Sociology, places and cultures of sustainability

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Course articulation

Aim: Sociology of places for understanding environmental crisis

Course articulation: 2 parts, one on frameworks, the other on a special topic (lessons), then,

- External experts' intervention, maybe a seminar
- Students/teacher fieldwork
- Students presentation at the end of the course (optional)

Final exam: a paper in English of 2500 words, all inclusive, plus a short discussion, if necessary

Course method

- **Frameworks of Environmental Sociology**
- What is essentially sociology
- Connection among disciplines: a meta-frame for approaches
- A lesson on each approach matched with a paper
- Lecture + discussion
- The language problem: to use several ways (spoken and written language, images and even dramatization
- Moodle

- **A Case study**: wetlands socialization
- International conference in March 2026 on ‘land water competition/hybridity in rural marginal areas’ (call for cases ready soon)
- Students alone or in group can organise a small research on wetlands socialisation with a variety of methods
- This fieldwork can sort in the exam paper and conference participation (in the last years students organised an entire session)

Course's philosophy or style

"Sociology in a Master of Psychology"

Environmental Sociology in a Master with 'intercultural interests'

How to justify a sociological scrutiny of environmental issue (or crisis)?

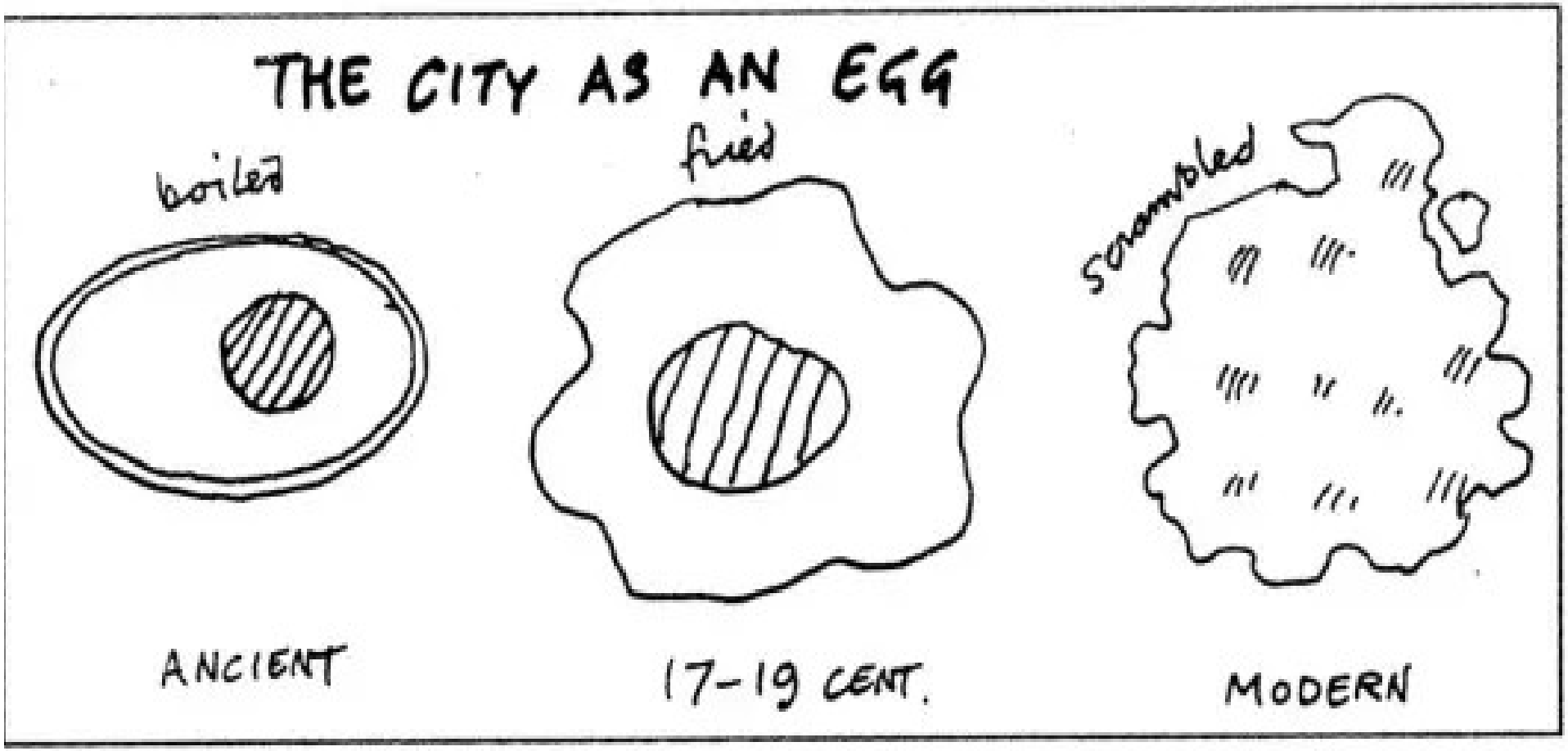
- Environmental phenomena are not self-evident
- Perception and meaningfulness filter reality → environmental sciences have a cultural mediation
- Organised action is fundamental; we are *zoon politikon* or social beings → rationality, power and love (or hate) for others

Sociology has 3 elementary aspects (analytics)

- Actors, agents, subjects (e.g. entrepreneur)
- Processes, dynamics, relations (e.g. group aggregation)
- Environments, institutions (*egg town*, square, park, pub, shop, municipality)

And a **plurality of methods**, not least those typical of physical sciences (**repeated experiments** in controlled environment-laboratory)... for small groups and simple reactions is possible… then, **statistics** when there are many context variables; finally, others less formalised more qualitative methods based on **interpretations** of interviews, observations, texts; extreme case is **research-action**

Representation of the urban environment; morphology, evolution, metaphor



Source: https://brandondonnelly.com/the-city-as-an-egg

Sociology is not a unitary discipline. It moves according to different logics, assumptions and ends forming a paradigm

- paradigm of order
- paradigm of conflict
- paradigm of structure
- paradigm of action-practices
- paradigm of relationships

Order question (Durkheim)

What holds society together and how is social order possible in an era in which economic, social and cultural transformations have broken the belief in the sacredness of tradition and religion?

Conflict question (Marxism)

All societies until now are unequal; conflict between classes/groups is inevitable. Thus, society without conflict are either perfect or dominated. Conflict produces positive changes (dialectic logic)

Structure or emergent qualities question (Durkheim)

Society comes before individuals. ‘Entities’ like clubs, institutions, groups, organisations, clans are real and affect individuals; those entities are the main object of research for sociology

Action (and sense making) question (Weber)

To explain social phenomena - of whatever nature they may be - it is always necessary to trace them back to individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and the meaning they hold for the actor must be grasped (nearer psychology).

We will see the paradigm of relationships later

Main ideal-types of social aggregations with essential characteristics (concept intension)

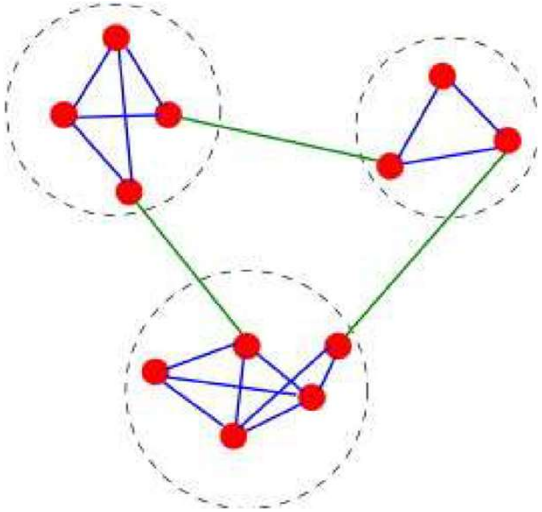
Group(-Community)
(e.g. pair group)
Common ideas and lifestyle
membership++

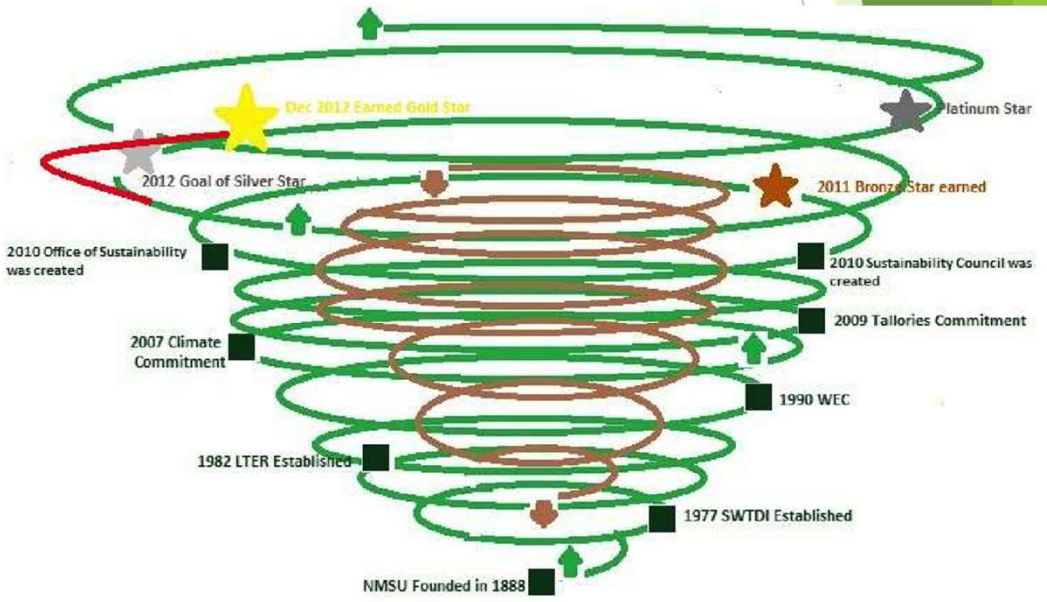
Institution
(e.g. State)
Rules and Sanctions
Legitimation, membership+++

Collectivity(-Society)
(e.g. Italian society, urban residents)
Common identity/residence
Membership+

Network
(e.g. social media, movements)
Free exchange of gift
Membership+

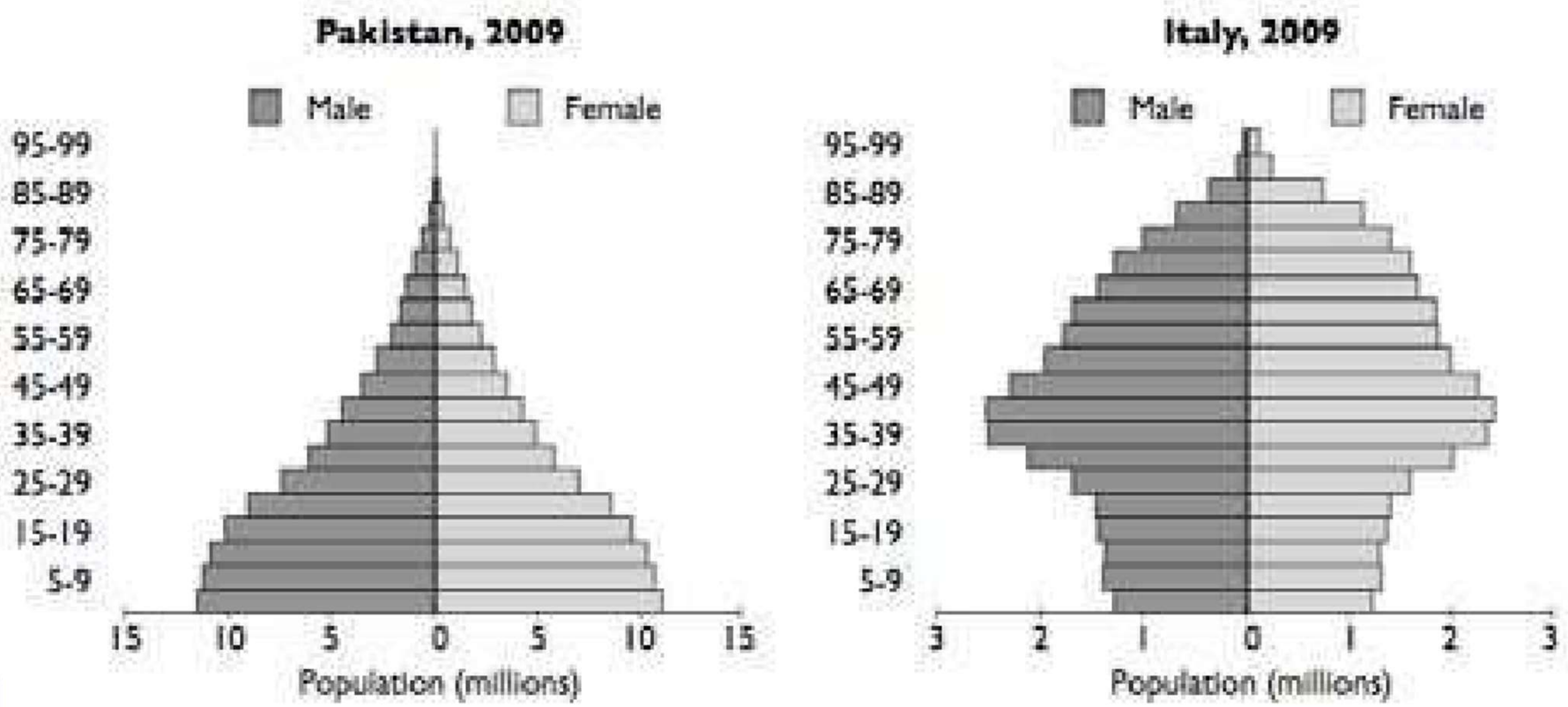
Note: Real aggregations often have an intermediate position, like associations or markets; some ideal-types contains others (e.g. informal networks are within almost all other ones)





How to represent graphically society

Sometime is quite easy to represent and compare societies



Population Pyramids for Pakistan and Italy Data
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database

Main forms (or ideal types) of social aggregation according to some criteria (synoptic table) -

Aggregations	Membership	Rules	Medium/process	Ties strength	Length
Groups	High informal	Implicit	Identity/construction	High	Variable
Institutions	High formal	Explicit	Law/Legitimation	Middle	Long
Collectivity	Low Formal	Low profile	Similarities/assimilation	Low	Long
Networks	Low informal	Low profile	Gift/Exchange	Middle	Low

Noteworthy: Society is made of Processes and Aggregations

What pushes aggregation among people

Types of factor pushing for aggregation (again plurality)

- Sexual attraction (family, sociability)
- Parents-children attachment (family, care)
- Physical, mental and communicative strength (power)
- Symbiosis, specialisation, know how, resources control (Interdependency, exchange)
- Game playing (sociability, recreation)

All these forces, often shared with animals, are included and transformed into meaningful systems, that we call ‘cultures’

Such cultures evolve over time, differentiating; difficult for sociology establishing ‘laws’ or regularities, but that is the aim!

Sociology is in between unique differentiations (historicism) and search for universal trends (philosophy of history, *does humanity have an end?*).

2° Lesson: introduction to environmental sociology

- What are human-environment relationships
- Historical matrixes of environmental crisis
- Forms/sources of environmental crisis
- Environmental crisis through ideologies
- Conclusions

Premise
How to conceptualise the human-environment relationship?

They are not completely detached, but are not the same entity ('fusion' perspective), thus we have 3 **compatible** situations

- Humans are **part of the environment** they are living organisms subjected to the rules of physic and animal world
- Humans are ***relatively*** **detached of environment** both in terms of single distinct bodies (identity) and artificial spaces, like a house protected from rain
- Humans are **interlinked to environments** in various ways – This variability is high because eco-systemic and human aggregations are many → the combinations or structural coupling https://www.fractalmodel.org/structural-coupling/ of various human and ecological systems is the object of environmental sociology (see farming as an old structural coupling)

An example per third type (interlinking)

An example of human-ecosystem combination is a prairie constantly monitored by an agro-environmental agency for understanding consistency and performances of grass after sheep's pasture and other perturbations, like CC, pollution, allochthone species arrivals

The constant interaction between agency use of indicators and grassland reactions can produce a structural coupling: the two systems communicate well and are *sustainable… monitoring prevents grass overuse*

Historical matrixes of environment sociology (classification with 2 criteria: temporal order and they have provoked social and political re-actions)

Studies on “green revolution” (?!?) (R. Carson and pesticides in waters, *Silent Spring*, 1962)

Social movements and protest (22 April 1970, USA *Earth Day)*

Great industrial and transport incidents (Exxon Valdez vessel oil spills off Alaska sea in 1989)

Risk society (U. Beck 1986), reflexive modernisation by education, secularisation, rationalisation

Global climate change (e.g. permanent glaciers/poles reduction) IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on CC, 1988

Principal sources of human-environment crisis and remedies

Forms of ecological crisis	Effects	Remedies
Pollution	Emission of synthetic substances harmful to health	Monitoring, recycling, bio-imitation, ban on substances
Ecosystem biodiversity reduction / fragmentation	Continuous rationalization of terrestrial and marine spaces	Protected areas, green cities, sustainable agri-forestry-pastoralism
Climate crisis	Exorbitant production of CO2 from fossil sources and livestock	Energy transition to renewables, food transition to less meet and milk by-products

Comments: more than one **independent** source; there is a bland **chronological order** (conservationism is the oldest XIX century, even if fight against pollution represents the boom phase of ES

A link with previous lesson: how forms of ecological crisis interface with main ideal-typical social aggregations?[1]

Forms of ecological crisis

Eco-systems and species biodiversity reduction (e.g. animal extinction)

Pollution from synthetic objects (eg Per-polyfluoroalkyl Substances-PFAS leaking)

Climate change (eg CO2 increase; Ozone hole)

Interfaces ?

Main social aggregations

Institutions

Networks

Groups

Collectivities

what happens in this box?

Interfaces (a dialogue between different worlds) can be many: policies, protests, citizen science, ascetic lifestyles, standardisation, donations to NGOs …….. **we need a framework for all these interfaces !!!**

1 attention that the two interfaced sides have different level of abstraction; interfaces work also in this way, connecting processes coming at different level or scale; typical air pollution is transboundary, while policies for its reduction are regional

Anonymous; 05/10/2022

One framework can be the ***Ideologies of Environmentalism;*** they facilitate the classification of socio-environmental studies with a (inter-) cultural perspective, for example through this scheme

		Attitude toward environmental goods (mainly)	
		Instrumental	Symbolic
Perspective of Analysis	Actor-oriented (control of environment)	Eco-modernity	Environment Stewardship
	System-oriented (integration with environ)	Political Ecology	Deep Ecology Degrowth

Always the idea of metanalysis……

We choose to organise our framework using environmentalist *ideologies*

But what are Ideologies? They are more than one

a) Cultural ways for cheating poor people (religion is the opium of the peoples)
b) A coherent block of ideas covering all reality
c) A charismatic vision of reality able to motivate a generous and wide political mobilisation
d) A rigid and sectarian way of thinking not considering reality

We choose mainly meaning ‘c’

Therefore, ideologies are both

- *Analytical instruments* for interpreting systematically the reality … in our case socio-environmental crisis and remedies
- A systemic knowledge becoming a guide for motivating people to action (performative)

A clear and convincing interpretation of reality moves people to action (vice versa, too). We could call it ideology—that is, a systematic vision of the world innervated by a charismatic perspective of social change: Gramsci's concept, according to Knud Erik Jørgensen (1992, 37), that can be found in poor people mobilisation (Borras 2016).

Ecomodernity features

- Humans cannot stop changing environment (modernity means no stop change)
- Humans have to change it in order to keep it sustainable or able to last
- More governance (eg Third sector inclusion) and technology are useful
- Requisite: a stronger and independent State willing to dialogue more with other States

Conference of the Parties - COPnn is the UN **climate** change conference. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and the summit will be attended by the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – a treaty that came into force in 1994.

Nature Stewardship main features

It belongs to the sphere of attitudes, meanings and cultures (previous one to the sphere of politics)

A more efficient and moral attitude to nature is **care**

According to Welchman (2012, 299), there are four attributes that make the term stewardship fitting for a *moderate* commitment to the environment: guardianship, landholding, enduring relationship and the exercise of moral virtues.

Attention to daily lifestyle of ordinary people

Convergence with religions thinking and with social responsibility practices of private companies (CSR)

Main features of deep ecology → degrowth

- It starts from a radical equality and assimilation between humans and other species/ecosystems

- It is immoral that humans pretend to change biodiversity and ecosystems balances

- There is a anarchist root in deep ecology; a vision of rules of states as oppressive anyway

- Degrowth contexts endless economic growth and its indicators like GDP change, North-South inequalities; promotes sober lifestyle, small scale commerce,

- Example: Citizens take part in **community-supported agriculture** (CSA), where they pay farmers directly in exchange for a weekly basket of food.

Note: Political ecology will be developed in 4° lesson

Logical interconnections of eco-ideologies

		Attitude toward environmental goods (mainly)	
		Instrumental	*Symbolic*
Perspective of Analysis	*Actor-oriented (overcoming nature)*	Eco-modernity	Environmental stewardship
	System-oriented (integration with nature)	Political ecology	Deep ecology

Dotted line represents a common reference to **asymmetrical relationships**

Continuous line represents a common reference to **individual behaviours** (reflexive human being or survivalist)

Conclusions

- Environmental issue is not unitary; that creates many trade-offs when trying to solve the single problems (see mini-hydro-power plants or wind farms)

- Environmentalism is plural as well, in cultural terms → several ideologies or ‘cultures of sustainability’.

- Such ideologies motivate people in different even in opposite ways (eg. survivalism versus paternalism), this is a source of weakness for environmental movement

- Ideologies are in any case necessary both for understanding environmental issue as for mobilisation

- Thus, we must move toward a more sophisticated construction of knowledge, seeking for integrating technical and physical savoir and social sciences

3° Lesson: From meta-frame to a master-frame

Still in an introductory phase of environmental sociology

Two important preliminary points and goals of the lesson:

1) The place for sociology in front of other disciplines

2) The search for a charismatic sociological original driver, able to rise enthusiasm among researchers (meaning 'C' of ideology, see previous slide)

The two points are complementary: the former fixes the **relative position** of sociology, the latter fixes the **absolute or original role** of sociology.

The argumentation has been thought for interpreting energy transition; thus a concrete, complex, mounting issue

Osti, G. 2023, *The 'position' of social sciences in sustainability issue (moodle)*

The course metaframe, a frame of frames

*Social Sciences Position Relative to Energy Engineering and Management Disciplines, According to **Key Words** and Approaches**

Social sciences position (and analytical level)	Key words (approaches)	
	Mechanisms ⟷	Reflexivity
ABOVE (macro)	Material **Interests,** power asymmetry (political ecology)	Cognitive **Frames** (social constructivism)
IN BETWEEN (meso)	Organisational **Borders** (neo-institutionalism)	**Bridges** among systems (network analysis)
BELOW (micro)	**Behaviours** (ABC model, nudge approach)	**Games** (strategic studies, reasoned action)

Note. 'Approaches' in the sense of 'paradigm' (Boudon and Bourricaud, 1991, p. 532)

The premises of the table

Do you know? The procedure for constructing the typology is always the same: crossing two important, general (meta-)categories

These typologies are a way both to simplify complex social situations and to respect a certain degree of pluralism (differentiation-parsimony compromise)

The table is similar to that presented in the previous lesson (slide 22), with one IMPORTANT novelty; which is?

Such innovation is a sort of *stylistic code* or *footprint of the course*

Table 1

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Always the idea of metanalysis.....

Some words on meta-categories used for creating the cross-table

Key words of each approach:
- **key words** are asked in every scientific paper; why? useful for finding and classifying it through computer search engines
- **key words**, ways for arriving to an extreme thoughts' synthesis

Key words of each approach are divided in two types of process:

Mechanisms G1	**Reflexivity** G2
They concern events and processes having a **determined causality**; humans are then placed within sequences that follow a rule; it requires a **correlation**	It concerns generally an attitude of actors to elaborate a thinking according to past, values, situations … before acting or reacting; it requires an **interpretation**

eg Social inequality causes riots

eg reaction to a punch is variable

The two processes concern a long dispute in sociology: structure vs actors

G1 Hedström P, Swedberg R. Social mechanisms: An introductory essay. In: Hedström P, Swedberg R, eds. Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory. Studies in Rationality and Social Change. Cambridge University Press; 1998:1-31.
Anonymous; 07/10/2024

G2 Jamieson, M. K., Govaart, G. H., & Pownall, M. (2023). Reflexivity in quantitative research: A rationale and beginner's guide. Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 17(4), e12735. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12735
Anonymous; 07/10/2024

The second metavariable is the **relative position of social sciences** with respect of other disciplines, especially STEM: *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*

Why this question on position?

- Very often there is a rigid (and detestable) hierarchy of disciplines
- The hierarchy of knowledge prestige becomes a hierarchy of power → clubs, circuits, gangs, sects, clusters, cliques, circles ….

However, 2 reasons for thinking such hierarchies are variable:

- environmental cases are **complex** and widely interconnected with human actions at several levels;
- **democratic claims**, in some degree present worldwide, impose fair and equal preliminary discussion of every choice,

therefore

- collaboration between STEM and social sciences is necessary → **inter-disciplinary** approaches
- that is an empty ideal if not precisely declined according to **patterns of knowledge …..** table 1 classifies such patterns

The relative position of social sciences (SSs), especially sociology, with respect of STEMs is a modest attempt to clarify how different patterns of knowledge *see*, *dialogue* and *use* each other

SSs are **ABOVE** when they provide a general frame for STEM

Example in energy field: *nuclear power is intrinsically not democratic* (analytical and normative statement) → critical and prophetic function of SS

SSs are in the **MIDDLE** between other disciplines
Example: disciplines of building energy retrofit do not dialogue with disciplines of renewable source of energy. The former uses parameters of adaptation to urban landscape, the latter parameters of most productivity of energy devices → SSs mediator creating organised moments of dialogue

SSs are **BELOW** other disciplines;
Example: SSs do not analyse whether an energy innovation is good or bad (example wind farm against landscape), but only they provide insights on the degree of its acceptance among people →SSs functional of other disciplines

For each type, obtained crossing mechanisms/reflexivity with relative position of social sciences, we will reserve one lesson

Then, there is plenty of time for deepening the approaches

We turn now to the other, complementary, task:
To find out a **master (=charismatic) frame**, that is a typical sociological variable able to create a cognitive commitment among scholars (see studies on social movements)

Such a master-frame, thought for energy, is **socialisation**

Socialisation is two things:

- education to basic values of a society
- sharing of a good

The original contribution of sociology to energy transition would thus be the study of

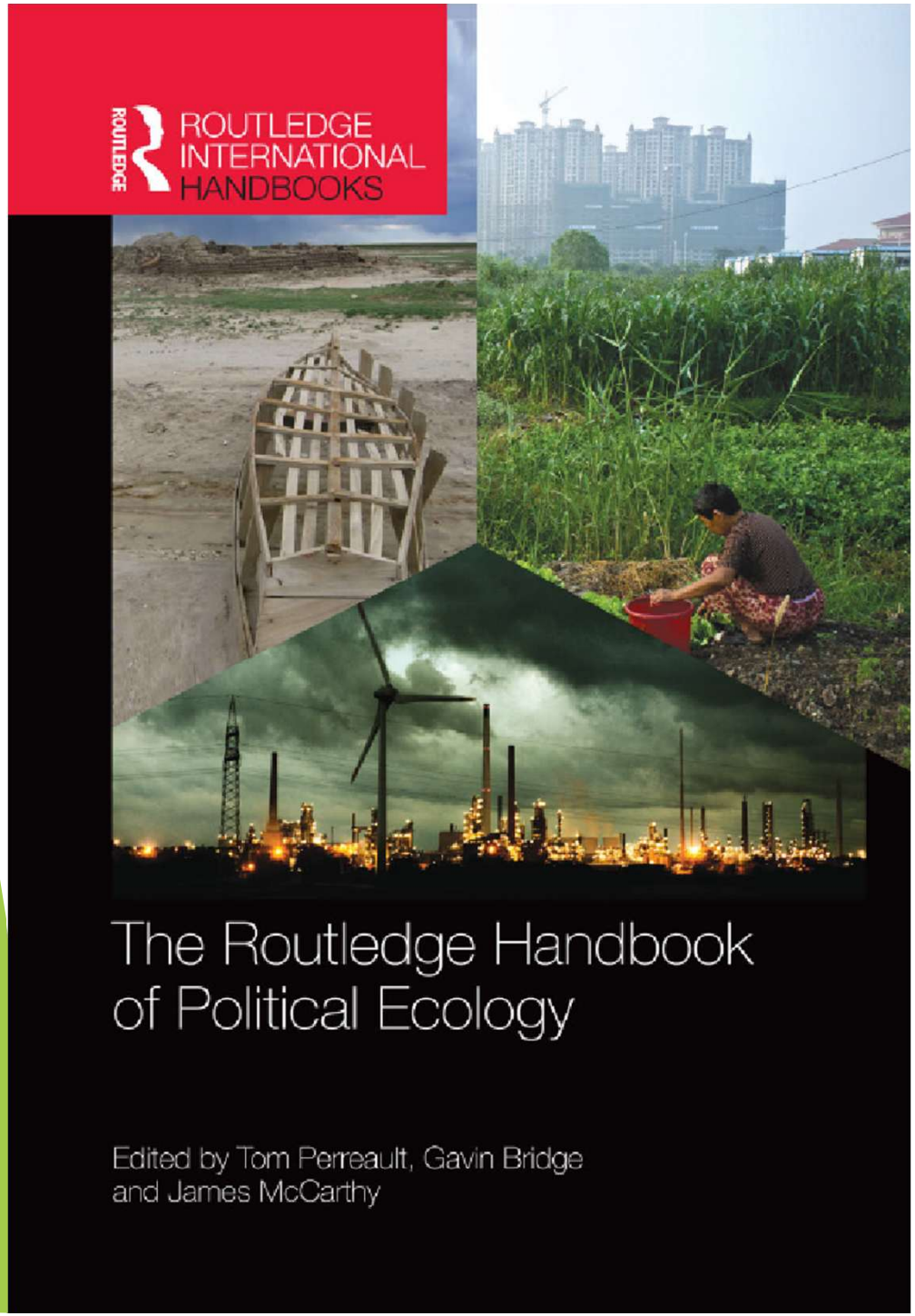
- How people **learn** the energy issue → environmental education techniques (eg working groups, small experiments in class)
- How people **share** energy production, storage, distribution and consumption → energy community **LESSON END**

4° Lesson

Political ecology (1 of 2 'above keys' in our scheme, slide 31)

J. McCarthy, T. Perreault, G. Bridge *Editors' conclusion*, in The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology, 2015

- An approach mainly cultivated by geographers
- Born in 1970' Great South, focused on land use and agriculture (see great plantations)
- Changed in the 1990' with extractivism (of natural resources) and attention to identities (ethnicity, feminism, peasantry …)
- The main focus is asymmetry of power among 'interested' people in their interface with ecosystem



Top down or deductive lesson in front of giant, dispersive handbooks

Political Ecology main features

the analytical dimensions of political ecology are

a) accumulation by dispossession (Harvey)

a) Focus on economic interests (materialism over culture)

a) the regulation of possible conflict between Capital and peripheral social classes (political regimes)

Environment is one of main arenas where the capitalist exploitation, accumulation and legitimation processes happen

The scale is international; States are substantially devoted to capitalism domination ⇒ **Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is distinct from liberalism insofar as it does not advocate laissez-faire economic policy but instead is highly constructivist and advocates a strong state to bring about market-like reforms in every aspect of society
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism.

Other aspects of Political Ecology

Not only the state, elites and local governments are seen as devoted to capital, also other two social spheres are considered subjugated:

- **Cultural sector and media**: marginal people are imbued of values based on material achievement, consumption and individualism (western values) → mind colonisation

- **Donors, foundations, most NGOs** are often seen as the long arm of capitalism, at a very subtle level: they spread values of autonomy and self-reliance for people materially constrained, creating self-accusation for who is unable to become sufficiently autonomous → *governmentality (M. Foucault)*

A strong methodological point of PE is **metabolism** that is the accurate measurement of **material flows** capacity to generate wealth and wellbeing for each class and area (Giampietro et. al. 2009).

Researches based on political ecology approach

- Take single cases studies, like a town or a district, very often on the Great South
- Look at the history of that place, usually a past of colonialism (past dependency)
- Highlight the asymmetries of wealth, education, expertise, access to credit and basic services
- Insist on the (negatively evaluated) dynamic of privatisation of public services like provision of drinkable water, energy, health and schools
- Discover *la trahison (betrayal) des élites locales, morally and economically* corrupted by powerful international companies
- Give great attention to movements and conflicts (environmental and gender issues highly considered)

The political ecology of water management

It is a sector widely studied by geographers, the most famous is Erik Swyngedouw

These studies reproduce the steps and the highlights just seen

- The history of potable water system arriving to last tendencies (or return) to privatisation of management, commodification of the water-good, recourse to the stock exchange → neoliberal reforms and governmentality

- Because of water consumption push, the provision basin is enlarged, the aquifers more exploited, the purification technologies intensified, the wastewaters (eg sewage sludges) exported in sacrifice zones → more impact on environments

Both previous processes are intimately political: they produce losers and gainers, increasing inequality between regions and between classes (environmental injustice)

Critical Conclusions

The strength of PE is to have a unitary universal pattern based substantially on Marxist assumptions: radical injustice in the distribution of environmental goods and bads (an universal master frame)

The weakness is specular, not considering the local specificity and multilateral nature of many environmental and social issues

In that sense, PE is more applicable in simplified social systems, with a low or **weak institutional** tradition

In those situations the stakeholders are less numerous and reciprocally very distant (social cleavage) in terms of material and immaterial resources

Such a distance and the scarcity of lateral solution bring to harsh conflicts. Underclasses less able to propose reforms
LESSON END

5° Lesson: cognitive shared frames (recall slide 30)

Cultural turn in sociology (Berger & Luckman, 1966)

"culture as a set of instruments that social actors use to make sense of their own life experiences (Diani & Della Porta, 2006, p. 73)
Frames "mental structures that facilitate organizing and interpreting incoming perceptual information by fitting it into already learned schemas or frames about reality (Dewulf et al. 2009)"

Attention is moved from structures-actions to:
- Definition of situation → linguistic analysis
- How such definition is shared among people → sociological analysis

The process has three steps: exteriorisation, negotiation and **institutionalisation** (in the sense of becoming rule) of meanings

Then other two steps: socialisation and legitimation (already mentioned in class)

Risks: reification, domination, manipulation of meanings

It is called also cognitive sociology because it highlights mental processes and their dealing among the members of a society

In literature you find different definitions of frame, for example:

"In comparing the two approaches, Tannen and Wallat (1987) pointed out a distinction between **knowledge schemas** and **interactive frames**. Frames as knowledge schemas refer to **structures of expectation** about people, objects, events and settings. Interactive frames refer to **alignments that are negotiated in a particular interaction** and focus on how communication defines specific aspects of what is going on in interaction, in the sense of Bateson's classic example 'is this fight or play?'"

Dewulf, A., Gray, B., Putnam, L., Lewicki, R., Aarts, N., Bouwen, R., & van Woerkum, C. (2009). Disentangling approaches to framing in conflict and negotiation research: A meta-paradigmatic perspective. *Human Relations*, *62*(2), 155-193. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708100356

In my view, the two approaches are compatible because there is an endless passage from (shared) cognitive frames to contested cognitive frames during an interaction (the Bateson' boys playing a fight)

One product of this dealing are cognitive shared FRAMES

Two levels of frame definition

E. Kant's a-priori (space and time; innate categories for interpreting the real)

Contingent, learned and debated categories (constructionism) "to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large" (Snow in Della Porta & Diani, p. 74)

The addendum in the 2° definition is 'labelling', that is a more or less intentional process for expressing with others such a category or schemata (eg climate 'crisis' instead of 'change')

In other words-1, there is an **objectification,** to recognise such a frame as an object external to individuals

In other words-2, the frame can be manipulated according to some scopes

Large use of framing for interpreting environmental movement (interesting use for science and technology studies → paradigms)

For social movements framing become a way to

- interpret the environmental issue
- mobilise people
- use it in the conflict

Snow and Benford (1988) define these steps as the "diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational" dimension of framing

Diagnostic: to problematize what was considered natural (disasters are not any more 'natural')

Prognostic: envision and proposal of solutions (revolution, reforming, lifestyle or government changes ….)

Motivational: symbolic elaboration or frame is essential in order to produce the motivation and the incentives needed for action (attending/funding a campaign)

With such frames we are very near the concept of **ideology** (again!)

“Framing is more flexible a cultural product than ideology, at the same time more specific [….] than the latter. It does not require a whole coherent set of integrated principles and assumptions but provides instead a [generic] key to make sense of the world” (Della Porta, Diani p. 79).

Dynamics of frame (always inspired by Della Porta/Diani)
Master Frame: a dominant vision sharply dividing people (eg climate injustice)

Frame Bridging: linking two or more frames in relation to an issue (eg climate crisis and poverty fight)

Frame Extension/Transformation: Broadening the issues to incorporate a potential group of supporters/activists (eg land consumption for integrating farmers and their supporters)

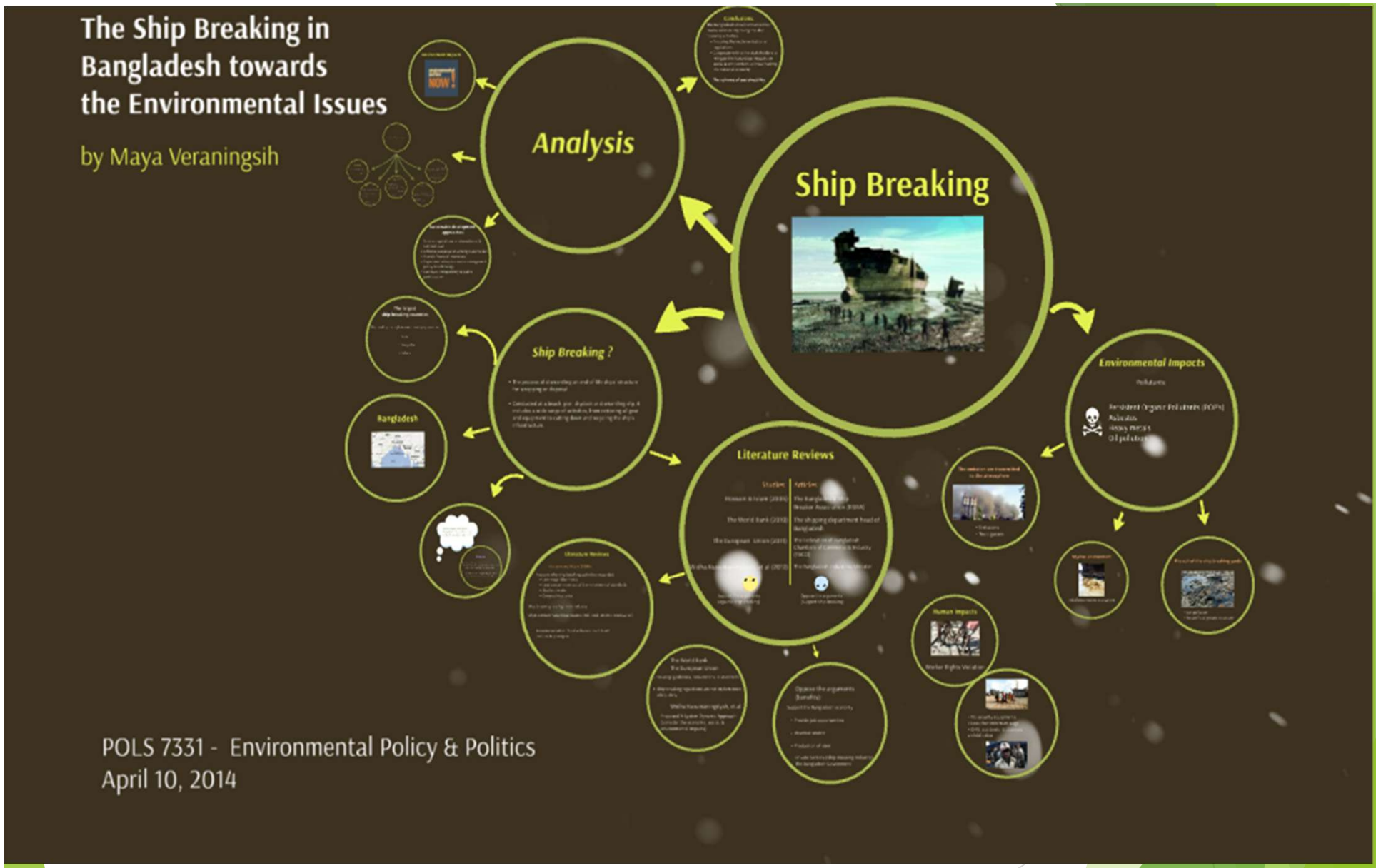
Frame Alignment: relies on a dynamic relationship between the development of a movement and the cultural milieu of the place in which it operates (eg climate crisis frame aligned with music trends)

Frame approach provides

- A good classification of the galaxy of environmental groups (conservationists, Nimbyes, politicised, alternatives….)
- A good instrument for all types of media action
- A good interpretation of tension toward identity, identification, sense making, millenary anxieties ……

Risks of frames primacy

- culture becomes totalitarian like was politics in the past
- Misconception of low conscious activities like practices
- Misconception of relationships as autonomous factors
- Low recognition of culture manipulation from economic interests
- Slipping to rhetoric analysis
- Excessive attention to media representation eg conflicts in the newspapers
- Low attention to organisational change of movements



https://prezi.com/phupf3_o0mb0/the-ship-breaking/

Aron Buzogány, Patrick Scherhaufer, Framing different energy futures? Comparing Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion in Germany, Futures, 137, 2022, 102904, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2022.102904. Abstract: Combining research on sociotechnical imaginaries and social movements, this contribution examines how two major actors of the climate justice movement active in Germany – Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion – frame the discourse on climate change and just transitions. We focus on narratives of both movements and their justification strategies based on the analysis of frames. Using material produced by the two movements, the paper comparatively analyses the movement's frames on social, political, economic and epistemic orders. The results suggest that the two groups are part of the same discursive community but emphasize different aspects of just energy futures. Keywords: Climate justice; Climate activism; Social movement organizations; Sociotechnical imaginaries; Framing analysis; Germany; Fridays for Future; Extinction Rebellion

Important the paper methodology: page 3 of PDF (moodle)

Table 3

Master frames and its corresponding imaginaries.

	FFF	XR
Climate Justice	Apocalyptic imaginaries	Post-apocalyptic imaginaries
Political order	Strong liberal democracy advocates	Strong deliberative democracy advocates
Economic order	Economic modernizations and degrowth	Emphasis on individual change
Epistemic order	Bringing science into politics	Bringing science to the people

Source: own compilation.

LESSON END

6° Lesson: the meso-level, borders and bridges

reference to slide n. 31

Social sciences provide an inter-mediation between other knowledge systems and organisations

Disciplines are organised as 'communities' that have identity, scopes, rules, rituals, tics, membership, chairs etc.

All these aspects of disciplines are BORDERS, a DISTINCTION, a relative closure toward the external world, called also environment

When borders are too rigid and too closed, bridges become necessary; thus the life of every organisation, scientific disciplines included, is represented as an open system, alternating moments of openness to moments of closure

A good way to study this system relative closure is social network analysis which detect, classify and measure relationships and their emergent qualities (slides 11 and 14)

Social Networks is one of the basic social aggregations; it can be conceived as a social aggregation driven by the **principle of reciprocity**

Reciprocity (a powerful basic kind of relationship, gifts exchange) is seen as *a* **cause of**, *a* **method for** and *an* **indicator of** a community wellbeing (*a indefinite article*)

Social networks and reciprocity, however, belong to different scholar traditions

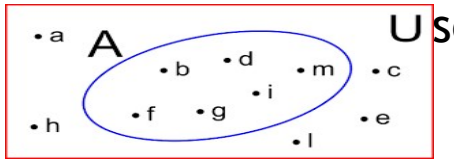
The former: **quantitative**; the sum of relationships produces an emergent quality (Barry Wellman) http://mis.csit.sci.tsu.ac.th/siraya/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1Social-Network-Analysis-An-Introduction-1.pdf

The latter: **qualitative** and linked to different types of relationship, usually three: reciprocity, redistribution, market exchange (K. Polanyi *The Great Transformation*) ….other typologies based on symmetry, inclusiveness, meaningfulness, face-to-face)

Before looking at the 2 schools, elementary definition of social network:

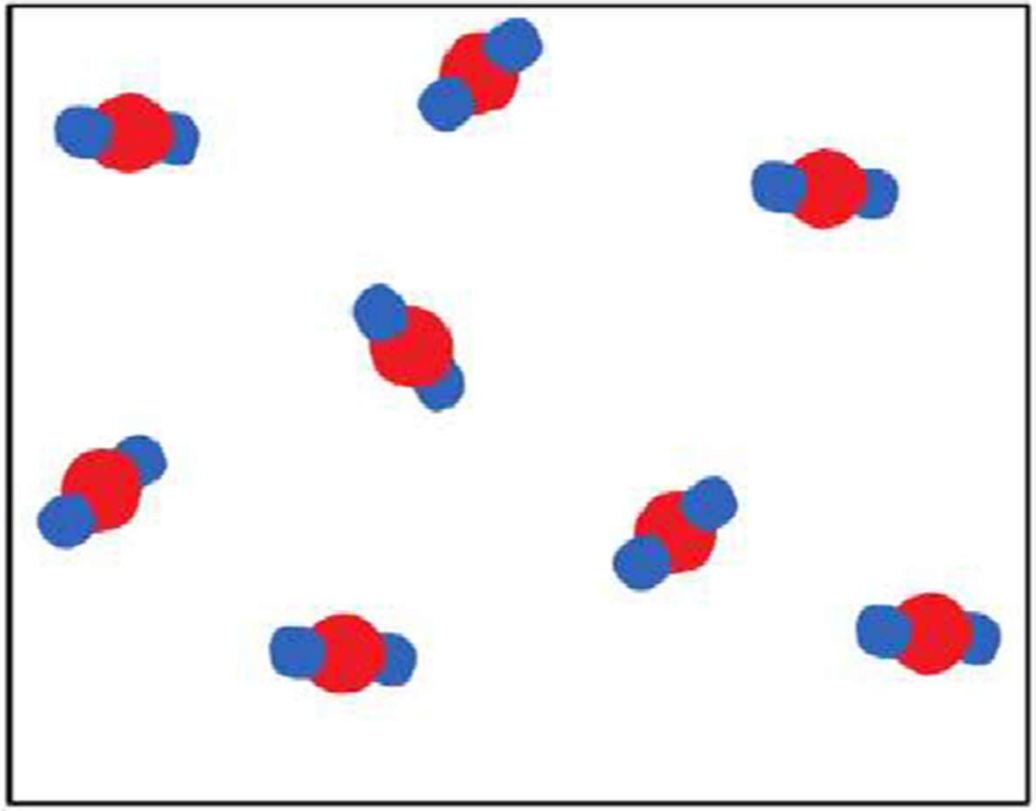
"A social network is social structure which consists of two elements; these are generally known as actors (or nodes or points) and ties (sometimes referred to as links or relationships)" (Ennis and West, 2010, p. 408).

Analytically,

Network is a set of flows with a quite flat morphology different of a hierarchy or a market 

see next slide)

Social Structure	something regular, permanent, over individuals control
Actors-nodes	individuals (and organisations) able to act purposely
Ties-links	Bonds ---------contacts----------acquaintanceship (Obligations--relationships—alter cognition/trust)



Stylised representation of a market?

https://www.visitlondon.com/it/cosa-fare/luogo/32803549-southbank-centre-market

a set of independent individuals, very near (contacts) but with temporary weak ties

Two traditions of the study of social relations

Manchester's school: attention to the **quality of relationships**; reciprocity is one of several types of relationship and has specific characteristics (exchange of gifts, relationship comes before the exchanged object, indefinite duration); tradition of Marcel Mauss, recently *MAUSS Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales* → studies on third sector and communities

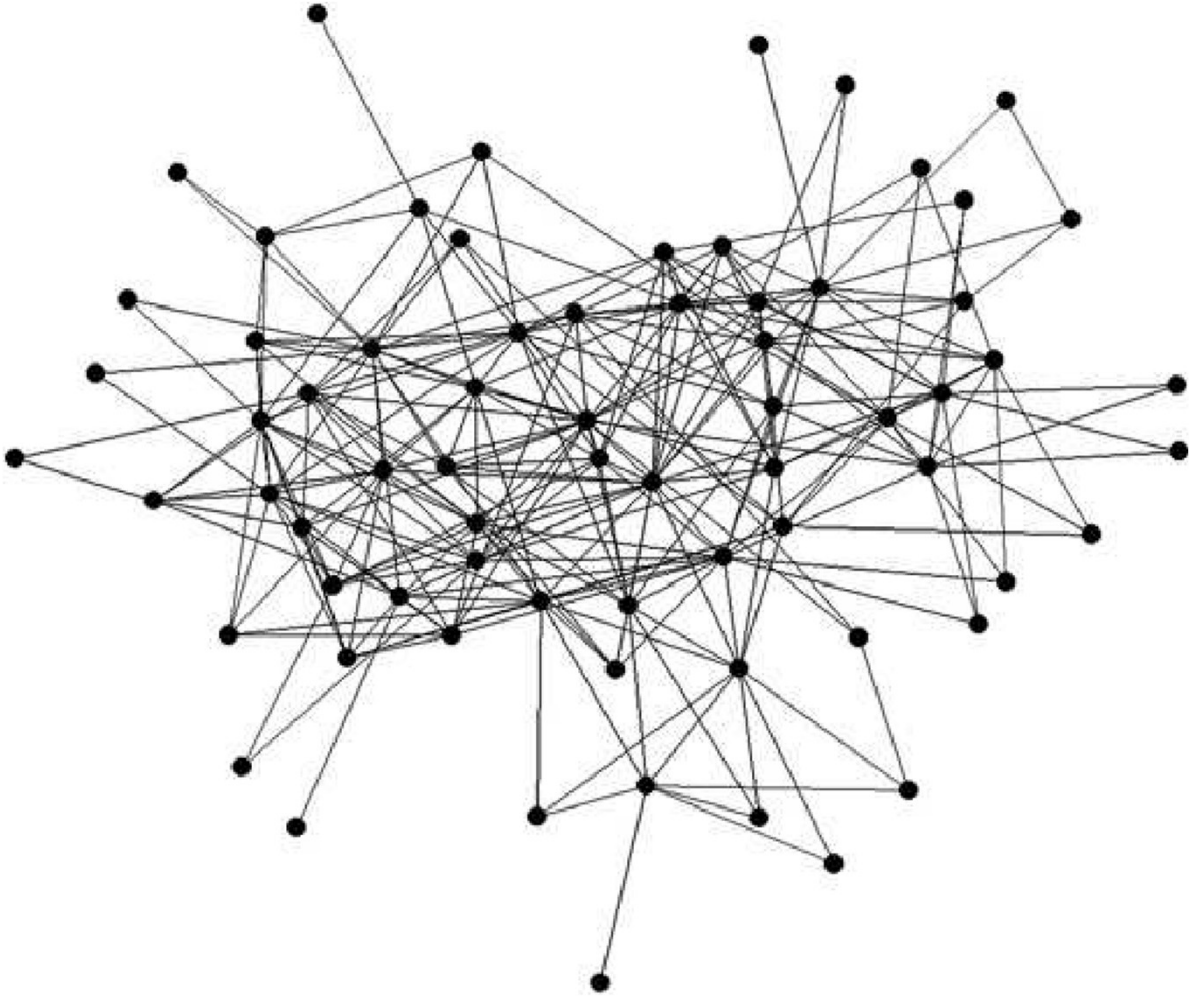
Havard's school, attention to the **quantity of contacts** from whose count (→ mathematics of relationships) arises **emerging qualities** of the entire network, often unknown to the participants themselves; sociograms of Jacob Moreno (1934). Application to studies on board of directors, informal groups, worldwide internet networks, group therapy

(Barry Wellman goes beyond: modern society based on **networked individualism** =multiple, loosely-knit social circles, an idea developed by Simmel)

Making a network: the qualitative approach to relations uses direct observations, pictures, videos

Mutual relationship matrix of a group of friends. Number of contacts that each claims to have with the others within a week. By row of assigned contacts, by column of contacts received. Eg. 1° row: Mario says contact Antonio twice a week

R A	Mario	Antonio	Alessia	Giusy	Alfredo	Ketty	Fulvio	Assigned
Mario		2	2	2	2	1	0	**9**
Antonio	3		2	1	4	1	1	**12**
Alessia	1	2		1	1	1	4	**10**
Giusy	0	0	1		0	0	1	**2**
Alfredo	3	3	4	2		2	2	**16**
Ketty	1	1	1	2	1		1	**7**
Fulvio	0	0	1	0	1	0		**2**
Received	**8**	**8**	**11**	**8**	**9**	**5**	**9**	**58**



A product of a more formalised research method using social networks

Fig. The green and blue water governance network based on reciprocated collaborative ties among 70 organizations. Source: C. Stein, H. Ernstson, J. Barron, A social network approach to analyzing water governance: The case of the Mkindo catchment, Tanzania, Physics and Chemistry of the Earth, Parts A/B/C, 36(14–15), 2011, 1085-1092, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pce.2011.07.083

Social network charged with many **normative expectations** (they represent an aspiration of people)

In fact they are associated with
- Trust
- Help
- Democracy
- Combination of diversity and unity

However, they have some problems

- They can be very closed, elitarian, exclusive
- They may be not so transparent, opaque
- They can be used for perpetuate privileges
- They can be a subtle form of affective blackmail and a source of sense of guilty

One macro example is patron-client relationships

Thus, they must be used for analytical reasons, for analysing phenomena, then can or not be a source of wellbeing

In case of environmentalism social networks can be used for understanding

- Social movement (SNs are ways and instruments for action)

- Scientific communities and socio-technical complexes (eg triple helix is a sort of network)

- policy networks opposed to community networks

- Governance versus government

- Experiments of deliberative democracy and participation in general

In all these topics, there is at least in one pole an open and flat network

Conclusions

At theoretical level social network have two problems

- To match the exclusivity of relationship and its openness to third actor (the foreigner)
- To respect the self-establishment of relationship and its standardization (obedience to a rule)

For these reasons, we must integrate a social network approach with an institutional one.

Here institution means a rule that assure both the protection of individuality and the network universal openness. See the rules for free/volunteers associations in the civil code (they have right to assembly and duty to be open and democratic)

LESSON END

Lesson 7 - Working groups

How to imagine working groups on environmental NGOs (ENGOs) roles, meanings and relational arrangements

Here a list of the main ENGOs (according to which criterion? To be discovered….)

https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/20-global-nonprofits-environment

Background: ENGOs

- are protagonists of environmental crisis setting
- are essentially a social network (or a clan, Ouchi)
- are protagonists of a cultural turn: ecological way of thinking

Assigned task

- To make a relational and cultural profile of some ENGOs
- Method: to compare selected (criteria) ENGOs according to a framework → theory → concepts → dimensions → indicators
- Sources of information: ENGOs official web sites, plus other sources
- Expected product: Elaboration of a synoptic schema or matrix
- Subdivision in small groups
- Final spoken Report of each group

Frameworks and possible hypotheses ….

There is always a hypothesis

Political ecology/governmentality
h: ENGOs are unconscious cultural agents of a neoliberal, capitalist order based on minds control

Frame analysis, cultural turn
h: ENGOs are a sort of lay prophets or sentinels of apocalyptic times, cultural vanguard

Social Network approaches
h: ENGOs start with democratic/deliberative arrangements but over time they suffer the *iron law of the oligarchy* (R. Michels)

8° Lesson: the below / micro approaches

Behavioural experiments

The lesson is built on this paper Parece, Grossman, Scott Geller (2013) *Reducing Carbon Footprint of Water Consumption: A Case Study of Water Conservation at a University Campus*, in T. Younos, C.A. Grady, (special issue of the journal *Remote Sensing*)

After an introduction on global water issue, the paper looks for solutions. One is more efficient use, especially through technology

Another is changing people habits "changing an individual's repetitive behaviour" → curtailment (downshift, degrowth)

Curtailment initiatives include activities such as taking showers instead of baths, taking shorter showers, and turning off water while shaving or brushing teeth.

Reductions not easy because: tap water is easily available and low cost, at least in developed countries

Sorry of long citation, but it presents the research core argument

"This chapter reports on a study that examined how college students, residing on the Virginia Tech campus, responded to various strategies designed to promote ERB (**Environmental Relevant Behavior**).

Specifically, the research investigated the relationship between different forms of educational media and the consumption of water on Virginia Tech's main campus.

In other words, we evaluated whether or not the water consumption behavior of students living in university residence halls would change in response to various conservation strategies *[like stimuli or drivers]*.

The strategies were applied at varying levels of intensity across 5 study groups over two semesters (spring and fall) in 2009. Additionally we explored whether one particular strategy would produce higher reductions in consumption, and whether combining strategies would produce more consumption reductions than individual techniques" (p. 201).

Criteria: intensity, ranking and combination of media stimuli'

Premises
Statistics on the Campus location, urban form and its population composition (**the context**)

Hidden variables environmental costs: energy used for pumping and treating water before and after the use (the paper considers also these costs)

Heuristics: Monetary incentives *work* for household energy use (eg fee reduction); they work less for water use, probably because of very low tap water tariffs

Thus, we must look for other ***no-material*** **incentives**

Three blocks of literature taken by psychological science
-social norm theory,
-value-belief norm theory, and
-the Antecedent, Behavior Consequence model (ABC Model)

Social norm theory argues that humans are social individuals who are influenced by interactions with other people.
This theory is founded on the assumption that humans base their behaviour

- on what is socially acceptable vs. unacceptable, and
- on those behaviours most frequently performed.

If an acceptable behaviour is the one performed most frequently, it is very likely that people will conform to that behaviour (rule of conformity)

Value-belief norm theory is also relevant to this research. Under this theory, ERB is prompted when people believe environmental issues threaten their values; they take action to alleviate this threat;

For the paper 3 are the value types: Egoistic, Altruistic, Ecocentric

This study considers altruistic and ecocentric values in terms of students informed on the contents of these values (indicators issue)

3 acceptable = recognised social norm
Anonymous; 26/10/2021

2 also frequency must be an observable behaviour; otherwise it is not effective
Anonymous; 26/10/2021

The Geller's Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence model (ABC Model) employs behavior-based techniques of applied behavior analysis.

Antecedents: information on the **causes** of natural resource depletion,

Behavior: information on how **changing behaviors** will lessen their impact on natural resources

Consequences: information on feed backs of results and rewards for some virtuous behaviour

All three theories envisage an experimental design in which a stimulus (essentially information on a topic) is provided and material reaction – tap water consumption – is precisely objectively measured

It is not a research on people opinion and/or interaction

Research design

To compare the 40 campus residences in order to keep under control factors external to the research design (e.g. special uses of water or age of the water system); some residences were excluded

They identify 5 study groups so divided

1 Control Group (without stimuli) and

4 Intervention Groups

Basic Information Group information by emails,
Simple Feedback Group, monthly feedback on students water use
Comparative Feedback Group, each group receives information on other groups
Coaching Group (active volunteers within)

Gradation of stimuli

Table 4 Study groups and strategies

	Control group	Basic information group	Simple feedback group	Comparative feedback group	Coaching group
Residence halls $n = 10$	2	2	2	2	2
Antecedent strategies used	Initial email advising of study	Initial email Educational information Prompts Posters Periodic follow-up emails providing educational information	Initial email Educational information Prompts Posters Periodic follow-up emails providing educational information	Initial email Educational information Prompts Posters Periodic follow-up emails providing educational information	Initial email Educational information Prompts Posters Periodic follow-up emails providing educational information
Consequence strategies used	None	None	Monthly feedback on their residence hall's results	Monthly feedback on their residence hall's results Monthly feedback on how their residence hall's results compares to others halls in the study	Monthly feedback to team leaders on their residence hall's results Leaders within the halls to act as a coach to remind students of techniques to reduce consumption

They call stimuli 'strategies'

The **research design** planned precisely the times and the repetition of stimuli/strategies (monthly report);

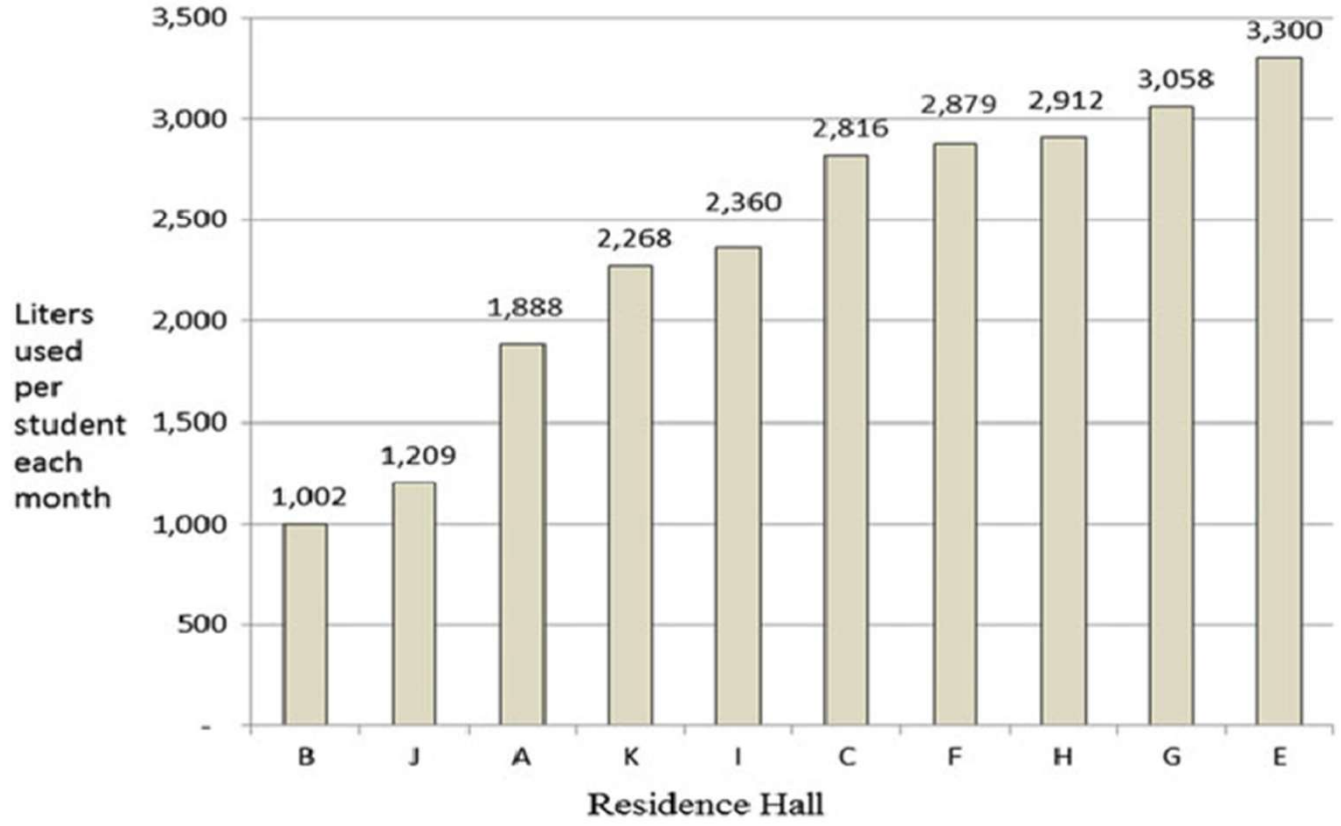
Long time spans are necessary in order to evaluate how the stimulus efficacy lasts

The same for water consumption + the levels of tap water consumption were detected and used both as dependent variables and feedbacks

Also reduction of pumping electric energy was detected and transformed in terms of CO2 savings (feedbacks)

Comment: this is not only a matter of experiment but also a matter of language (people understand more CO2 reduction than water reduction?)

Fig. 4 Spring historical water usage – 7-year average (2002–2008)



Historical water uses are necessary for measuring the possible distance with uses after the stimuli … winter and summer excluded

Table 5 Percent change in per student water use, Spring 2009 versus historical average

Control group	Basic information group	Simple feedback group	Comparative feedback group	Coaching group
Dorm A	Dorm G	Dorm E	Dorm I	Dorm C
+17.5%	+6.3%	−2.3%	−4.7%	+12.7%
Dorm B	Dorm K	Dorm F	Dorm H	Dorm J
−11.2%	−18.1%	+0.7%	−14.5%	−15.9%

Table 6 Percent change in per student water use, Fall 2009 versus historical average

Control group	Basic information group	Simple feedback group	Comparative feedback group	Coaching group
Dorm A	Dorm G	Dorm E	Dorm I	Dorm C
Excluded	−3.8%	+2.8%	−11.7%	+0.5%
Dorm B	Dorm K	Dorm F	Dorm H	Dorm J
−10.2%	+8.1%	−6.8%	−32.6%	−30.9%

For the statistical analysis of differences ANOVA has been used

It compares the variance within the groups with the variance among groups; if the former is greater means that differences among the stimuli are not relevant

Results

Consequence strategies (feedbacks) did not reliably increase Environmental Relevant Behavior.

Appealing individually to the students through the informational emails, posters, and prompts, request to add altruistic and ecocentric foci to their values resulted in a positive response (less water consumption).

The presence of a volunteer (coaching strategy) had no further effect on water consumption; thus, low difference provoked by the most demanding stimuli.

Comments

- Feed backs (information on students' consumption) are not so relevant; thus the ‘C’ of ABC model is not demonstrated

- Information on values is the most effective strategy or stimulus; thus, social norms (or social conformism) can be learnt easily …. and it is cheaper and more lasting (maybe)

- Relational variables like dialogue with a volunteer is not so effective; maybe the volunteer is perceived as a form of control (a “zealous pest”); in any case, idea of meso-level approaches, that is networks, are important in environmental mobilisation is not confirmed

- The authors seem to me arrive to an idea that cognitive (understanding the issue) and cultural (attaching values to the issue) variables are prominent… and this brings this research toward the ‘above’ approaches (a conformist mechanism is at work) …. And this a curious result

-

LESSON END

9° LESSON - A second lesson on 'below' or 'micro' approaches according to the schema of slide 28 The lesson has been substituted with presentation of Melike Arikan Peggion, student II year Clinical, Social and Intercultural Psychology

This lesson is placed more on 'reflexive' side than on 'mechanisms' side

It concerns the **theory of reasoned action,** a theory used many times in the psychology of environmental crisis

The exemplification is made with a classical paper

Hae-Kyong Bang, Alexander E. Ellinger, John Hadjimarcou and Patrick A. Traichal (2000) **Consumer Concern, Knowledge, Belief, and Attitude toward Renewable Energy: An Application of the Reasoned Action Theory,** Psychology & Marketing, 17(6) (in moodle) 900 quotations!

Very applicative paper (not really a speculative one as it is for 'above' approaches); a concrete set of information for acting in favour of environment

Introduction: the issue

Energy demand is growing and causing great environment degradation (they don't talk of climate change… in 2000!)

Consumption (or demand) side of action is quite effective in tackling env. crisis, beside supply side

Consumption of private customers/households (not only industry consumption)

"Research also suggests that socially responsible consumers *view* environmentally friendly products more favourably"

→ marketing analysis (see the Journal hosting the paper; sociology studies more 'supply organisations')

Despite the fact that 75% of Americans consider themselves to be environmentalists”

Despite at that time (2000) power companies offered green energy (even if at premium price that is higher price for higher costs and R&D)

The rate of green energy consumed by households was only 9%

Why?

Energy flows, especially green power, is intangible

Premium price discourages people, especially poorer ones

Scepticism toward energy companies and their communication

For all these reasons it becomes important understanding the cognitive dimensions of pro-environmental attitudes

Knowledge and believes are crucial factors

The purpose of this study is to examine whether there are relationships between **consumer concern** for the environment, his/her **knowledge** and **beliefs** about renewable energy, and his/her **willingness to pay** more for renewable energy

The theoretical framework used to develop and test these hypotheses is the **theory of reasoned action** (TRA) advanced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)…. and integrated in 1991 (**theory of planned action**).

About intercultural psychology… the translation in Italian of belief = *credenza* or *convinzione*?

Theory of reasoned action

Normative beliefs are individuals' beliefs about the extent to which other people, who are important to them, think they should or should not perform particular behaviors

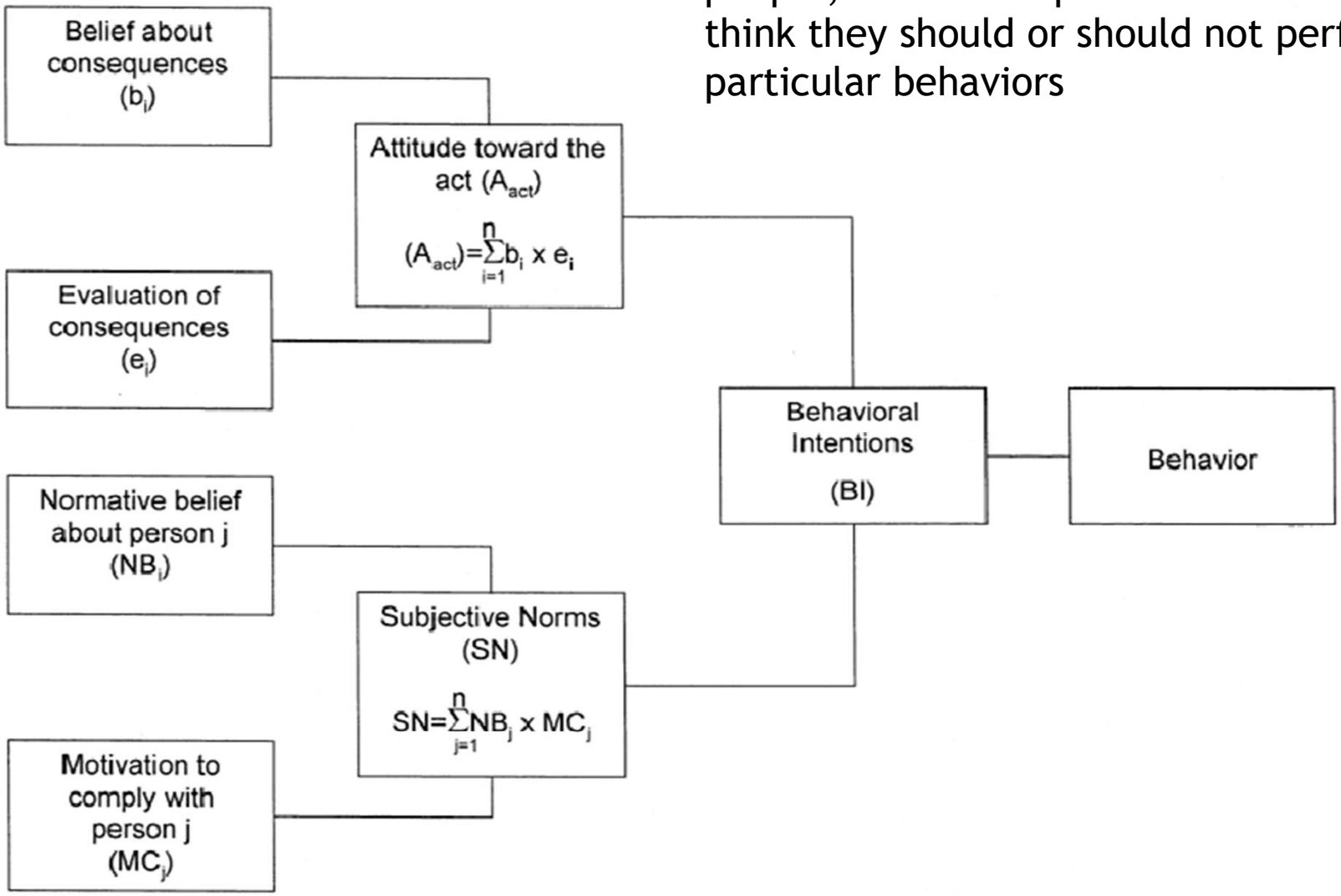
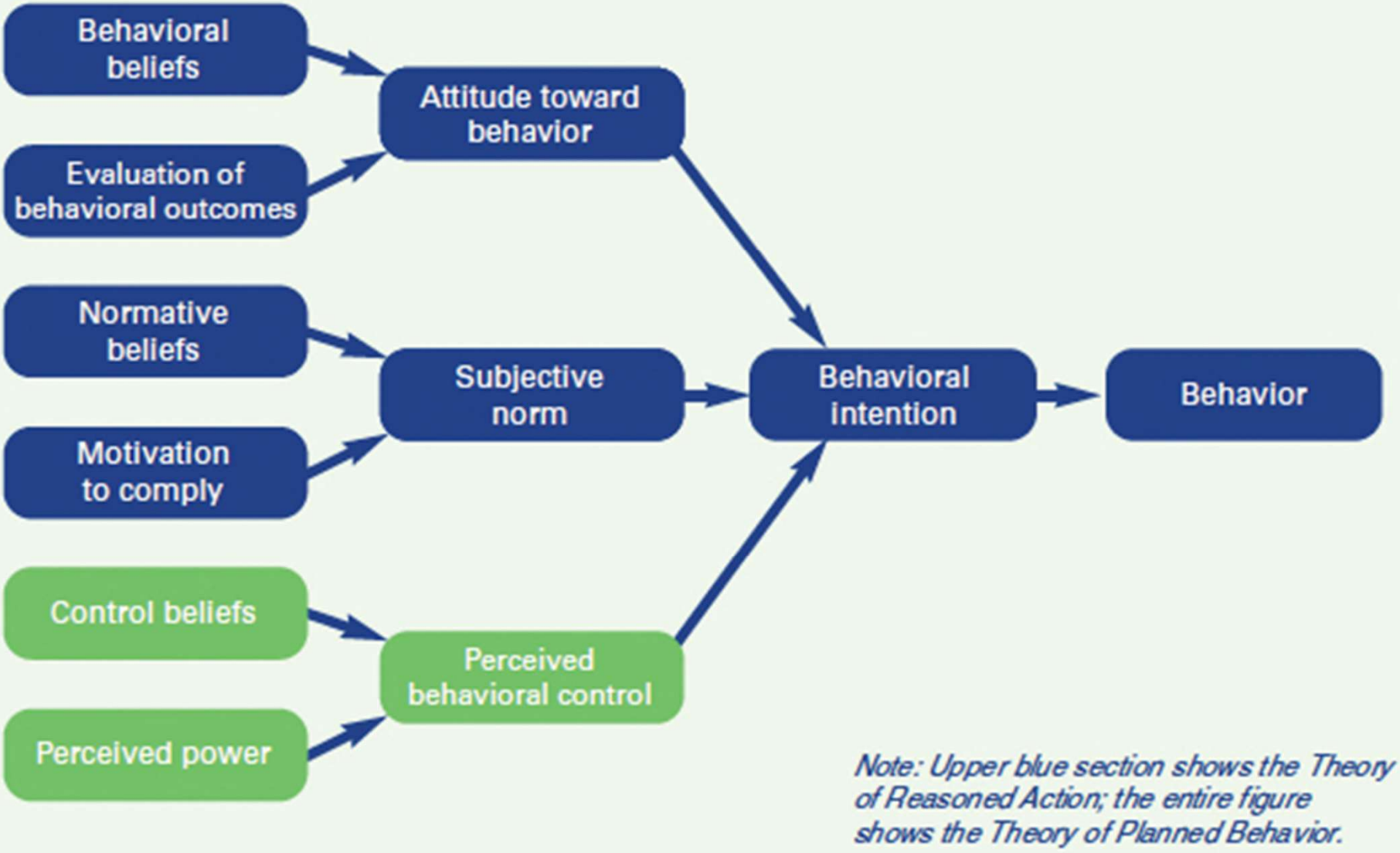


Figure 1. From Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

DIAGRAM OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR



Source:
https://www.howcommunicationworks.com/blog/2021/1/5/2t2nwgf1wtehyutw4z1k5ozesvmr4w here a very didactic video

The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) suggests that people

consider the consequences of alternative behaviors before engaging in them, and

that they choose to perform **behaviors they associate with desirable outcomes.**

In the model, behaviors are determined by a person's intention to perform the behavior.

that behavioral intent (BI) is derived from two factors:

(1) attitude toward the behavior, and

(2) subjective norms (or perceived social pressure associated with the behavior)

(and 3, perception of self control-efficacy, added in the theory of planned behaviour)

The authors adapt the Fishbein and Ajzen model to their scope (willingness to pay for renewables) cutting the part concerning the 'subjective norms'…. I don't know why…. Often scholars manipulate the models

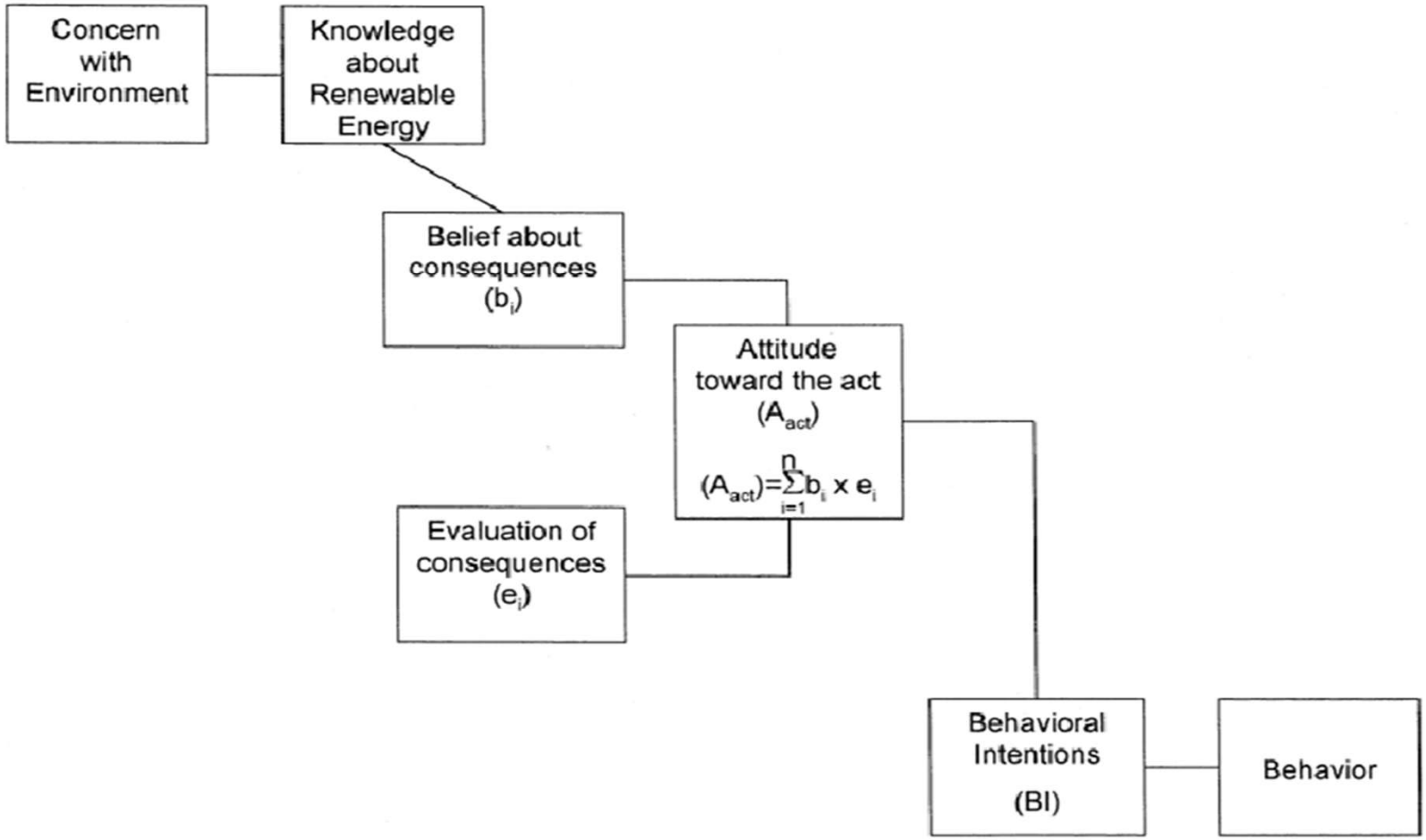


Figure 2. Theoretical framework.

They formulate 5 hypotheses

- Consumers who are more concerned about the environment tend to be more knowledgeable (IT *informato*) about renewables

- Consumers who express a higher level of concern about the environment are more likely to be willing to pay more for renewable energy

- Consumers who are more knowledgeable about renewable energy tend to have stronger beliefs about the positive consequences of using renewable energy

- Consumers who have stronger beliefs about the positive consequences of using renewable energy tend to be more willing to pay a premium for renewable energy

- Consumers who are more knowledgeable about renewable energy tend to be more willing to pay more for renewable energy

Comment: Hs are quite similar; they differentiate independent variable 'awareness' as concern, belief, information→ with an unique dependent variable willingness to pay (that is an intention)

Methodology

Preliminary focus group with electricity consumers

Terminology discussed with a power utility

Mail survey (self-fulfilled questionnaire) to gather information on concern for the environment, knowledge about renewable energy, beliefs about renewable energy, and willingness to pay more for renewable energy.

Pre test to a reduced sample

Questionnaire sent to 2600 consumers (residential electric bill payers) … stratified sample

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Sample.

Note the rate of answer to questionnaire is about 12%

Characteristics	Sample N	Sample %[a]
Gender		
Male	202	58
Female	141	41
	343	99
Age		
20–29 yrs.	38	11
30–39 yrs.	80	23
40–49 yrs.	81	23
50–59 yrs.	51	15
Over 60	77	22
	327	94
Annual household income		
Below $20,000	94	27
$20,000–$29,999	60	17
$30,000–$39,999	52	15
$40,000–$49,999	34	10
$50,000–$59,999	33	10
$60,000 or more	47	14
	320	93
Educational attainment		
Did not finish high school	40	12
High school graduate	49	14
Some college	99	29
Bachelor's degree	82	24
Masters or higher	57	16
	327	95

[a]Sample % was calculated with the use of total number of respondents to survey (N = 347). Numbers do not add up

Crucial phase for a cognitive research: the construction of items and the verification of their coherence according to the theoretical dimensions

- Knowledge
- Concern
- Beliefs
- Willingness to pay

Limits: terminology, false conscience, lies attempt

Table 3. Cronbach Alphas and Scale Items for Constructs.

	Cronbach Alpha
Knowledge (3 items)	0.76
How familiar are you with renewable energy sources?	
How familiar are you with wind-generated electricity?	
How knowledgeable are you about renewable energy?	
Concern about the environment (6 items)	0.87
How concerned are you about the environment (air, water, and land use)?	
How concerned are you about pollution?	
How concerned are you about water and air pollution in your city?	
How concerned are you about water usage in your city?	
How concerned are you about the environment when making purchases?	
The electric company should use less expensive energy even if the cheap energy may increase environmental pollution (reverse-scored item).	
Beliefs (3 items)	0.80
How important is the environment when considering renewable energy?	
How important is safety when considering renewable energy?	
How important is reliability when considering renewable energy?	
Willingness to pay more for renewable energy (6 items)	0.86
How willing would you be to use more expensive forms of energy to reduce pollution?	
How willing would you be to support a local project to generate energy with wind-powered devices?	
How willing would you be to pay more for your electric bill if you knew the cost paid for environmentally safe electricity?	
How willing would you be to support a fuel adjustment clause in your electric bill to subsidize the cost of developing wind-powered energy?	
How willing would you be to pay more now in exchange for possibly lower electric rates in the future?	
How willing would you be to pay more for wind-powered energy?	

Results

Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Consumers who are more concerned about the environment were not significantly more knowledgeable about renewable energy

Hypothesis 2 was supported: > **environment** concern → Willingness to pay more

Hypothesis 3 was not supported: > RES knowledge → evaluation of RES positive effects

Hypothesis 4 was supported: > evaluation of RES positive effects > Willingness to pay more

The result of the *t*-test supports Hypothesis 5: > RES Knowledge → Willingness to Pay More for RES

Discussion and comments

In general the Theory of Reasoned Action works: there is a correlation between concern and WtoP and between beliefs and attitude to act

However, the very high level of concern for environment presents some methodological and substantive problems:

- Tendency to agree theoretically to environmental concern (political correctness)
- The very high concern does not correspond to high belief for RES and WtoP for RES; conclusion: the attitude to act pro environment would be unstable
- Low level of a corresponding knowledge on RES indicates a technical and practical ignorance that however is only perceived and affected by the research instrument (self-completed questionnaire) that doesn't allow checking real situated knowledge

Curious the way the Authors comment the results

…. After a sophisticated and formalised methodology they need to sum up with a discursive sentence of a hypothetical consumer

“I do not know much about renewable energy, but I am in favor of supporting its program because I am very concerned about current environmental conditions. I also believe that renewable energy has clear advantages even though I do not really know a lot about it.”

Then, they comment:
“It is possible that consumers’ beliefs are developed through primarily an affective, rather than a cognitive, process”!!!!!

Conclusions weaken the cognitive approach

Emotion and Cognition is empathy, indeed; the two-combination is the novelty, also because Authors say emotions are unstable, while cognitions are stable (I am not sure, but in any case combination is good way to face environmental crisis)

LESSON END

Lesson n. 9 – Network and Institutions

Logic of the lesson

- Need for integration of levels of analysis
- Analysis of wetlands in an integrated way
- Just not to fall in a holistic approach, we choose an integration between social networks and institutions
- Remind of characters of social networks; some hints of institutions
- How they can integrate theoretically
- Vision of a promotional video on wetlands conservation

Networks and Institutions

The lesson is an attempt to combine two theoretical traditions

Social networks, for what has been said in meso level approaches (called ‘borders and bridges’)

Neo-institutionalism that insists on the creation and application of collective norms through myths, rituals, expertise, protocols, standards, certifications, conventions, parliamentary and government activities

In our monster frame is an ‘above or macro’ approach: rules affect or force or drive people in implicit and explicit ways

There is a psychological way toward rules → subjective norms

But, in our case the task is how institutions (rules) interact with social networks, leaving beside actors’ beliefs

Levels of analysis; how to combine them? Is it necessary to combine them?

Actors → subjective norms (=belief about rules complied by exemplary persons/institutions)

Social Networks → interactions create and animate rules application

Institutions → set of recognised objective rules

Remind of the networks polyfunctional use

Gretchen Ennis and Deborah West, Using social network analysis in community development practice and research: a case study, *Community Development Journal*, 48(1), 2013 pp. 40–57

The paper is an example of Network Analysis as tool of

analysis,
intervention
assessment

Social Networks not always produce positive effects: but

-exclusiveness (club effect, relations as a matter of rank),
-patron-client practices (exchange of favours) eg job for vote
-information redundancy (Granovetter: the strength of weak ties),
-professional selection based on friendship, blood, ethnic membership
-…
Theoretical and practical problems with social networks are 2:

- They become rigid, informal, hidden, exclusive social forms
- How the social tie can respect the other in his/her individual sphere (anonymity, privacy, rights)?

Even an intimate relationship needs respectfulness of the other as such (in order to avoid **over socialisation**, excessive pressure of society on individuals)

In other words, social network must find a **balance** between (slide already present in the set)

- The exclusivity of relationship and its openness to third actors (eg the foreigner)
- The self-establishing of relationship and its standardization (compliance to an external rule)

For these reasons, we must integrate a social network approach with an institutional one.

Here institution means a set of rules that assure both the protection of individuality and the network universal openness. See the rules for free/volunteers associations in the civil code (they have right to assembly and duty to be open and democratic)

The issue is to understand ***the recursive nature of institutional and network influences*** (J. Owen-Smith and W. W. Powell 2007)

What are institutions and how they work?
As said, institutions are set of rules, which have a processual nature:

- Formalisation process
- Legitimation
- Rituals and Myths
- Evolution .. birth, growth, stabilisation, possible decline …
- Products (norms, standards, protocols, procedures, styles, codes, manuals etc……)
- Isomorphic Mechanisms: emulation, standardisation, socialisation in the same schools (Powell and DiMaggio)

Return on a concept apparently simple and natural

What is a social network; **strong version**: a set of nodes and links among them, dominated by the rule of reciprocity (gift exchange). **Weak version** SN is a set of simple contacts

Forms, extension, duration and functions are VERY variable and unpredictable, despite there are historical social networks like **relatives links** that have been very strong and stable… because they were institutionalised (clan).

SNs, as set of links among nodes, essentially have not an **ideology** or a **membership** (very modern!); their borders are defined exclusively by the frequency and intensity of relationships; thus a network is less than a group, even if presumably in each group there is at least one network.

Do you remember this initial classification of

Main ideal-types of social aggregations with essential characteristics (concept intension)?

Group(-Community)

(e.g. pair group)
Common ideas and lifestyle
membership++

Institution

(e.g. State)
Rules and Sanctions
Legitimation, membership+++

Collectivity(-Society)

(e.g. Italian society, urban residents)
Common identity,/residence
Membership+

Network

(e.g. social media, movements)
Free exchange of gift
Membership+

Note: Real aggregations often have an intermediate position, like associations or markets; some ideal-types contains others (e.g. informal networks are within almost all other ones)

"Numerous scholars identify networks as the channels through which institutional effects flow, and see networks of *like-minded* individuals as central reference groups that promote widely emulated practices" (Owen-Smith, Powell, p. 599).

Therefore relationships are the mechanism for compliance to rules

The 2 authors in their paper, firstly, defined some researches arriving to the above result, then they analyse 4 core concepts they think work in both institutional and network analysis

- **Organisational Fields** (set of organisations submitted to the same rules)
- **Institutional Logics** (habit and conventions of a particular field)
- **Embeddedness** (the non-contractual basis of contract)
- **Social Capital** (capital or asset derived from the sum of individuals relationships, Lin, 2001).

(The four concepts are) "Meaningful social categories to be defined in large part by relationships' participants from within and across them" (Owen-Smith, Powell, p. 603)

The two authors take a **co-constitutive** approach to network and institutions

The profile of an individual or organisation is defined by

1) Formal attributions (e.g. doctor needs a university degree and recognition from the healthy authority) = **CATEGORY**

2) Interaction with others made during practices, experiences field activities = **RELATIONAL PRAXIS**

Who is an entrepreneur? Both a person with a **recognised status** and some **relational skills** (… not really a capitals owner, so!)

What is an NGO? Both an authorised agency of development and an actor able to connect different worlds.

What is more important CATEGORY or RELATIONSHIPS?

The Authors say there are '**myriad ways** that relationships and categories influence each other' …. unsatisfactory

Institutions determine most of behaviour	Intermediate situations	Relationships are fluid and indetermined
Military, bureaucratic roles	Voluntary associations life	Occasional relationship (Sociability, Simmel)
Traditional aristocratic family	Bourgeoise family	Post Modern family
Unspecialised worker	Worker in the islands of production	R&D employees in the company

How to analyse a concrete case with lens of network-institution combination: concrete measures for protecting wetlands

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--rHgombuUc&t=1173s

Into Wetland Conservation

How to analyse a concrete case with lens of network-institution combination: community gardens (CGs)

They usually are public land plots given to private people for cultivating their own vegetables

Institutional dimensions: public property, rules of plot assignment and use (eg organic method), social assistance policy

Network dimensions: cooperation among assignees, pro third persons activities, cultural animation of neighbourhood, internal relational leadership, ….

Patterns of network-institution combination in CGs

- Institutions promote sociability for achieving consensus
- Landless people mobilise to achieve public resources
- Culture institutions (eg library) promote land/nature contact by aggregating people usually closed in their circles
- Unexpected rules of cooperation raise by near contacts in the garden (weak ties produce a rule of strong ties, then a pro-third association)

……. The nearing of network and institutional logics produce society

Conclusions for our topic 'cultures of Sustainability'

Social networks and institutions are two ways to look at society. One is based on reciprocity, the other on rules/categories.

Analysing environmental crisis, cultures and praxes with these 2 different eyes is fruitful, even if we have not a formal recognised pattern or theory

Community gardens: they oscillate between to be a club with mutual ties and a fixed-by-law service for all community

The various and growing world of 'environmental agencies' (eg Green Building Council) is probably an organisational field

Multi-scalar interorganisational relationships (see 30rd Conference of the Parties COP) another example of SNs-Is combination

Cultures of sustainability according to network/institution combination assume a new light; not only a personal baggage (micro) not only a collective frame (macro) but also a collective recognised enterprise inspiring public laws defending the environment

LESSON END