

Viewpoint: ‘An environmental activist-driven narrative spun by a small population of privileged zealots is presently shaping global climate and agricultural policy’



s the COP26 winds down and the world leaders, delegates and activists all head home, it is time for the rest of us to return to reality. And that reality is getting harsher.

We are in an environmental-activist driven narrative with a small population of privileged zealots presently shaping the global policy and media landscape. The NGOs and Green Parties (now fully and unashamedly deploying children in their lobbying) have done an excellent job shifting the mindset of our elected leaders. But have these leaders successfully shifted the mindset of their electorate? And if (apparently) not, what will be the consequences to COP26, the environment and their political futures.

During the Conference, the Risk-Monger received his annual home energy bill readjustment and he was not amused. He ends with some advice on how to manage the energy transition.

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Who was calling the shots in Glasgow?

We heard a lot of stories in those two weeks in Glasgow. Emotional stories about floods and droughts, storms and fires. These things are always terrible and the UN has a large stable of victims they can regularly call on for these media events. But there is another reality people face daily that these great and the good don’t see. The children who spoke so eloquently on the UN stage have never had to pay an electricity bill or face hard food choices. The environmental activists and leaders making speeches live in houses with nice gardens. Most of them did not fly to Glasgow out of their own pocket and few flew coach. For them the choices are simple and the need to act urgent because they have never had to make hard decisions. Are these the people who should be setting the agenda for those suffering the harsh consequences?

For in this show of benevolence and political good will, who was calling the shots in Glasgow? Why was the focus on banning coal energy and not on promoting new technologies? While the environmental NGOs complained they were being excluded, their voices were loudly heard in the agenda and the media. They prerecorded their rants claiming the entire process was “blah, blah, blah” and a fiasco before it had even begun. And even though they accused lobbyists of trying to hijack the COP26, the largest industry lobby group in Brussels, the wind energy lobby (see, for example, just their Brussels-based trade associations [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), had been busily working the halls to ensure increased subsidies, exclusion of competing energy sources and regulatory favour. The COP26 outcome has proven to be money well spent.

But despite their slick PR campaigns, wind energy cannot keep the lights on. As the energy mix in most countries is being radically disrupted by decisions imposed in Glasgow, there will be shortages, increased

prices and suffering. This is already becoming the case as countries [irresponsibly cut out](#) natural gas infrastructure to comply with previous COP commitments. The electric car lobby was also influencing our leaders, but how will we recharge our EVs on a grid that is unstable or out? Activists are already touting how we can power our home via our electric car batteries when the lights go out. Sweet ... for those who could afford an electric car. The COP26 was an event led by the affluent who sought to impose their privileged ideals on those unable and unwilling to afford the consequences of such benevolence.

When the COP26 gavel came down to close the conference, most Europeans were watching World Cup football qualifying matches (and for the record, Belgium qualified). Little did they know how much the decisions made in Glasgow would impact their lives and hope for prosperity.

The Green-Monger

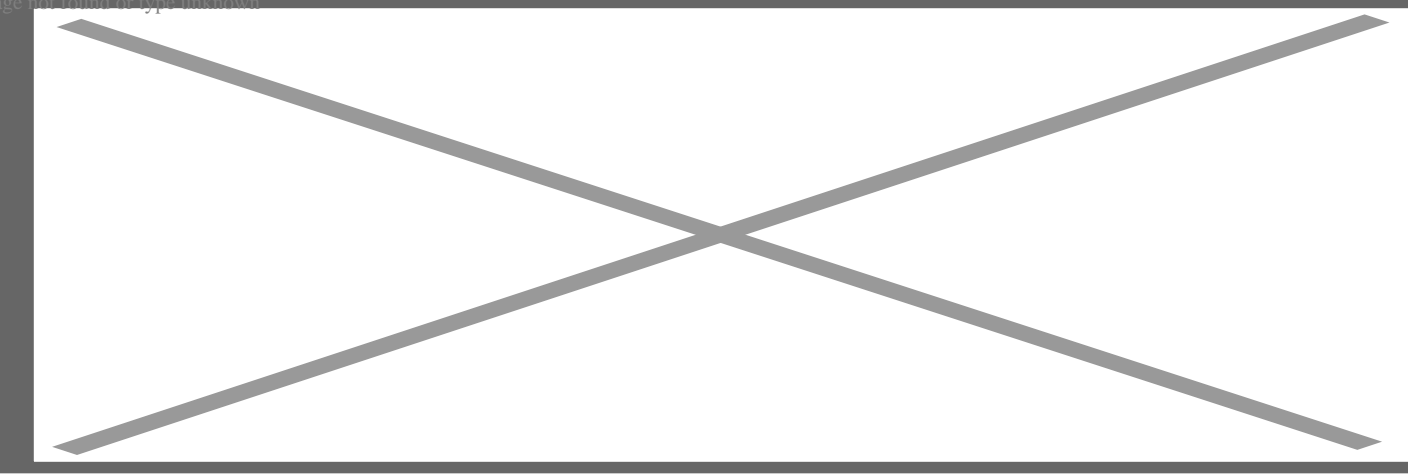
During COP26, I got my annual gas and electricity readjustment bill and it raised more than a few eyebrows.

Make no mistake. I am one of the lucky ones with a nice garden. Five years ago, I saw energy prices increasing and decided to install solar panels on my roof. I owned my property and could afford them (a privilege most people don't have) and the financial savings have been enormous. I also added an extra layer of insulation on my roof to make life more comfortable in both the summer and winter. As natural gas was more efficient for hot water and heating, I installed the latest gas furnace technology. So my only energy cost now is for natural gas.

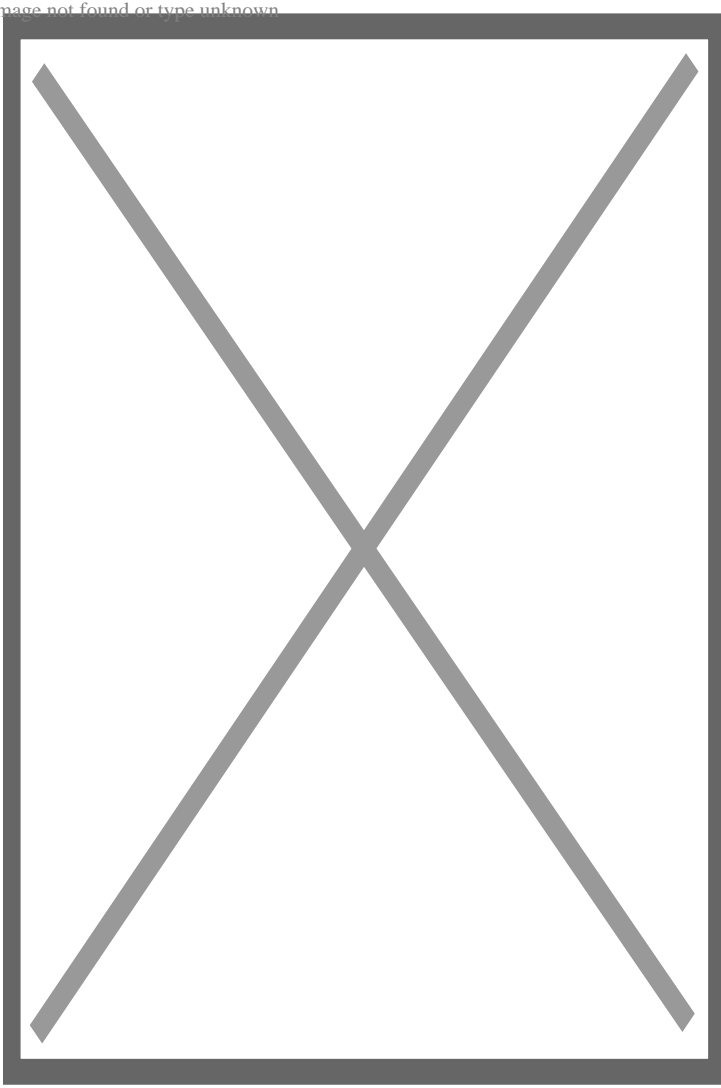
I am no green hero though as I am [fully aware](#) that my solar panels are probably the worst thing I could have done for the environment. No one seems to be factoring in the environmental costs to produce these ecological 'roof-pigs', from the mineral extraction, processing, electronics, silicone purification, glass manufacturing, aluminium and copper use ... (and oh, how are we going to recycle them?). These CO2 emissions are cumulative in the atmosphere while their solar energy yield declines each year (in sunny Belgium!). But I called it right and saved a lot of money as energy prices continued to go up in a European economy that claimed zero inflation and froze wages. I am not paying for my electricity use (some with older solar panel technologies are even getting money back from their power companies) – those earning less income are the ones forced to pay (and they are the ones who will be left in the dark and the cold).

Given further economisations, I was producing much more energy than I needed so I bought less-efficient electric heaters for each room and turned my gas furnace off for most of the year. Last year I reduced my natural gas consumption by almost a third (cut in half compared to three years earlier).

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Casa Monger reduced energy consumption by a third over the last year, by over a half for the last four years.



So imagine my surprise when I saw my recent utility

bill readjustment from my Belgian provider. With only a fixed network tax for electricity (actually negative consumption on the meter) and a sharp reduction in my gas use, I am still expected to pay 235% more. Now I can afford it and given my low levels of consumption, I know I am one of the fortunate ones. But what about those struggling with full utility costs and other bills to pay? I can wear an extra sweater but what if I had a baby in the house?

Add to the misery other climate-based inflation ('climation'?) costs like food and transport and this situation will soon spire out of control. As agroecology and organic food industry lobbyists put pressure on governments and retailers claiming (falsely) that they are the climate-wise solution, food is starting to get much more expensive and farmers are struggling with increased costs like fertiliser (which the European Commission, under Farm2Fork, wants to make harder to use). This is utter madness. I cannot even begin to imagine what these zealots are going to do to global food security in developing countries.

Where is the pain threshold for most working families?

Tax the poor!

Will the public accept these sudden price increases? Can Western governments afford to subsidise the results of their mismanagement? What will happen when more people get fed up and don yellow vests? What will happen when the lights start going out? (Not for me though ... like many of the privileged, I am already looking at buying a Tesla Powerwall battery – starting from €10,000 with installation – despite the pure ecological stupidity of such a purchase).

The people facing this dismal reality today did not go to Glasgow to talk about tomorrow. They have not been sold on the necessity of being instantly impoverished because little Greta publicly insulted and humiliated their elected officials. Their hopes for a better future did not include candles, hard food choices and going into debt to have basic necessities. The people who went to COP26, the activists, the media, the renewable energy lobbyists ... represent only a small fraction of the population. They will benefit from the COP decisions.

What will happen when the Western working and middle classes start to fight against the significant quality of life reductions that are being imposed on them? What about when European infrastructure and value chains fail to keep up with energy and financial disruptions? How will the media play the narrative when the West self-impoverishes? The unelected European Commission officials will continue to push their Green Deal so they can claim a moral high ground in their legacy-building. Any elected leader with an ounce of political instinct, though, will know enough to try to ease the public pain and suffering. But is there any money left in the kitty to once again “mollify the sheep”? In typical European fashion, they will move the goalposts and most likely cut back on their COP26 commitments (temporarily of course). In other words, the entire COP process will have, once again, been a failure. We can expect a rise of radical (extremist) parties gaining popularity capitalising on the public hardship and feeling of abandonment – and those in Glasgow will express their outrage at the “climate deniers” that their harsh transition strategy had created.

Political leaders in Weimar had also made promises without consultation that they couldn't keep.

Manage the transition

The leaders have not done a good job selling the consequences to their populations – the voters who have been (literally) left in the dark. If you strangle energy supplies, increase food and shelter costs, disrupt transportation networks and bankrupt the economy, do you seriously think the 95% of the population not represented in Glasgow are going to be so understanding?

Pushing the transition too fast and too hard will simply mean pushing themselves off of a cliff. Western leaders in Glasgow let themselves be lobbied too strongly by an emboldened coalition of activists (using children), renewable industry lobbyists, angry scientists and sensationalist media. Add PR opportunists from certain alternative-based industries and a few self-important dinosaurs from the WEF or ESG-driven

asset managers and the COP26 bubble could proceed well-insulated from reality. But reality always bites back and those who forget their key obligations to their constituencies won't be around for much longer.

What then should our leaders in Glasgow have done?

- First, put some distance between yourselves and the climate death cults, lobbyists from the renewables industries, idealists and storytellers. Sometimes it is not the loudest voices in the room you should be aligning yourself with.
- Secondly, set a reasonable energy transition timeline with benchmarks to assure the population that they will not have to sacrifice their standards of living. People are facing pain today from commitments that could have been made over several years. Spread the pain slowly.
- Thirdly, fight for the innovation narrative (COP26 showed those pouring cold water on technological solutions – the *precautionistas* – have won this debate). Next generation nuclear, CCS, hydrogen ... the solutions should be forward looking. Innovative solutions can address climate change while adding value to lives and economies. The precautionary – ban XYZ – approach will only produce pain and suffering.
- Fourthly, look up from your navels. Not every tweet, TV report or public protest needs to throw you off of your political convictions or demands a response. Don't let the tribal interest group noise separate you from your obligations.
- Finally, show some courage. Just because some teenagers reading from a script growl that they have lost trust in you, this does not mean you have to cave in to their simplistic solutions. In other words: Grow a pair!

So COP26 is done. Tomorrow most people will try to get to work, pay their bills and put food on the table. Glasgow will mean nothing to them. But if it means they cannot survive comfortably, if it means they are sitting in the cold and the dark, then the result of this entire exercise will have been an utter failure. That will rest not on the media, teenage activists or wind industry lobbyists, but on the leaders who must be accountable.

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