TRANSITIONS IN PRACTICE
climate change and everyday life
Elizabeth Shove, ESRC climate change leadership fellowship
Beyond the ABC of sustainable behaviour
A is for Attitude

Individuals have attitudes.

Attitudes towards personal consumption, waste and responsibility need changing.

Attitudes are changed by persuasion and information.

Attitudes drive behaviour.
B is for Behaviour

Behaviour is what individuals do.
Behaviours need changing.
Behaviours are driven by attitudes and prices.
People choose how to behave.
C

is for Choice

Choices are made by individuals.

If individuals chose not to use so much energy, water and other natural resources we’d not be in the fix we are.

Policy makers need to encourage individuals to make different choices.

Change, consumption, convention
Representation of social change

Drivers include
- Attitudes
- Society
- Economics
- Other people
- Habit

Externalise pretty much anything, including own role
A FRAMEWORK FOR PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURS
Defra January 2008

This report sets out a framework for Defra’s work on pro-environmental behaviour. It pulls together evidence on public understanding, attitudes and behaviours; identifies behaviour goals; and draws conclusions on the potential for change across a range of behaviour groups.

The headline behaviour goals
- Install insulation
- Better energy management
- Install microgeneration
- Increase recycling
- Waste less (food)
- More responsible water usage
- Use more efficient vehicles
- Use car less for short trips
- Avoid unnecessary flights (short haul)
- Buy energy efficient products
- Eat more food that is locally in season
- Adopt lower impact diet
Where most effort is focused

Individual attitudes, behaviour, choice, price and persuasion

Where the real issues lie

Dynamic regimes of everyday life; changing definitions of normal practice generate changing patterns of demand for energy, water, and other resources.
Relevant resources in social theory

cconsumption, material culture, actor network theory, technology studies, cultural theory, theories of practice, histories of sociotechnical change, transitions, innovation studies....
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories of practice</th>
<th>Theories of behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared, social</td>
<td>Individual choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endogenous dynamics</td>
<td>External drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific cultural and material histories</td>
<td>Common base in belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive, generative</td>
<td>Causal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Daily showering
Changing integration of material infrastructures, procedure and image

Watering the garden
Resources-services; diversity

Freezing food
Multiple embedding

Being comfortable
Deliberate intervention to challenge 22 degrees C.
Explaining daily showering

bathing as a social activity

porous skin, fear of plague, need a week to recover.

controlled bathing as medicinal intervention

social status, thrill, mineral waters, hydro-therapy sleep, circulation.

sanitary science; cleanliness and godliness, civilisation, discipline, germ theory.

USA, 48 litres of water per capita per day for personal hygiene (91% showering)
UK, 27 litres of water pc pd for personal hygiene (36% showering) – freshness.
Contemporary images
Links between industry structure and innovation in practice

- Industry fittings e.g. bath, shower
- Media, friends, family
- Plumber, fitter
- End consumer
- Industry system e.g. designers/planners
- Regulation, existing infrastructure
1 productive
UK, 2006, hosepipe ban and garden life

2 playground

3 convenient

4 living room
## Contemporary diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation to garden life</th>
<th>Layout/material organisation</th>
<th>Social role &amp; organisation</th>
<th>Watering obligation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productive 1</td>
<td>Well established, with zones for plants, lawn, vegetables, etc.</td>
<td>Keen gardeners, hive of activity, hobbies, cultivation, etc.</td>
<td>Intensive watering, but expertise to rig up water butts, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground 2</td>
<td>Usually lawn for games</td>
<td>Given over to children for play, not a place to grow roses, etc.</td>
<td>Marginal, the grass is dead anyway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient 3</td>
<td>Simple layout, plants and hardy shrubs that fend for themselves</td>
<td>Garden used only occasionally, low maintenance, a burden</td>
<td>Minimal effort, hosepipe ban excuse not to bother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living room 4</td>
<td>Zones for eating; lighting, heating</td>
<td>Space for social interaction, sitting, dining</td>
<td>Sufficient to maintain the view</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Framing freezers

An established appliance: the ‘need’ is now for more freezers, larger freezers and more types of frozen space: we discover co-existing, sticky links between freezing, food and family

- Preservation and procurement
- Value for money
- Convenience and temporal coordination
- Self service
- Marginalisation and specialisation
- Frozen as last resort
How come 22 degrees C?

physical parameters and cultural concerns

sea breeze or mountain air

what climate to provide?
Defining comfort
Standardising comfort, sweat and smell: the clo and the olf

The standard amount of insulation required to keep a resting person warm in a windless room at 70 °F (21.1°C) is equal to one Clo.

Units were chosen so that 1 clo would be roughly the insulating value afforded by a man’s underwear and a lightweight suit, or “a heavy top coat alone.”

The Olf is a unit used to measure the scent emission of people and objects.

One olf is defined as the scent emission of an "average person", a sitting adult that takes an average of 0.7 baths per day and whose skin has a total area of 1.8 square metres; the scent emission of an object or person is measured by trained personnel comparing it to normed scents.

Standardising science also matters for ventilation rates and energy consumption.
The reproduction of comfort involves integrations of:

- Clothing
- Sweating
- Building fabric and technology
- Ideas about the human body
- Seasonality
- Regulation
- Scientific research
- Corporate interests

If a building is set, regularly at, say, 22 °C … [and] … If enough buildings are controlled at this temperature, it becomes a norm for that society at that period of its history, and anything different is regarded as ‘uncomfortable’ (Humphreys 1995: 10)
Changing ideas and conventions of comfort: space, body, building?

6 to 30 degrees C; 20 to 28 degrees C; 22 degrees C.
New commercial opportunities
green consumption

Where most effort has focused

Individual belief, attitude, behaviour, information, economics, persuasion, labelling, reflexive decision-making about resources

Where the real challenges lie

ordinary consumption

Convention, routine, dynamics of practice, sociotechnical structuring of options - services not resources; systems of practice injunctions not choices

Where most effort has focused
Requires an extended vocabulary

- duck
- ink
- postman
- rabbit
- spoon
- table
D is for dynamics and demand

Demand is an outcome of practice. Practices are dynamic, changing all the time, emergent, systemic.
is for infrastructure and institution

Practices are embedded in, and are reproductive of material and cultural infrastructures and institutions.

Though often invisible in policy debate, these are key sites of order and transformation.
is for practice

Practices exist beyond specific performances;

they consist of interconnected sets of norms, conventions, understandings, embodied know-how, states of emotion, arrays of material things;

they are made and transformed in and through moments of performance – doing, washing, eating, travelling, etc.
is for routine and regime

Most environmentally significant consumption is routine, inconspicuous and habitual, e.g. washing, eating, travelling, etc.

Routines change, but not through price and persuasion.

For regimes of practice, see systems
is for systems and services

Practices intersect to form bundles, complexes and regimes. These have different systemic qualities.

Services like comfort, cleanliness and convenience are relevant units of demand (not resources as such).
is for transitions, tipping points and transformations

Practices and systems of practice are not stable.

Transition and transformation is normal.

For policy, the challenge is to understand transitions in practice.