

Mobilising Silent Majorities – The Climate Majority Project 2026

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The *Mobilising Silent Majorities March* Report unpacks the complexities of inaction and division amongst the general public towards climate change. It challenges the central idea that individuals must be continuously confronted with the severity and consequences of climate change and, instead, argues that the public needs to be mobilised and united to feel useful in the face of climate change. Indeed, the report recognises division among individuals as the primary barrier to effectively mobilising for positive action regarding climate change. These “silent majorities” are divided into six key groups: those concerned about climate change; business leaders; scientists; those who believe civilisations may be heading towards collapse; those exhausted by polarisation; and those who feel their values are not reflected in a consumerist society. The report comprehensively explores the values of each group, providing insight into the significance and potential impacts each group may provide given the opportunity to do so.



Figure 1. Students participate in a climate change demonstration in Dresden, Germany. “Germany’s Students Are Taking to the Streets to Demand Action on Climate Change,” by Los Angeles Times, 2019.

<https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-germany-worldwide-climate-change-20190328-story.html>

The Silent Majorities

The Climate-Concerned Majority

Likely the most relevant group unpacked in the report is the climate-concerned majority. This group agrees that climate change poses a serious threat but ultimately lacks coherence and unity to mobilise effective action. In most countries, climate concern stabilises around 70%, except in highly polarised societies where climate concern is often associated with extreme ideology. Overall, approximately 89% of the world believe their country is obligated to take climate change seriously. Despite this large number, tangible climate action is minimal. Research has identified that climate concern registers the highest among youth. This is not a surprising observation; young people are due to inherit the world at a more degraded state compared to previous generations, and ultimately feel increasingly betrayed by their government’s inaction. The inability to effectively coordinate action between those concerned about climate change serves as a major barrier against climate action. The report argues that mobilising this group to be seen and heard requires making climate concern visible and legitimate.

The Climate-Concerned Business Majority

The climate-concerned business majority recognises climate chaos as a deep economic concern due to expected economic losses. It is undeniable that climate change has significant economic implications for the global economy, making it a legitimate and prevalent concern to individuals' economic interests. Indeed, estimates of economic damages associated with exacerbating climate change risks are evolving. It is evident that climate chaos will slow the rate of productivity, whilst the crossing of major tipping points will further contribute to a breakdown in the economic system. Despite these insights, few business people have publicly expressed concerns and facilitated regulations in the economic system to accommodate for the future impacts of climate change. Furthermore, acknowledgement of this concern is undermined by business individuals who maintain traditional ideological values opposed to government intervention in the market. It is arguable that the business majority is perhaps the least vocal in proportion to its importance, which is the result of a lack of coordination, profit incentives, ideology taboos, and alienation of potential customers.

The Reticent Science Majority

The true depth of scientists' concern towards climate change is under-emphasised. There exists a hesitation for scientists to fully express their concerns, which is the result of a combination of taboo narratives and professional expectations. An anonymous poll conducted in 2021 by the renowned *Nature* journal discovered that the vast majority of climate scientists are not confident that humanity will succeed in limiting its overheating to 1.5°C or even 2.5°C. Indeed, as of September 2026 the United Nations Environmental Program has announced that global warming is set to cross 1.5°C, confirming this silent belief held by scientists. The incomplete transparency from scientists regarding their thoughts on the future of humanity is known as *scientific reticence*. Such a phenomenon hinders climate action, as any substantial change depends upon scientific consensus to justify certain actions. Scientists serve as a key group that, despite some cases, the public still confides their trust in the most. To overcome this reticence, we need to create the conditions that would enable the hard truth to come forward.

The Decline- and Collapse-Concerned Majority

The decline- and collapse-concerned majority recognise the catastrophic future imposed by inaction and polarisation against climate change. They are further concerned with the growing risk of collapse driven by ecological deterioration, social inequalities, conflict, and the rising dangers of technology. This majority knows that deep change is required; however, acknowledging the realities of the state of the climate crisis is an uncomfortable subject that is easier to quietly accept than publicly protest against. The report argues that instead of suppressing these beliefs and the collapse-related concern, we need to make honest space for it.

The Depolarising Majority

The depolarised majority are fatigued by the division amongst society and seek unity and a shared response towards common threats. However, this majority is largely under-represented in the public eye as the controversial, highly-divided conflicts between two central opposing ideologies tend to dominate conversation around climate change. In the face of disunity, a movement that calls for collective action and adopts a less polarising narrative has greater potential for effective change to take place.

The Majority With Other Priorities

The majority with other priorities believes that society ultimately fails to prioritise what they truly value. Across most countries, individuals collectively prioritise intrinsic values of family, friendship, and fulfillment over material values. It is arguable that societies' current priorities of economic development, status, and material items further contribute to the climate chaos. The economic pressures of our society ultimately prevent these intrinsic values from guiding the lives of individuals.

Mobilising the Silent Majorities

The Spirals of Silence

The spiral of silence refers to the process of how silent majorities are formed. When there are widely held public views that remain muted, a silent majority is established. This is driven by the phenomenon of *pluralistic ignorance*, whereby a majority of people hold a particular belief but are unaware that they constitute a majority group. Indeed, the six silent majorities unpacked in *Mobilising Silent Majorities* all share particular views, but are ultimately unrepresented, resulting in their silence. However, through the accumulation of individual speech, these spirals of silence can be broken. When one individual speaks up, others feel comfortable doing so as well, triggering a cascade of public speech. Traditionally, public expression of concern towards climate change is reaffirmed by a devoted small minority, yet those who may share these concerns often remain silent. Mobilising this silent majority to engage in action for climate change can ultimately shift this dynamic.



Figure 2. Illustration displaying the spiral of silence and its components. *Mobilising Silent Majorities*, 2026.

Breaking the Spirals of Silence

Breaking the spiral of silence tends to occur in the following steps. Firstly, there is a private shift in views or opinions that emerges before they are actually visible. Those who speak out first, described as “social survivors”, test the boundaries of society’s response to their speech. Those who privately have aligned views with the social survivors observe firsthand the result of their speech; either they are ignored, punished, quietly tolerated, or supported. This leads to crossover messaging, whereby if the speaker’s social survival persists, others are invited to come forward and echo their concerns. When public speech emerges from individuals, we least expected it from, a turning point has emerged. It is now evident that the opinions in question are not a minority, but rather, reflective of a larger majority. This leads to the stage of explicit organisation: groups of advocates become coordinated, self-aware, and communicative. Finally, a newfound facility for speech allows groups to find their voices, and a majority comes together.

What’s Stopping Us From Achieving This Change?

Ultimately, it is the structural barriers in place that prevent the majority opinion from being expressed through collective action. Without united action, individual contributions that emerge fail to achieve tangible action on a broader scheme, and upon surveying the state of climate action, it is easy to draw the false conclusion that nobody cares. In polarised countries, silence towards activist groups and those who loudly and consistently speak out is

exacerbated. This is because many want to avoid the tension associated with left-wing ideology. Moreover, media coverage tends to reinforce the ideologies of extremely polarised groups, highlighting social tension and further alienating the silent majorities. The radical and disruptive action that makes good clickbait media ultimately associates any form of climate concern with progressive or, in some cases, extreme political identity. Media sources that are hostile to climate action seek to discredit it by maintaining such imagery. Thus, we arrive in a spiral of silence; we need global coordination to achieve tangible results, but when we are silent, we fail to coordinate. The world remains silent and uncoordinated, failing to act.

Mobilisation Is Our Solution

The solution to giving voice to silent majorities is their effective mobilisation. This is achievable through the four key dimensions of mobilisation:

- Truth/knowledge
- Action
- Collective efficacy
- Emotional stability

Accordingly, the product of these four dimensions is total motivation and social mobilisation. The first dimension, truth/knowledge, highlights the need for action to be clearly defined and understood. The action dimension then asserts that we have a clear and tangible way of enacting a role or contributing to part of the response. Collective efficacy outlines that one's individual actions feel part of something meaningful and productive. Lastly, emotional stability outlines the emotional support that is required to hold the awareness of the difficult challenge at play and take appropriate action. Of these dimensions, collective efficacy is often lacking the most, as society tends to have little belief in the achievability and power of our collective response against climate change. It is easier to avoid actively thinking and addressing the reality, as this can be emotionally overwhelming.

Conclusion

Trends ultimately suggest that climate chaos and worsening weather conditions will be the climate movement's most successful recruiter. Indeed, the palpable chaos and tangible effects of climate change on society and the economic system will more directly influence climate action. Achieving tangible results for positive adaptations against climate change thus requires climate action led by the silent majority. Ultimately, breaking the silence of a majority requires creating safe spaces of solidarity where individuals can develop a united approach that is powerful enough to overcome taboos.

References List

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