

## **Hackgate – the perfect values storm?**

An alliance of Settler morality and Pioneer ethics around the phone hacking scandal may represent a ‘tipping point’ for a new dominant narrative in public life.

In 2005 CDSM measured a retrenchment in Prospector territory for the first time since 1973 – significantly, a return by a significant number of Prospectors to Settler ‘safety’: and this *before* the banking crisis. This retrenchment was reinforced in the 2008 British Values Survey (BVS) and has continued in research in 2011.

Percentages now stand at Pioneer 41%, Settler 31% and Prospector 28%. Prospectors are the smallest group – but because Pioneers and Settlers rarely make common cause, the public discourse, where it exists, has felt confused, while public life has continued to be run by Prospector ‘rules’ as it has been since the 80s. The result of the General Election reflected this confusion.

The Murdoch media empire personifies the Prospector idea of success – to the winners go power, wealth, celebrity. But it has catastrophically offended both Settlers and Pioneers – Settlers because it has broken the rules of “proper conduct” and Pioneers because it has behaved unethically. These two groups, at 72% of the population, are now setting the tone for the coming discourse about the future of society.

But it goes deeper. The revelation of the hacking of Milly Dowler’s phone is the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back” for all Maslow groups. One of the most significant questions asked by the BVS is around self-definition. Asked to make a choice from a list of 30 options about how we self-define – by race, skin colour, class and so forth – the single largest factor chosen was ‘being a parent’. Every parent’s most atavistic fear is losing a child. To lose a child through kidnap, sexual abuse and murder is the stuff of our worst nightmares. By hacking Milly Dowler’s phone to sell newspapers – by exercising power without morality or ethics in order to make money - News International has crossed a line from which it can never retreat. That one action makes its behaviour unforgiveable to the majority of the British population.

Ed Miliband is almost certainly a Pioneer. The reason he is looking increasingly comfortable in this new public landscape is because he is articulating his personal values and, for the first time in a long

time, these values are displacing Prospector values as the dominant determinant of discourse in Parliament, and indeed in public life.

Cameron is holed below the waterline and looks increasingly isolated because he is almost certainly a Prospector, as are the people with whom he is surrounded; their policies reflect those values. They cannot credibly speak to this new discourse because they have built their authority on the basis of Prospector values.

Clegg's values are almost certainly Pioneer, but he is in a difficult position because he has been supporting a Prospector-dominated government.

Depending on how this plays out, this could be the end of both Cameron's and Clegg's political careers.

A public discourse no longer based on the Prospector agenda of 'winners and losers' but rather on the Settler morality of playing within the moral rules and the aligning of them with the Pioneer orientation to making ethical choices, of 'doing the right thing', is bad news for a government dominated by Prospector values.