

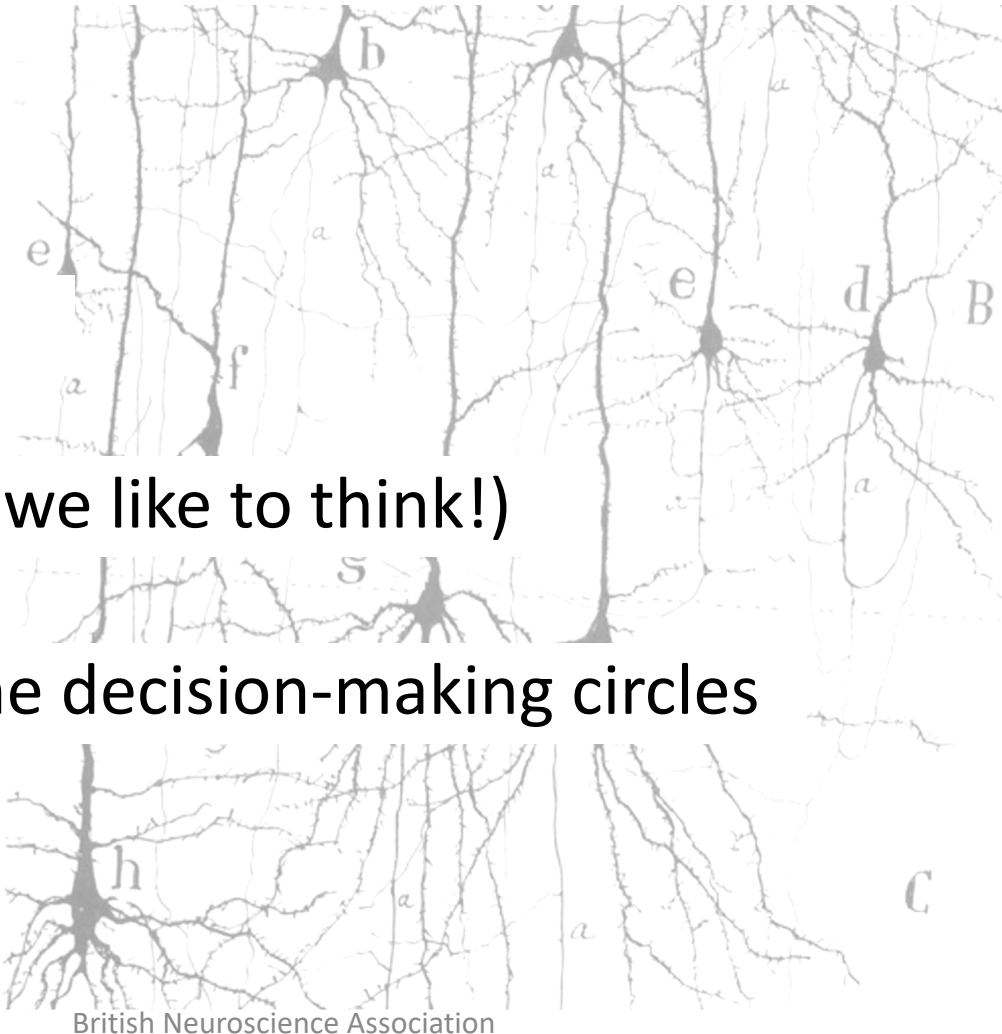
Changing minds: how neuroscientists can influence public and political action on the climate crisis

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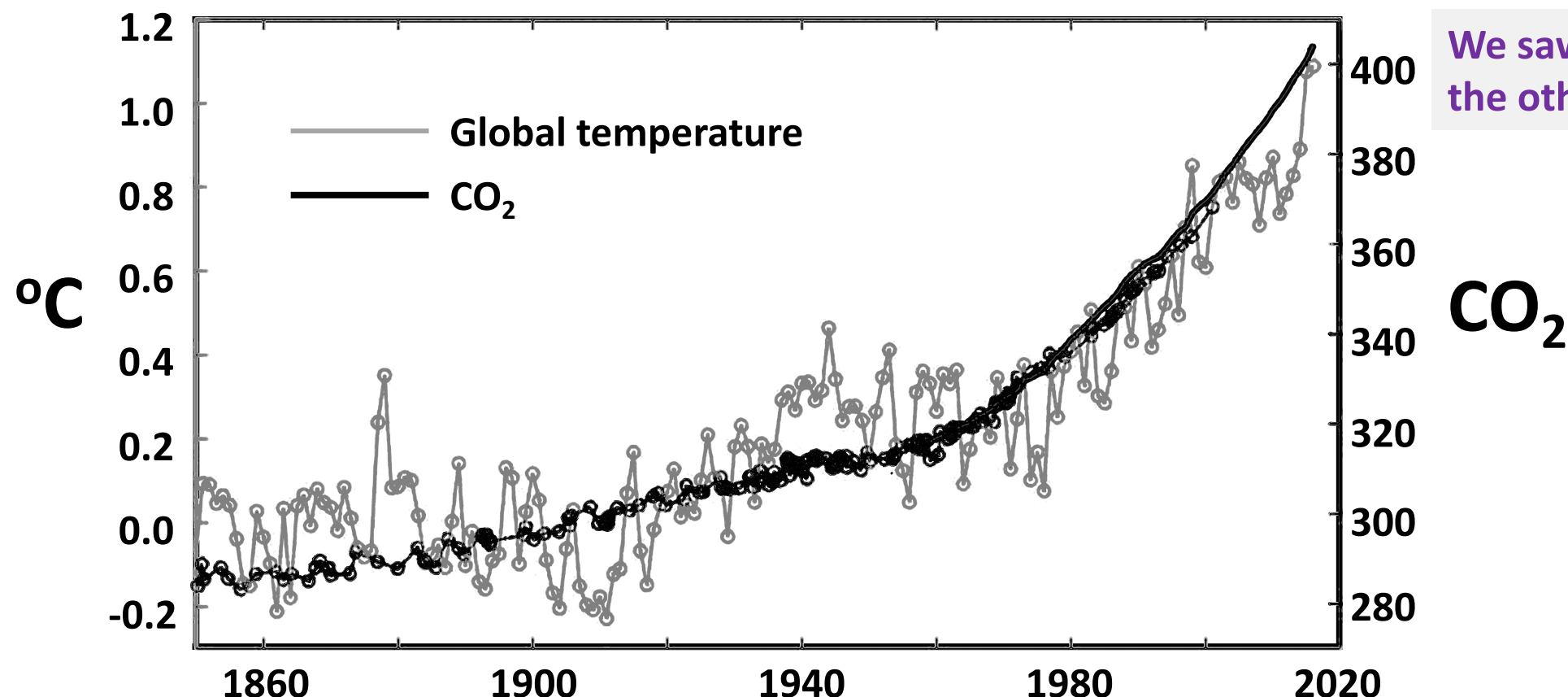
What can we as neuroscientists do?

Neuroscientists are:

- Data literate
- Respected (or so we like to think!)
- Influential in some decision-making circles



Data literacy means we understand exponentials

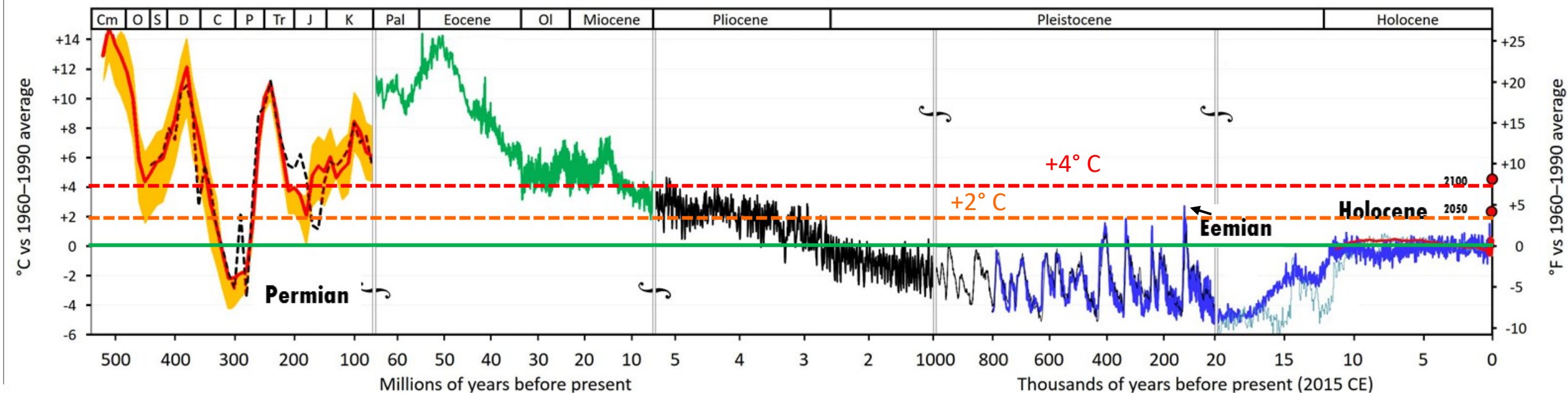


Adapted from Henley and Abram, <http://tiny.cc/tdqeez>

British Neuroscience Association

We understand oscillatory dynamics

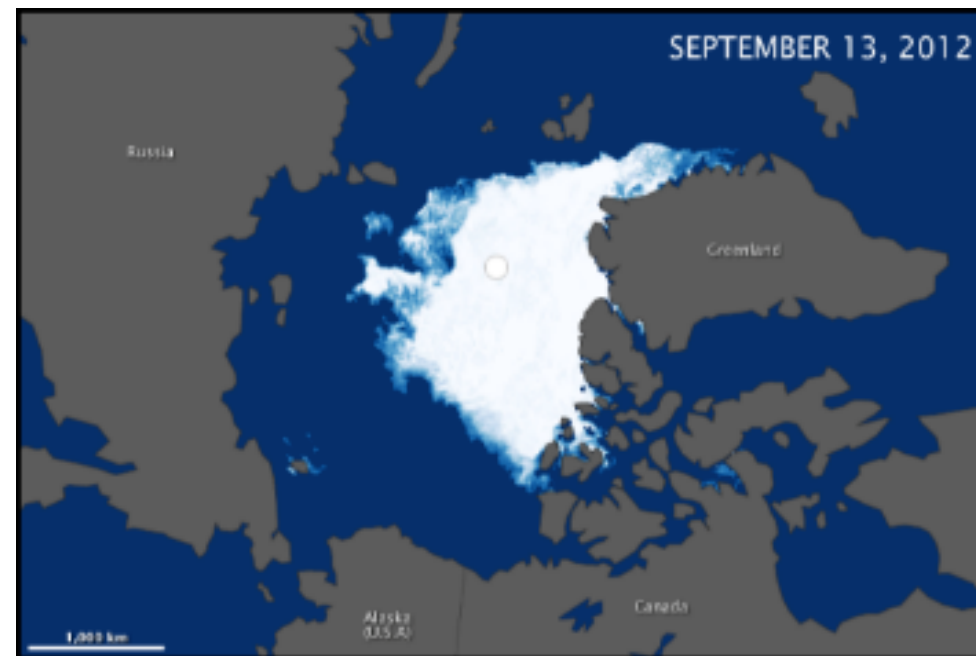
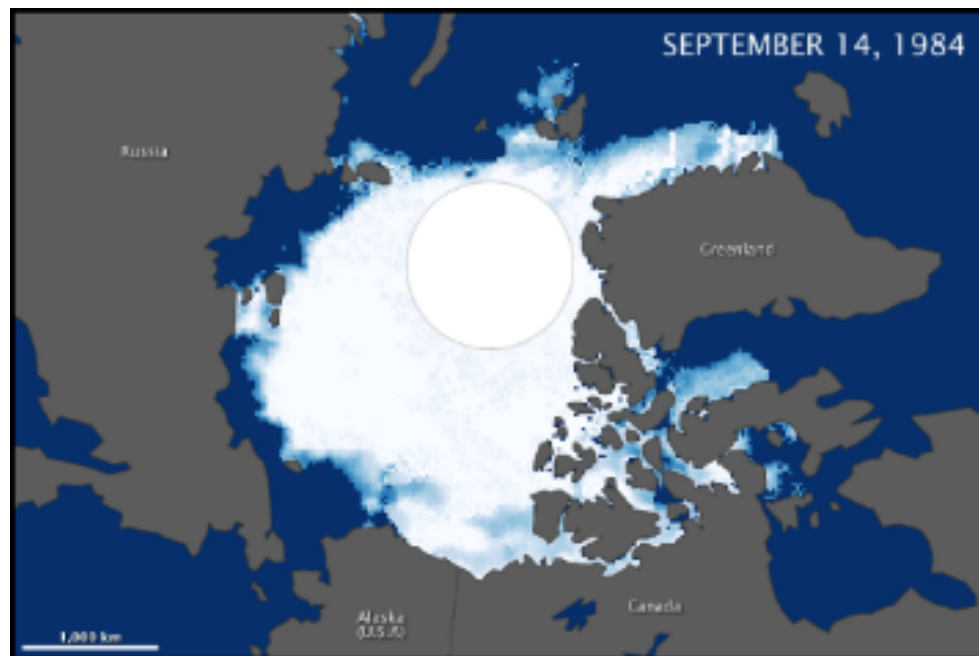
Temperature of Planet Earth



We haven't seen +2°C for 130000 years...

...and +4°C for several million years

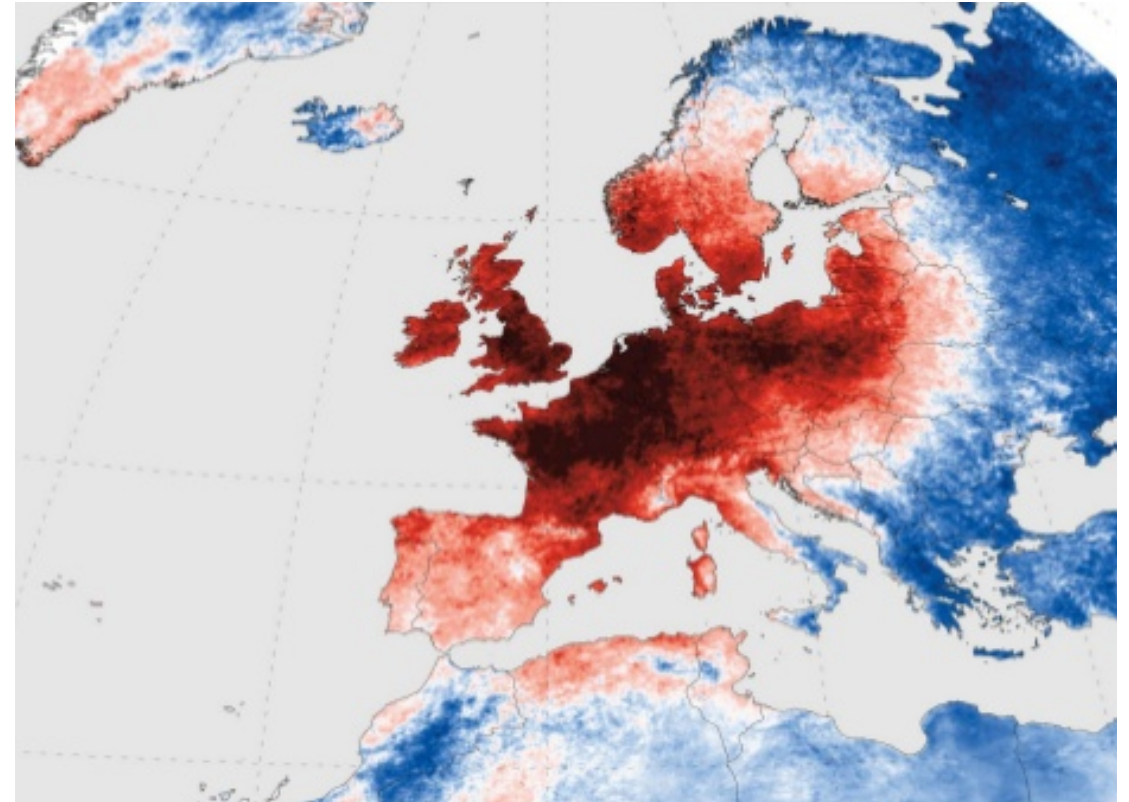
And we understand positive feedback loops



Some of us study human psychology



2001 ~3000 dead



2003 ~30,000 dead

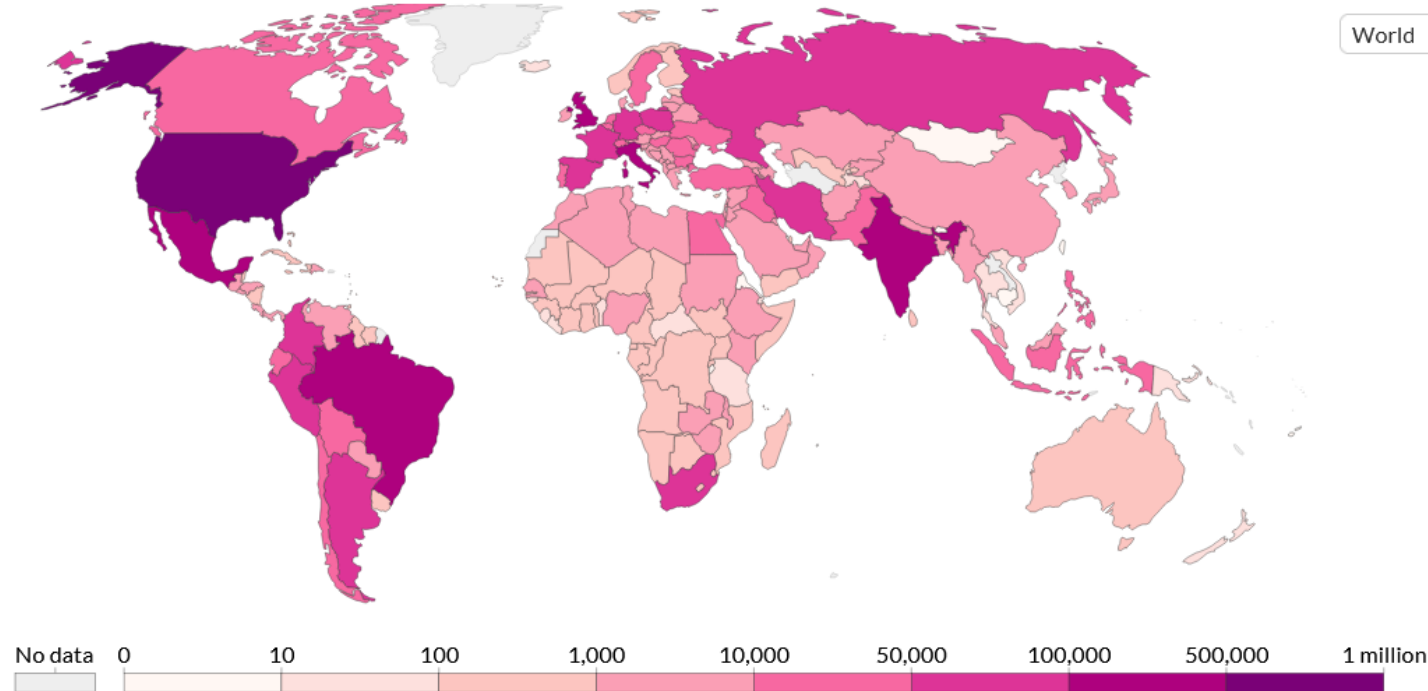
The 2021 version of that

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 deaths, Mar 28, 2021

Limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death means that the number of confirmed deaths may not be an accurate count of the true number of deaths from COVID-19.

Our World
in Data

World



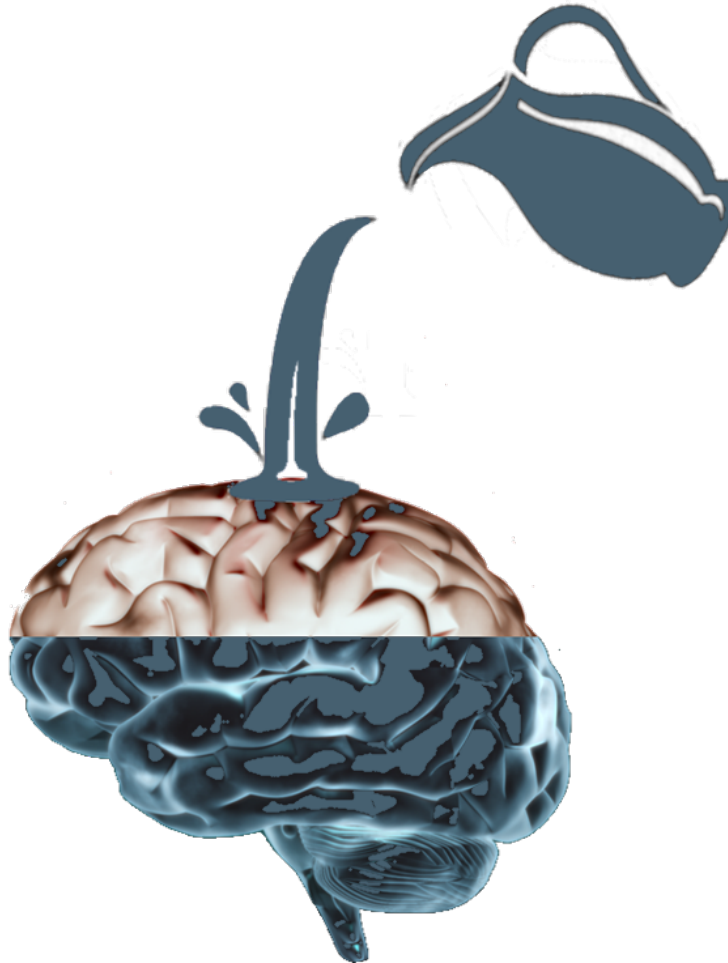
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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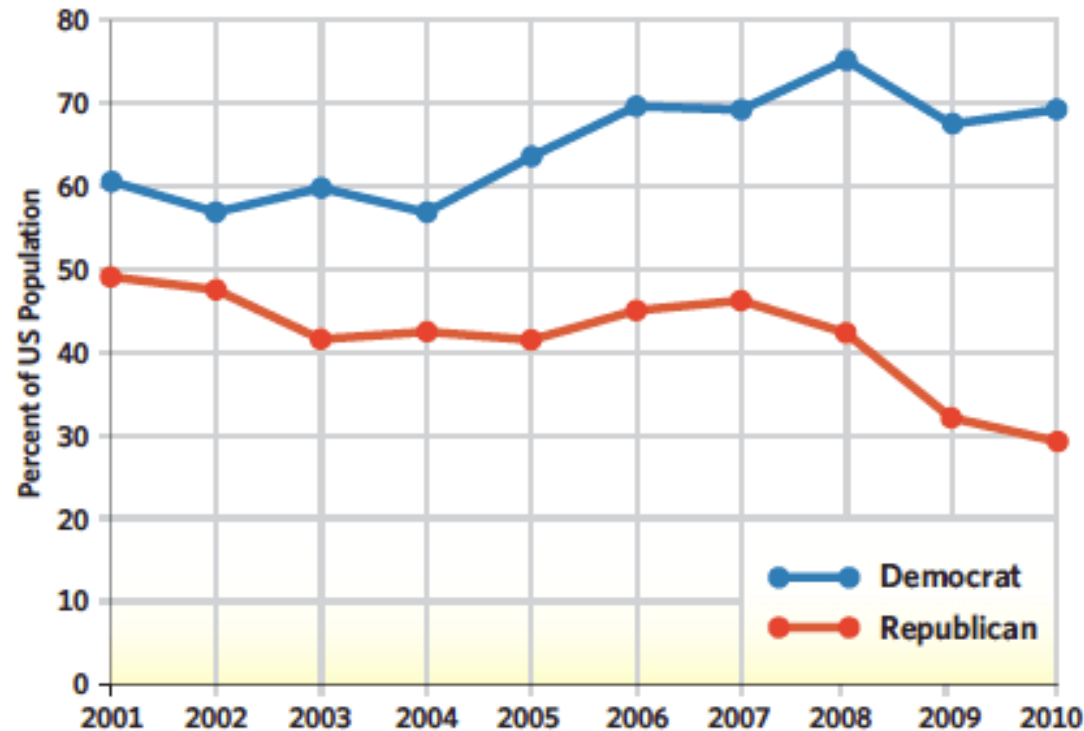
▶ Jan 22, 2020 Mar 28, 2021

We also know that the “deficit model” does not explain people’s beliefs

Pouring facts into a person
likely won’t change their
beliefs



And we have learned that beliefs about climate change are partly/mainly socially constructed



Source: Aaron McCright and Riley Dunlap, "The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public's Views of Global Warming, 2001-2010," *The Sociological Quarterly* 52, 2011.

Being respected means that people listen when we speak out

Scientists and doctors are the most respected professions worldwide

Outside of the coronavirus pandemic, generally speaking would you be happy or unhappy if one of your children held this kind of job? If you don't have children imagine that you did. Figures shown are NET scores

	Australia	Germany	UK	Sweden	US	Denmark	UAE	India (urban)	Italy	Indonesia	France	Singapore	China	Poland	Spain	Mexico	AVG
Scientist	+77	+78	+81	+72	+68	+69	+73	+68	+81	+75	+68	+66	+75	+64	+68	+66	+72
Medical Doctor	+77	+81	+78	+75	+70	+71	+75	+60	+74	+68	+67	+63	+59	+65	+64	+63	+69
Architect	+75	+78	+77	+70	+66	+66	+68	+54	+68	+73	+68	+61	+55	+71	+61	+56	+67
Senior manager in a large company	+69	+72	+68	+64	+56	+57	+70	+62	+71	+74	+63	+61	+69	+56	+50	+69	+64
Lawyer	+66	+74	+72	+66	+54	+65	+52	+40	+57	+39	+61	+58	+66	+65	+43	+36	+57
Graphic designer	+68	+68	+68	+56	+60	+56	+56	+57	+57	+66	+47	+44	+57	+61	+51	+35	+57
School teacher	+65	+60	+63	+53	+51	+45	+51	+51	+58	+54	+46	+55	+63	+15	+47	+17	+50
Athlete	+52	+46	+54	+46	+40	+47	+57	+45	+53	+46	+39	+26	+27	+34	+28	+41	+43
Musician	+50	+43	+56	+41	+45	+41	+25	+53	+52	+38	+42	+32	+43	+29	+37	+29	+41
Nurse	+66	+53	+67	+59	+63	+55	+44	+25	+41	+37	+46	+36	+10	+4	+34	+14	+41
Artist	+47	+35	+51	+33	+47	+40	+39	+53	+47	+43	+34	+26	+51	+30	+26	+24	+39
Firefighter	+53	+57	+50	+54	+45	+41	+31	+21	+34	+18	+45	+17	+10	+24	+18	-26	+31
Social media manager	+33	+32	+24	+32	+21	+34	+39	+50	+37	+48	-7	+37	+48	+30	+13	+14	+30
Police officer	+42	+45	+38	+43	+14	+40	+49	+39	+18	+19	+5	+32	+42	-3	+1	-56	+23
Farmer	+46	+43	+47	+46	+41	+30	+31	+33	+29	+23	+16	+13	-23	-4	-6	-0	+23
Elderly care worker	+42	+47	+38	+35	+40	+31	+33	+27	+33	+11	+18	+27	-15	+2	-5	-19	+21
Receptionist	+39	+42	+32	+33	+29	+32	+2	-2	+15	+3	+8	-2	-19	+7	-2	-36	+11
Retail shop worker	+32	+46	+21	+29	+20	+22	-2	+6	+6	+1	+2	-3	-15	-4	-16	-30	+7
Builder	+52	+42	+41	+41	+44	+50	-8	+2	-2	-24	-3	-20	-26	-1	-34	-50	+6
Social media influencer (e.g. Instagram star)	-4	-15	-20	-12	-7	-20	+30	+44	-21	+32	-24	+9	+25	-18	-34	-11	-3
Factory worker	+18	+24	+9	+25	+15	+9	-9	-16	+5	-12	-13	-21	-27	-4	-40	-55	-6
Truck driver	+17	+14	+19	+28	+21	+3	-21	-31	-20	-38	-5	-20	-28	-8	-45	-59	-11

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We often have influence in high-level decision-making



So what should we do?

We need to understand that individuals and nations incline to act in their own immediate best interests



“The tragedy of the commons” Hardin, *Science*, 1968

But they will make sacrifices for the common good
if there's reciprocity



We need both a bottom-up and top-down approach





- Write to your MP
- Talk to politicians
- Lobby parliament
- If you have to – protest



- Talk to friends and colleagues
- Help to change academia's way of working
- Talk to public and schools
- Fight for the future of humanity!

Because that's really what's at stake here



Thank you