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THEORIZING ENVIRONMENTAL
(SOCIAL) WORLDS
THE SYSTEMS OF EXCHANGE TYPOLOGY

<http://systemsofexchange.org>

Nicole Woolsey Biggart Dina Biscotti Kelsey Meagher

Today

- **Individuals** don't act individually
- How thinking **social** gives often gives better leverage
- The natural world is **social** – really!

You are **more** than an individual!



- People are born into societies
- Societies differ – values, networks, groups, institutions
- But we mostly *assume* individuals when trying to save energy

Behavioral economics

[cognitive limits, assumptions]

Rebates and incentives

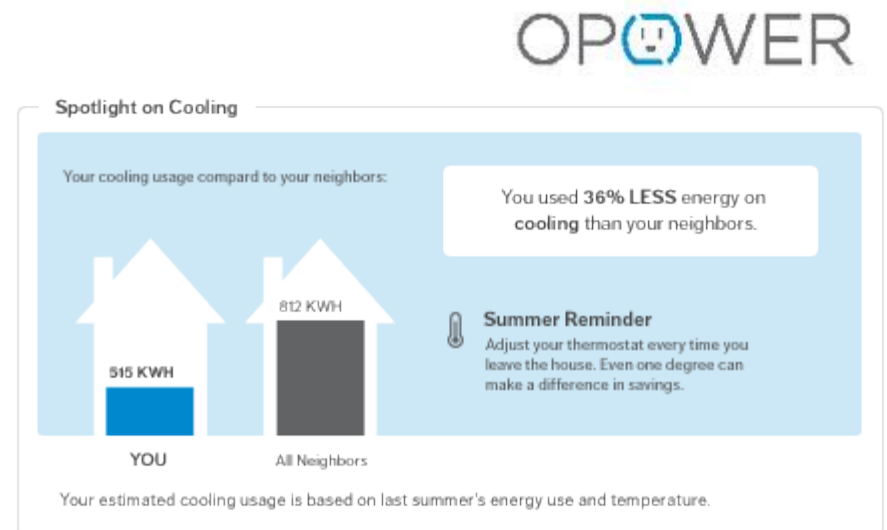
Emphasizes cost-savings associated with energy efficiency technology adoption and behavior change

Good, but there's more....

Social psychology

[group dynamics, peer pressure]

Detailed (but anonymous) utility bills comparing your energy usage with that of your neighbors



Understanding Social Action

Multiple Levels and Contexts

- Psychology
 - Individuals – cognition, affect
- Social Psychology
 - Social effects on individual mental states and action
 - Group dynamics
 - Socialization, conformity, social identity
- Economics
 - Macro: dynamics of economies
 - Micro: how individuals decide
 - Assumes individuals- are rational, asocial
- Behavioral Economics
 - More realistic psychological assumptions, emotion, cognitive limits



- Social Anthropology
 - Culture, social organization, material culture and artifacts, values
- Sociology
 - Study of whole societies and subgroups, social categories
 - Organizations, industries, households
 - Social systems at national and sub-national levels
- Political Science
 - Political systems and behavior
 - Governance, political institutions
 - Power and politics



What if we assumed that people are Social?

Systems of Exchange

		Structure of social relations	
		Universalistic (act toward all the same)	Particularistic (act toward outsiders differently)
Basis of action	Instrumental rationality (means calculus)	<i>Price system</i>	<i>Associative system</i>
	Substantive rationality (calculus in relation to an end)	<i>Moral system</i>	<i>Communal system</i>


Biggart and Delbridge, 2004, *Academy of Management Review*, 29: 28-49.

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Cutting the world up into FOUR types of societies, groups

Systems of Exchange

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MORAL: faith communities in action



Great holiday gifts from **Interfaith Power & Light**

ShopIPL.org



Instant Discounts Available for Faith Organizations through This Online Store



Energy efficient LED holiday lights




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One Change: simple actions matter



<http://www.onechange.org/our-story/>





TABLE 1
Four Logics of Water Governance

System Characteristics	Price	Associative	Moral	Communal
Valuation of water	Instrumental (Economic good)	Instrumental (Economic good)	Substantive (Social and environmental good)	Substantive (Social and environmental good)
System of allocation	Auction market	Organization of actors in market	Guarantee of water rights by some governing body	Community norms and regulations
Normative user	Individual or firm	Association of individuals or firms	Value-oriented individuals or groups	Community member
Principle for optimal use	Efficiency; Value for money	Mutual gain in the market	Ethical value of water	Equitable distribution
Example use of water	Manufacturing component; Irrigation for individual corporate farm	Manufacturing component or irrigation for network of firms	Drinking water and sanitation for all people	Irrigation for community subsistence farms

ORGANIZING BELIEF: Interfaith Social Change Organizations and the Religious Environmental Movement

- 300,000 U.S. religious congregations
- Moral, Communal
- Challenge is connecting beliefs to environment
- Narratives of belief
- Network leveraging across faiths



Conclusion

- Multiple logics inform human action
- People are socialized within institutions
- Social relationships and social institutions can be leveraged to drive change
- Efforts to promote energy efficiency and the adoption of renewables should expand beyond their focus on self-interested, utility-maximizing individuals
- Social analysis reveals leverage points

Thank you for your attention!

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