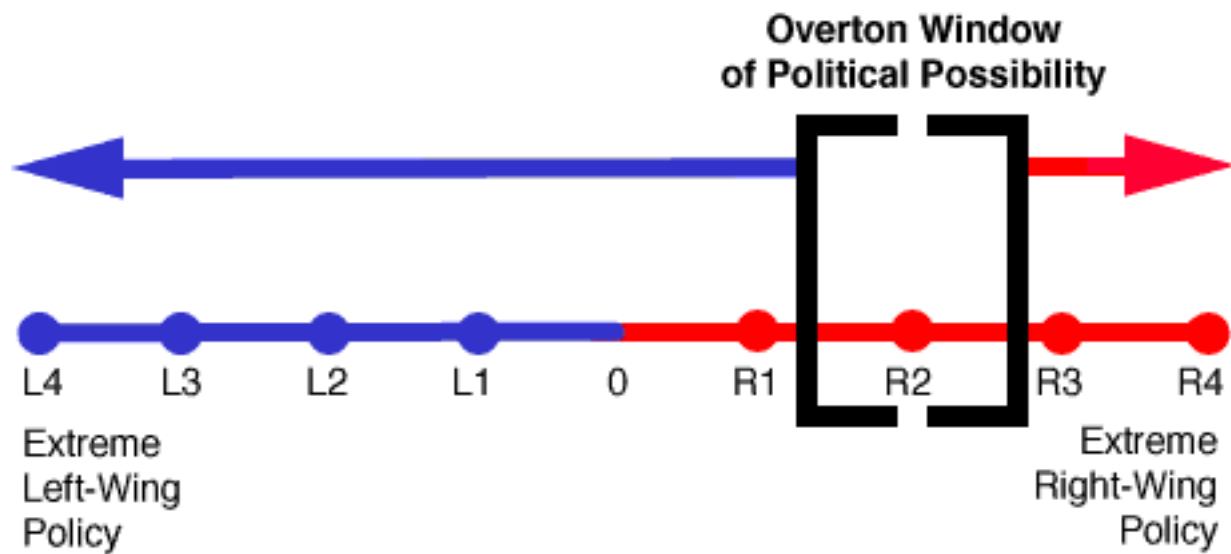
... AND THEN THERE'S
THIS TO CONSIDER...



POLITICAL CLIMATE



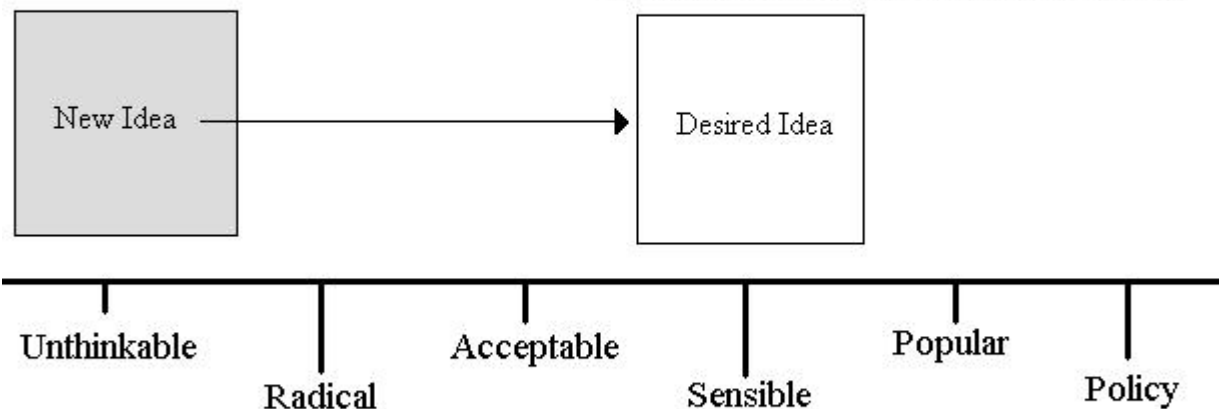
Kat Musker

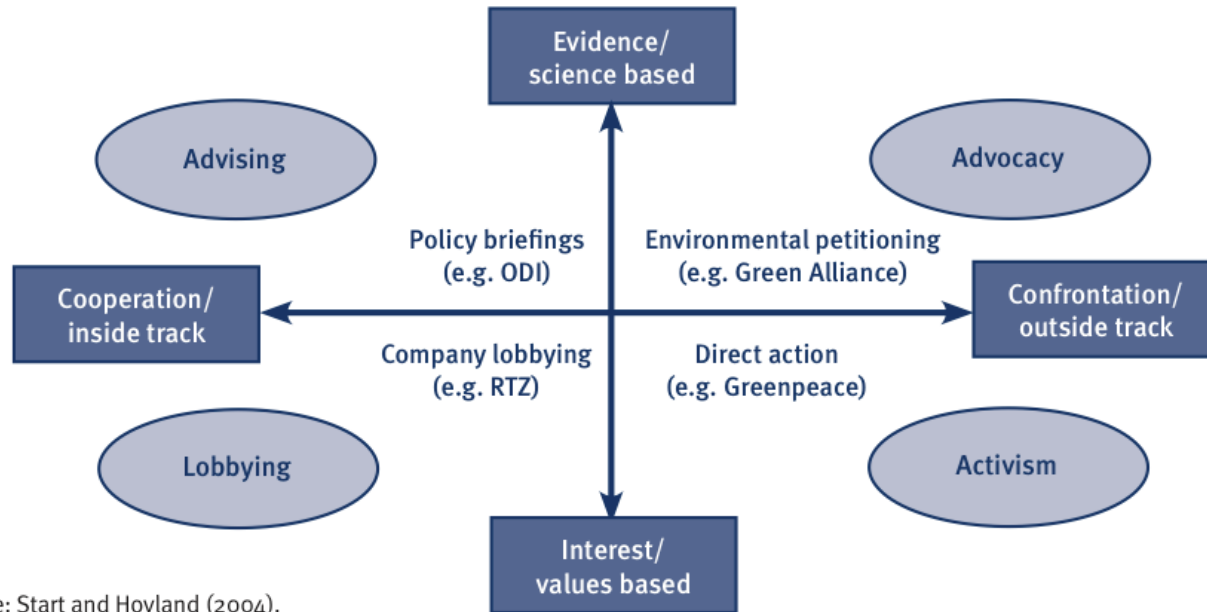


Overton Window

A new idea fills the window of what the public views as unthinkable ...

... causing the desired idea to shift into the window of what the public views as sensible without explaining any benefit of the desired idea.





Source: Start and Hovland (2004).

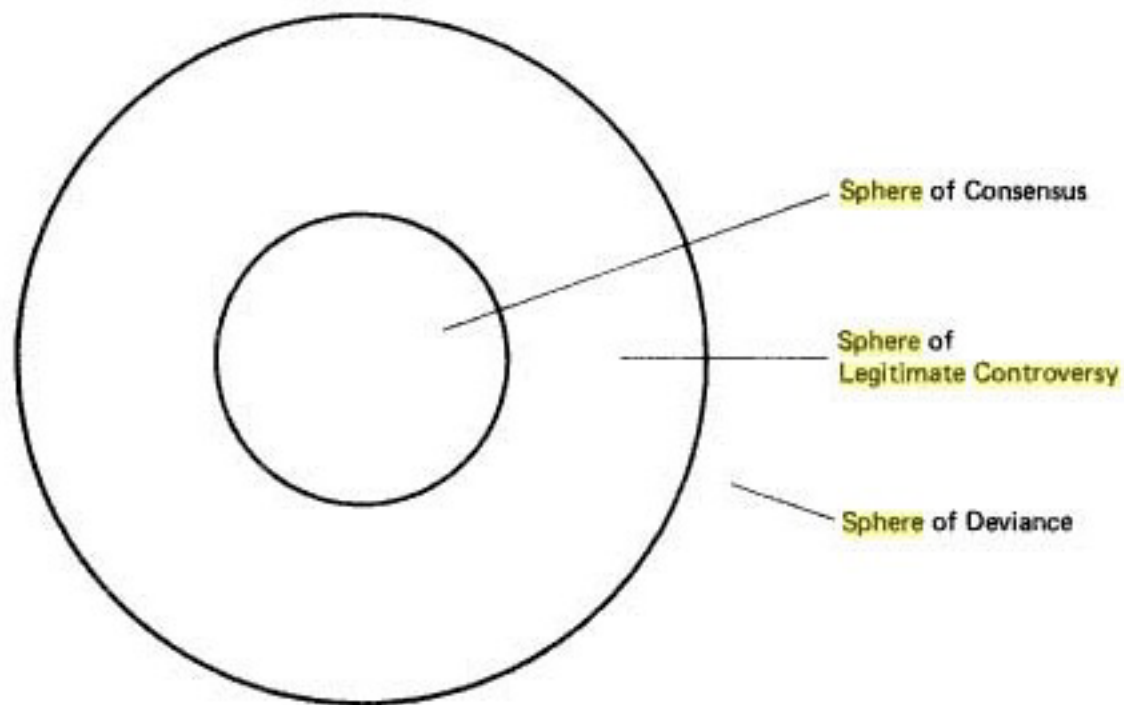


Figure 1 Spheres of consensus, controversy, and deviance.

Why should we care?

“The mining industry spent \$20 million campaigning against a resources tax and changed the country...The Your Rights at Work campaign against John Howard’s Work Choices was a \$20 to 30 million campaign. The environment movement could be running something bigger than that every year.”

Richard Denniss,
Executive Director, The Australia Institute



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Thanks!

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