



Motivating Sustainable Consumption

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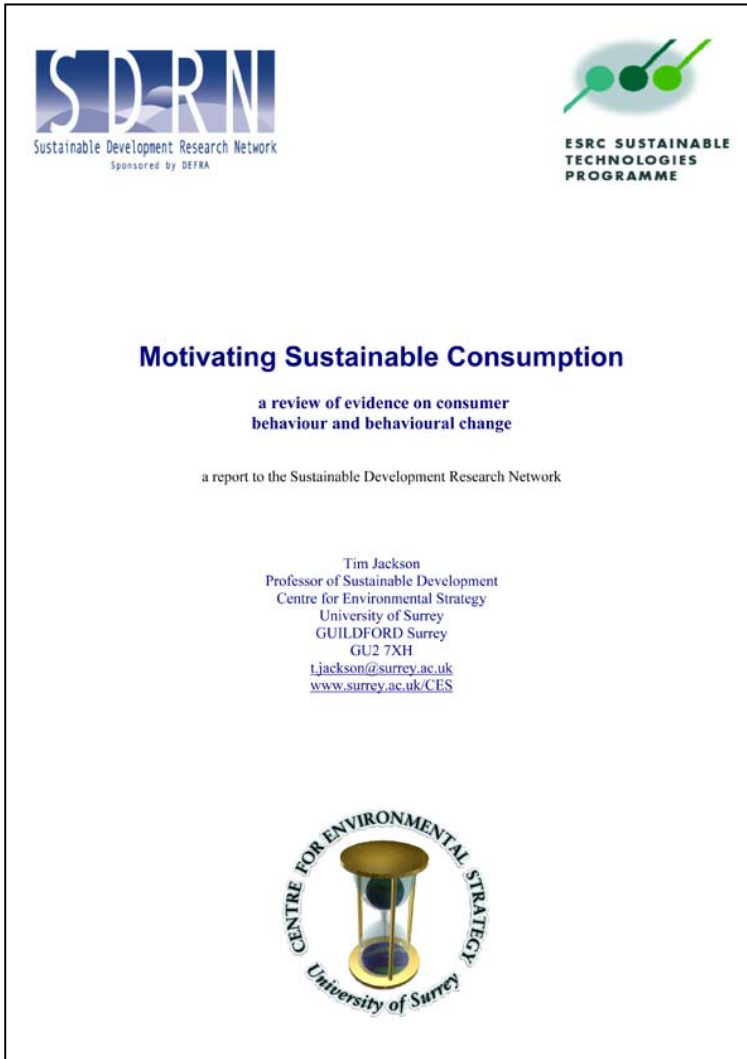
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SDRN Review



Part 1 Framing the Debate

1. Towards Evidence-Based Policy
2. Consumption: the 'vanguard of history'

Part 2 Models of Consumer Behaviour

3. The Role of Models
4. Rational Choice
5. Against Rational Choice
6. Adjusted Expectancy Value Theory
7. Moral and Normative Conduct
8. Cognition and Habit
9. Sociality and Self
10. Integrative Theories of Consumer Behaviour

Part 3 Towards Behavioural Change

11. Change, persuasion and learning
12. Policy Options and Opportunities

Consumption: the 'vanguard of history'

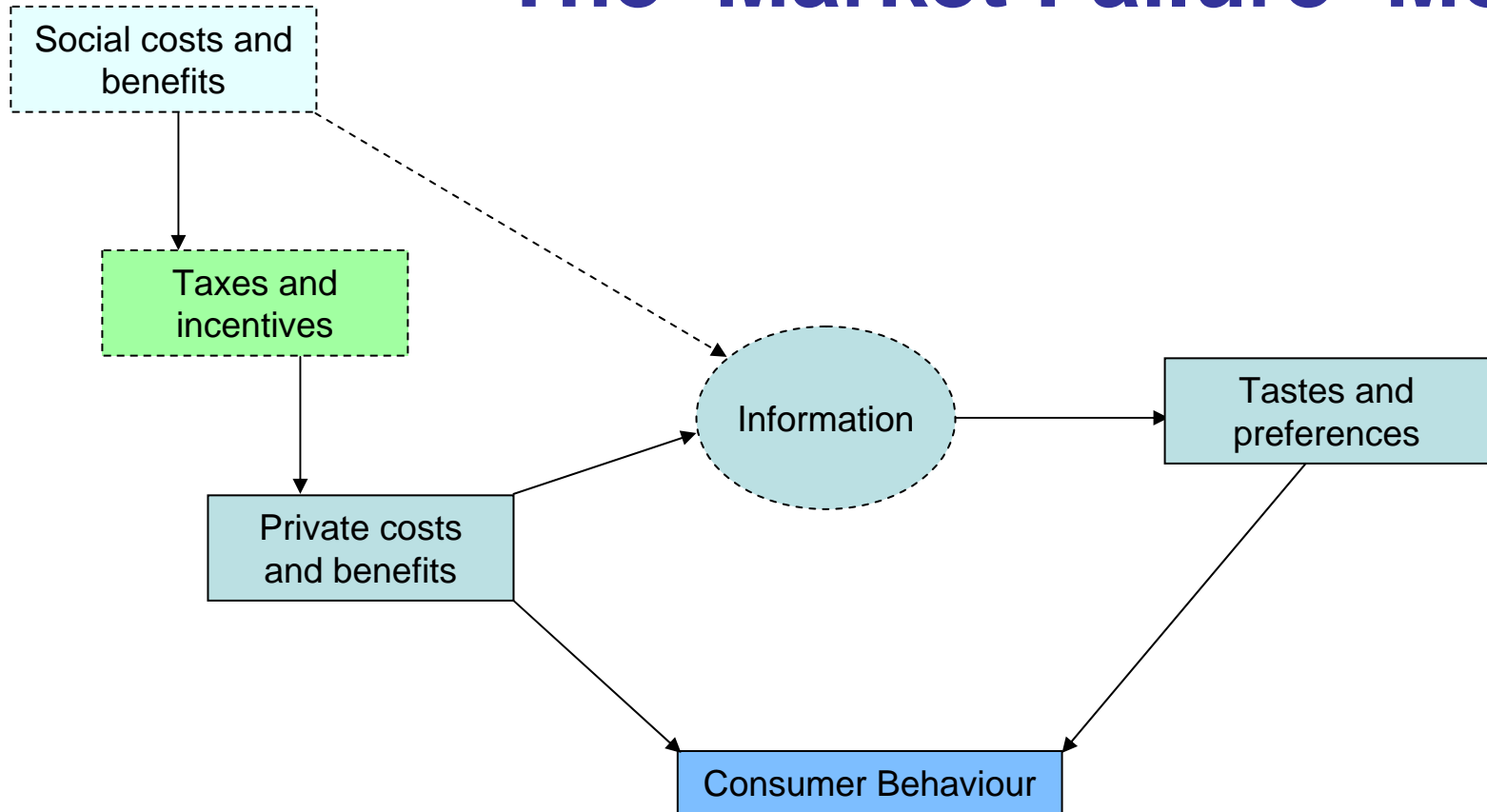


'cathedrals of consumption?'

The literature suggests a huge variety of different roles for consumption in modern society, including:

- needs-satisfaction;
- identity formation;
- status and distinction;
- conspicuous consumption;
- social/sexual selection;
- social practice and routine;
- social cohesion and belonging;
- dreaming and hedonic desire;
- negotiating the sacred and the profane;
- the pursuit of meaning

The 'Market Failure' Model



Rational Choice



'Rational utility self-maximisers?'

The **rational choice model** contends that consumers make decisions by calculating the individual costs and benefits of different options and choosing the option that maximises their expected net benefits.

Several key assumptions underlie the model, namely that:

- **individual decisions** are the appropriate framework for understanding behaviour;
- 'rational' behaviour is the result of **cognitive deliberation**;
- **self-interest** is the main driver of behaviour;
- **preferences are exogenous** to the model, individual and absolute.

Beyond Rational Choice



'The heart has reasons that reason does not know at all.'

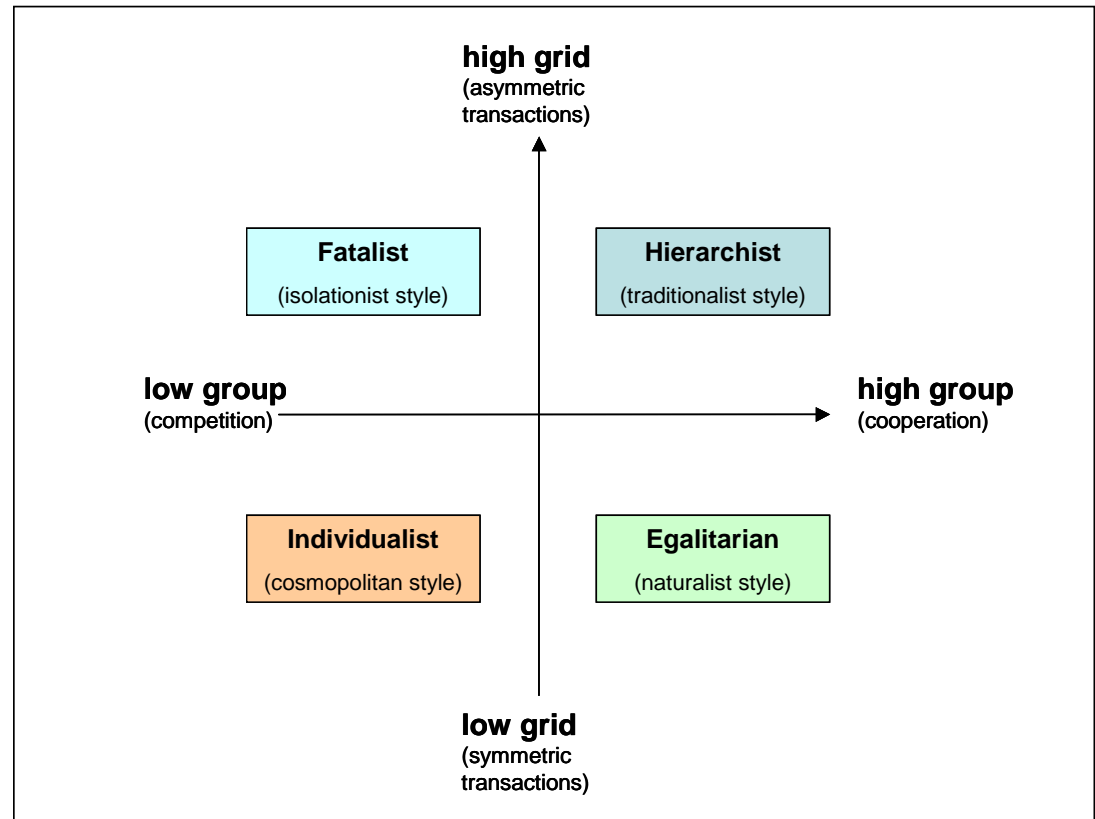
Pascal 1670

- habits and routines (**procedural rationality**) bypass cognitive deliberation;
- **moral influences** can over-ride self-interest and the 'cost-benefit calculus';
- **social factors** shape and constrain individual preference;
- emotional responses (**expressive rationality**) confound cognitive deliberation;
- **evolutionary rationality** suggests that emotion *precedes* cognition.

Policies in Cultural Context

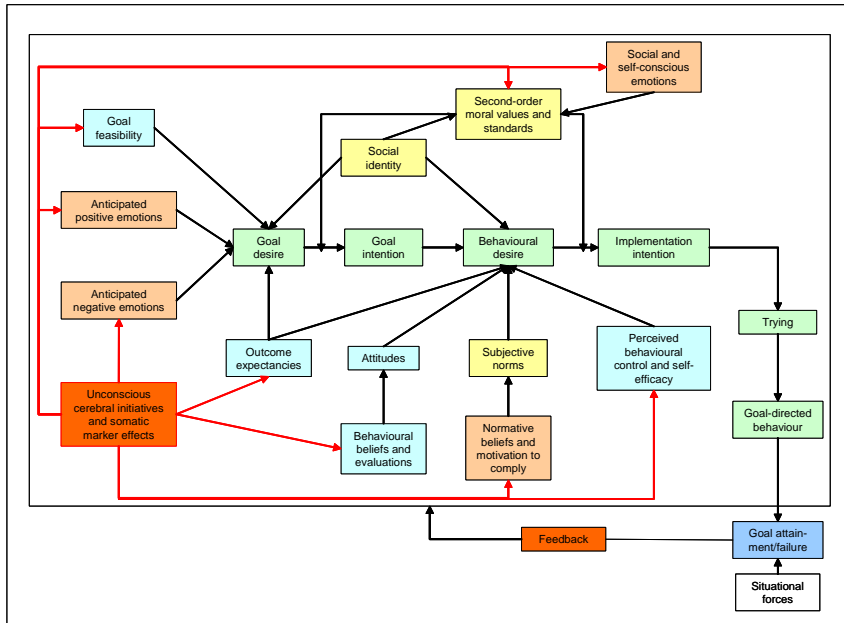
Cultural Theory suggests that there are four distinct forms of social organisation. Each form has a corresponding cultural type: the **fatalist**, the **hierarchist**, the **individualist** or the **egalitarian**.

Each of the four cultural types has a different view of nature and a different view of how social and environmental goals should be achieved. The dominant cultural model in 21st century society is individualist. But this is only one form of social organisation.



Cultural Theory's typology of cultural types

Making Sense of Behaviour

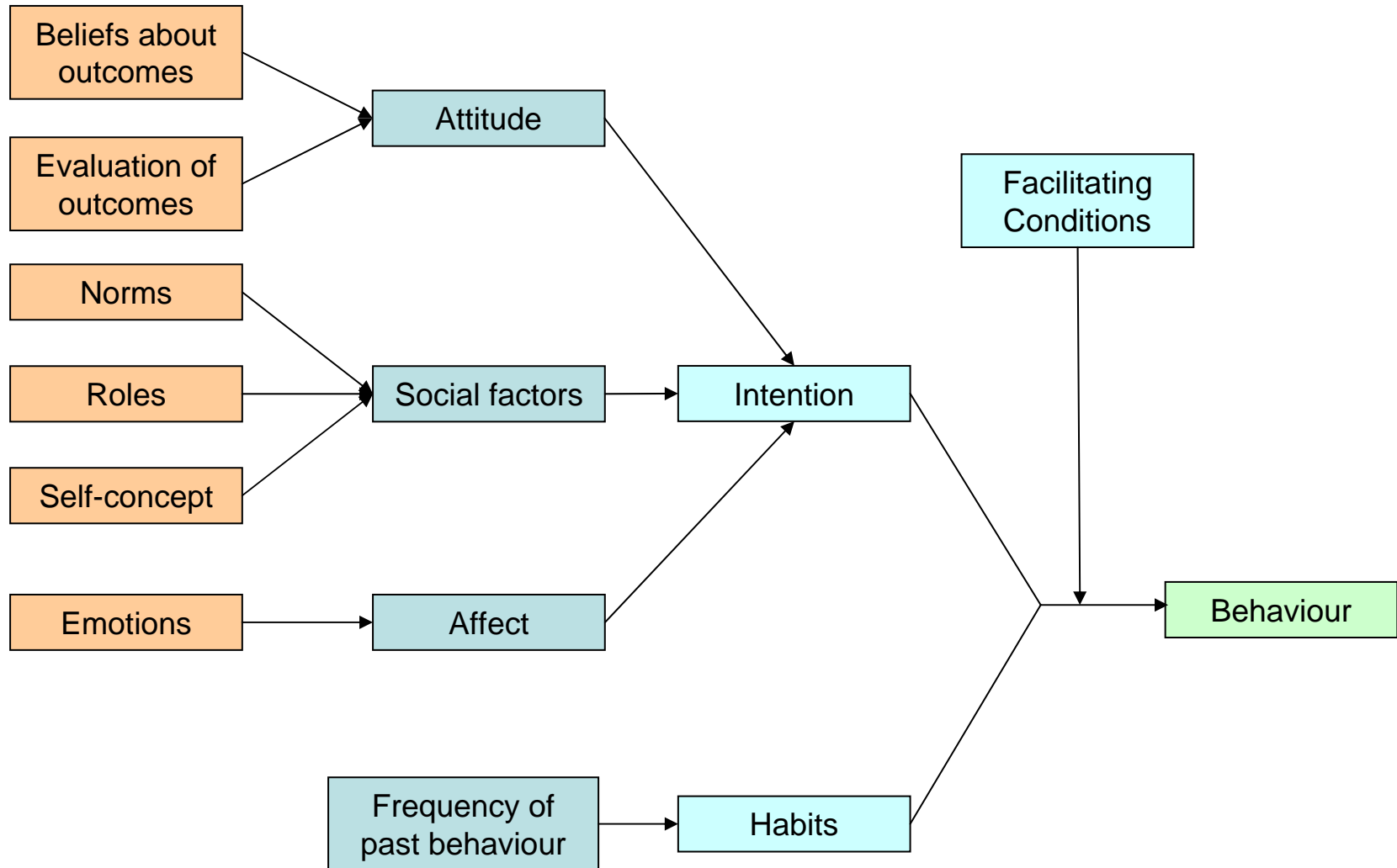


The Grand Unified Theory of everything?

Some behavioural models focus mainly in internal aspects of behaviour (motivations, attitudes, values). Others address mainly external influences on behaviour (incentives, structures, cultural norms).

Making sense of behaviour inevitably requires a multi-dimensional view which crosses the agency-structure divide and incorporates both 'internalist' and 'externalist' views.

A Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour



Policy Lessons (1)



Looking through the lens of consumer behaviour reveals a complex and apparently intractable policy terrain for two (related) reasons:

- consumption as 'social conversation'
- the problem of consumer lock-in.

The rhetoric of consumer sovereignty is inaccurate and unhelpful in steering behavioural change, in particular because it regards choice as entirely individualistic and because it fails to unravel the social and psychological influences on behaviour.

Delving into this complexity is essential if behaviour change initiatives are to address key problem areas in consumer behaviour:

- the influence of the social fabric
- habit, routine and lock-in.

Policy Lessons (2)



Despite the 'hands-off' rhetoric of modern governance, policy intervenes continually in people's consumption patterns, both directly and indirectly - in particular through its influence in **co-creating the social and institutional context** within which consumer behaviours are negotiated.

This view opens out a much more creative vista for policy intervention than hitherto recognised, in particular through the influence of government on:

- **facilitating conditions (markets, access etc)**
- **institutional context (product, media, trading standards etc);**
- **business practices;**
- **social and cultural context;**
- **community-based social change; and**
- **its own example.**

Concluding Remarks



'Open on Sundays?'

- social, institutional and cultural context;
- consumer lock-in;
- social control of symbolic resources;
- community-based social change
- *anomie* and resistance to change;
- towards supportive communities....
- ...and meaningful lives.

New approach to behaviour change

