

Enhancing **environmental citizenship** and reducing **energy consumption** through **creative engagement** with building users on **social media**

{ how green are you ? }



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Research questions

1. Can **social media** tools be used effectively to foster an interactive **participatory process** that increases **environmental citizenship**?

2. Would this lead to a **reduction in energy consumption**?

Case study



**De Montfort University
City of Leicester, UK**

Research background

1. **Climate change** is a **priority** for the UK Government



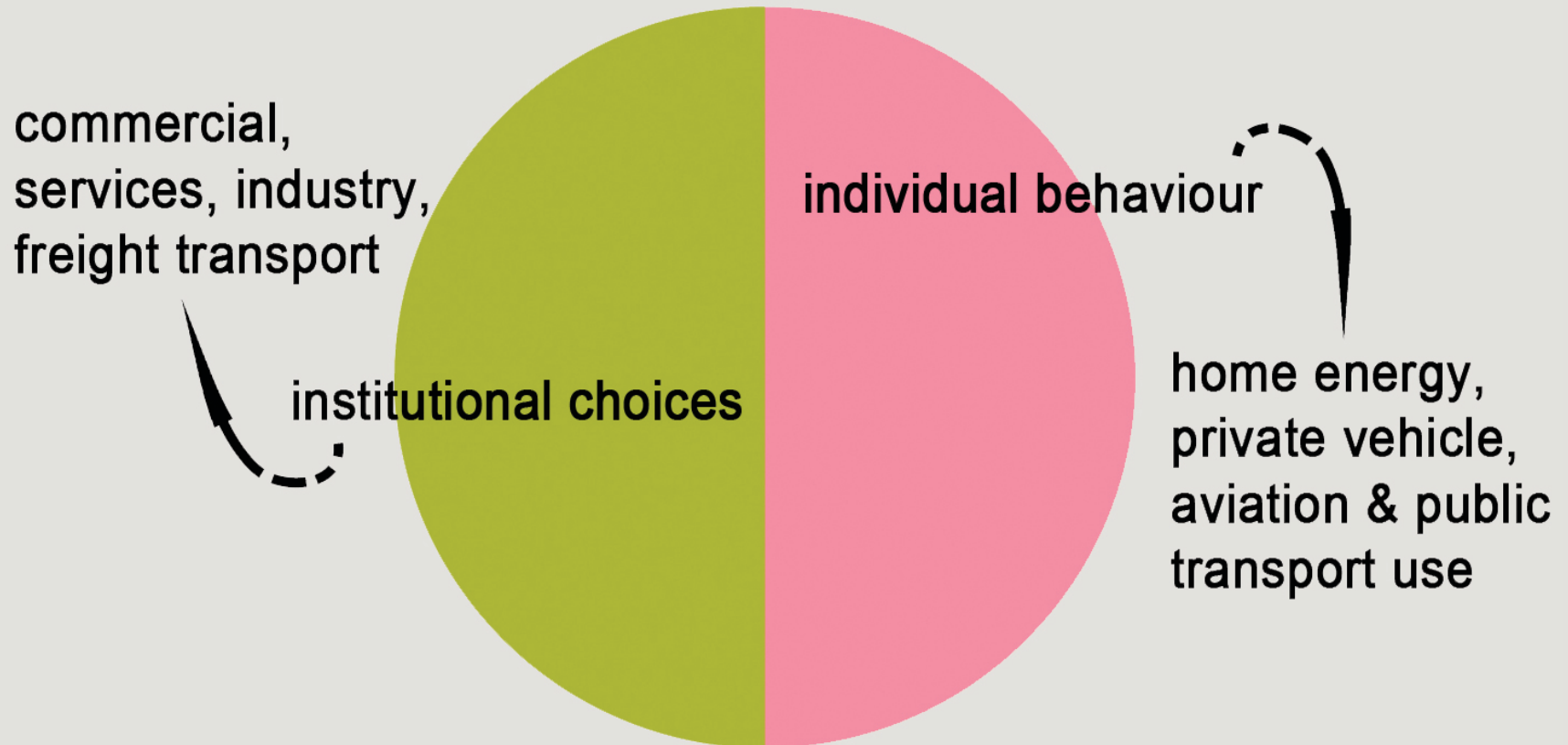
Research background

2. **University** and institutional buildings can **lead by example** and work as a catalyst in the energy reduction context



Research background

4. Buildings don't use energy, people do (Janda 2011)



Adapted from Janda 2011

Theory

Participatory approach

- Capable of helping society to change its attitudes and actions towards a pro-environmental model (Petts 2006)
- Establish a new relationship between expert and lay comprehension about a topic, enhancing trust and decision ownership
- It enhances democracy (Webler et al. 1995)

Theory

Testing the hypothesis:

participation leads to enhancement of environmental citizenship in engaged individuals

The green citizen makes environmental conservation and sustainability an important duty



Methodology

The links between **action research** and **participation theory**

Action research

The researcher is seen more as a facilitator than an `expert` (Gray 2004).

Promote feelings of equality for all involved (Gray 2004).

Action research is seen as a tool for bringing about democracy (Lewin 1946).

Learning is generated among the participants (Gray 2004).



Public participation process

The aim is not to impose solutions, but to construct a solution with all stakeholders.

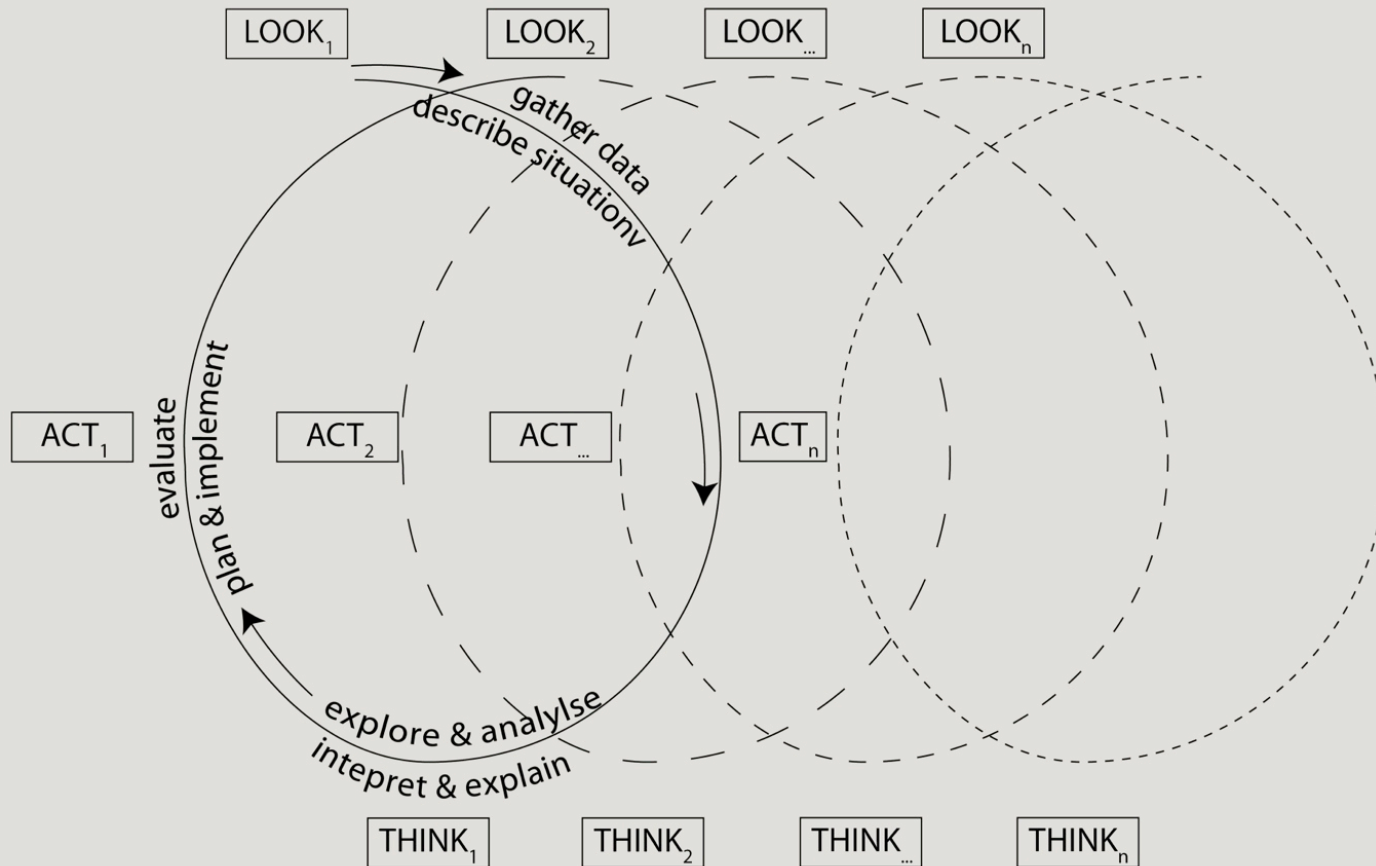
Fairness is one of the theoretical principles (Webler & Tuler 2000).

Public participation is an enhancement of democracy (Arnstein 1969).

Social learning is an important outcome (Webler et al. 1995).

Methodology

Action research: look – think – act routine



Adapted from Stringer 1996

Methodology

Social media: a tool for participatory engagement

Public participation process

Bottom up approach

Citizen knowledge

Equality in the process

Information (or knowledge) can spread
outside the participatory group

The process facilitate the dialogue
between experts and lay people

The process is an enhancement of
democracy



Social media

Bottom up phenomenon

Everyone can participate and create
content in the online discussion

Information is shared without
geographical constraints

Information can easily spread
outside the group of 'friends'

Comments transform information
into an interactive dialogue

Social media have been used to ask
an enhancement in democracy

Methodology

Study design and measurement

1. Prior to intervention – Evaluating baseline conditions

- a. Tracking frequency and content of pre-test social media interactions
- b. Conducting pre-intervention surveys on environmental citizenship and energy behaviour
- c. Recruiting groups of participants for in-depth interviewing and monitoring

Methodology

Study design and measurement

2. During intervention

- a. Social media campaign
- b. Interventions using participatory approaches and action research methodology
- c. Application of public participation theory
- d. Tracking of energy, social media interactions, and responses to interactions

3. After intervention

Analysis of data and reporting results

Thank you

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