‘Methods and Models’

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Let’s Play Policy!

I show you a model, you answer these three questions:

• How would you intervene?
• How would you measure the success of the intervention?
• What assumptions about actors and action are implicit in the model?
Economic Theory

• Economic Theory the starting point for understanding behaviour,

• In traditional (neo-classical) economics, individuals as utility maximisers (a working assumption), Rational Choice Theory as the default model of human behaviour

• Rational Choice Theory depends on three elements:
  - cost-benefit calculation...
  - within a fixed budget ...
  - and ability to anticipate outcomes

• For these conditions to hold true, perfect information required, and the ability to process it perfectly

• More recently, economists note the limits to human decision making – eg. ‘bounded rationality’ – and behavioural economics is born
A linear [deficit] model of pro-environmental behaviour (Kolmuss & Agyeman 2002)

- Environmental knowledge
- Environmental attitude
- Pro-environmental behaviour
Social-Psychological Models

• Social-psychological models the standard for behaviour change

• Models are “…concepts that will help people use their heads”
  (Triandis 1977)

• From Expectancy Value Theory (based in attitudes), becoming increasingly Adjusted (EV models), ie. less deliberative

• Factors inc.
  - Values, beliefs, attitudes
  - Norms
  - Agency
  - Habit
  - Affect
Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (1986)

- Beliefs about outcomes
- Evaluation of outcomes
- Beliefs about what others think
- Subjective norm
- Perceived Behavioural Control
- Attitude towards the behaviour
- Relative importance of attitude and norm
- Intention
- Behaviour
Triandis’ Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (1977)

- Beliefs about outcomes
- Evaluation of outcomes
- Norms
- Roles
- Self-concept
- Emotions

- Attitude
- Social factors
- Affect

- Intention

- Facilitating Conditions

- Behaviour

- Frequency of past behaviour
- Habits
Ecological models

• External factors often left ‘off the model’

• Where ‘facilitating conditions’ are featured, also include individual’s resources (skills and abilities) (Triandis 1977)

• ...although debate over extent to which ‘facilitating conditions’ are “out there” in the environment (Triandis 1980)

• (Unmapped) external/material factors seen as barriers to change

• Models at higher level of scale also required, eg ‘Ecological’ models in public health

• Individual processes (biological/cognitive) influenced by societal factors
  - eg. Bronfenbrenner (1979): micro, meso, exo, macro systems
Vlek et al’s NOA Model (1997)

- **Needs**: Relations, development, comfort, pleasure, work, health, privacy, money, status, safety, nature, freedom, leisure time, justice
- **Opportunities**: Availability, advertisement, prices, shops
- **Abilities**: Financial, temporal, spatial, cognitive, physical

**Motivation**

**Behavioural control**

**Intention**

**Consumer behaviour**

**Subjective well-being, environmental quality**

**Technology** → **Economy** → **Demography** → **Institutions** → **Culture**
Systems Thinking

- Systems defined by their ‘emergent properties’, which provide their resistance to change
- In human activity, ‘emergent properties’ account for ‘policy resistance’
- Systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes”
- Thus a diagnostic (not practical) technique for approaching complex problems, or ‘messes’
- Produces diagrams and maps, not models
Foresight’s Obesity System Map (2007)
Practice Theory


• Schatzki’s “intertwining strands” in a practice become Reckwitz’s “blocks of elements”

  “A ‘practice’ (Praktik) is a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.”

  (Reckwitz 2002:249)

• For Shove et al, three principal elements can be identified in “open, yet fundamentally contingent” practices:
  - **Materials** (‘things’; also necessary infrastructure)
  - **Competences** (skills and ‘know-how’; procedures)
  - **Images** (also ideas and interpretations)
Circulation of Elements in a Practice (Shove 2008 forthcoming)

- materials/objects
- competence/procedure/skill
- images/symbolic meanings
## Differences between ‘Behaviour’ and ‘Practice’ (Darnton et al 2009 forthcoming)

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