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Computational models in systemic design

Jamsin, Ella

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Computational Models of Complexity to Design for Sustainability

Questions and opportunities

Dr. Ella Jamsin

Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, TU Delft, Netherlands

Sustainability and social systems

- Take a commonly known sustainability challenge, such as plastic waste
- The first inclination is to deal with the waste directly, e.g. by organising beach clean ups
- The first design thought leads to rethinking the products made of plastic, such as packaging.
- Quickly designers dealing with this issue see the need to take into account human systems connected to plastic, such as a local community, the global plastic supply chains, or the worldwide network of additive manufacturing.
- These are all examples of complex social systems.



Source: Stefan van der Heijden, 2018.

100% reusable, recyclable or compostable plastic packaging by 2025

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD



Source: New Plastics Economy, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2018.



Source: Fab Lab Foundation, 2018.

How does design
approach complexity in
sustainability?

Complexity and sustainability in design

Systemic design

“Systemic design is distinguished from service or experience design in terms of scale, **social complexity** and integration. (...) By integrating systems thinking and its methods, systemic design brings human-centered design to **complex, multi-stakeholder service systems** as those found in industrial networks, transportation, medicine and healthcare.”

Transition design:

“A new, design-led approach should enable stakeholders to arrive at a shared definition of the problem and an **understanding of its complexities and interdependencies**”

Systemic design - Giga-mapping

Price Comparison 40km 3hr

ReachNow

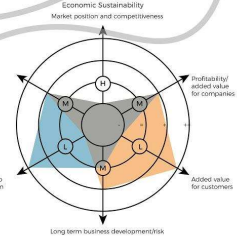
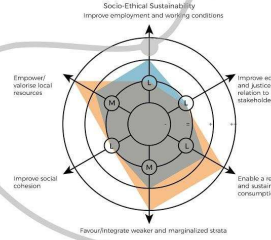
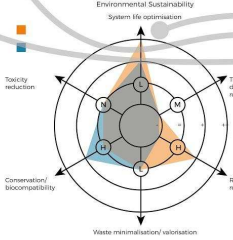
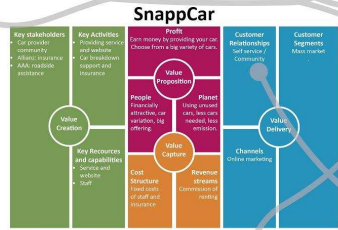
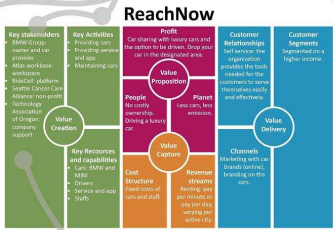
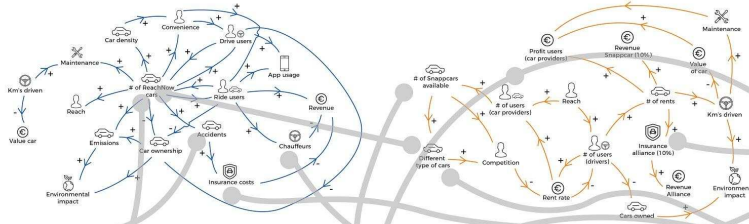


- €16.78 discount
- €19.90 regular
- €41.59 5 hours rate

SnappCar



- €26.98 2001 Citroen
- €33.32 2002 MINI
- €36.54 1997 BMW



1. How do the contexts differ from each other?

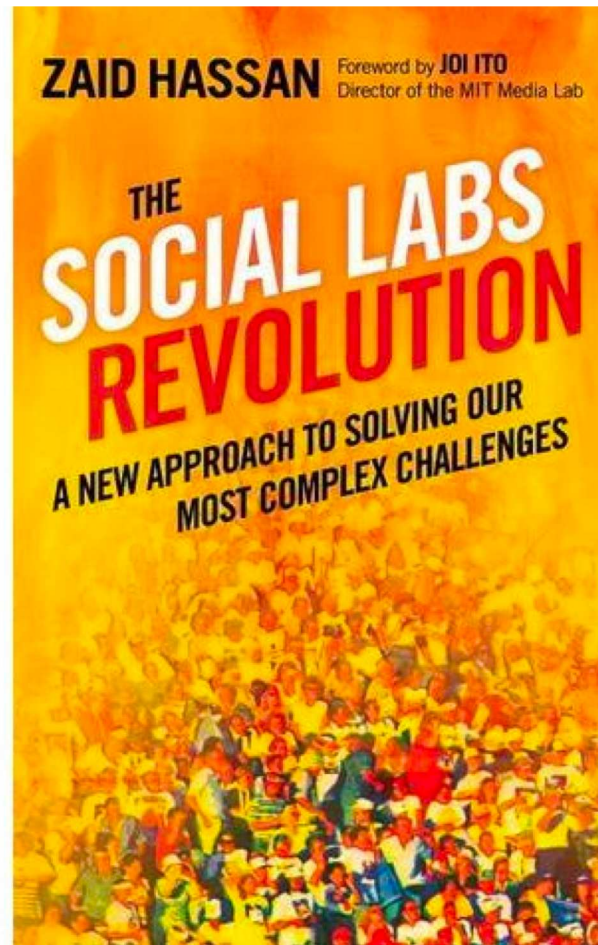
2. Comparison of SnappCar, ReachNow Ride and ReachNow Drive in different contexts

3. Future Improvement and Implementation of the different elements that Context variation can provide for both car-sharing and rental services

2. **Task Issue:** Working on options to improve the customer experience in different contexts. Adaptation to regional differences.
3. **Task Issue:** Working on options to improve the customer experience in different contexts. Adaptation to regional differences.
4. **Task Issue:** Working on options to improve the customer experience in different contexts. Adaptation to regional differences.

Source: B. van Zwet, C. Mui, J. Janbroers, M. Terranea, S. Botterweck, 2018 (student project)

Systemic design – participatory design and co-creation



Transition design – future visioning

What aspect of the problem does your snapshot address? print headline below

**NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY, POLICE AGGRESSION
LACK OF STRONG COMMUNITY**

Describe the ways in which societal and cultural, assumptions, beliefs and norms have changed in 2050. How are they different from the beliefs and assumptions that underpin the problem now?

IN 2050, CRIME IS SEEN AS A RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY COMMUNITY TO RESOLVE, AND A FAILURE TO SUPPORT THOSE CITIZENS WHO TURN TO CRIME. THE COMMUNITY TAKES RESPONSIBILITY TO JUDGE THE ACCUSED AND TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR REHABILITATION IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY REJOIN SOCIETY. THE FOCUS HAS SHIFTED FROM PUNISHMENT TO REHABILITATION AND ATONEMENT IN ORDER TO REGAIN DIGNITY AND RESPECT. ULTIMATELY, TO BE ABLE TO LIVE AND CONTRIBUTE MEANINGFULLY.

Snapshots of Lifestyles in 2050

1. A HOMELESS MAN ROBBS AN EIGHTY WOMAN IN A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

2. HE IS ARRESTED BY THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY FORCE AND TAKEN TO THE REHABILITATION CENTER.

3. IN THE REHABILITATION CENTER HE APPEARS BEFORE A BOARD OF INDIVIDUALS ASSASSINATING THE MAN, WOMAN AND A COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE.

4. WHILE HE AND HIS VICTIM UNDERGO SCOURGING, HE MEETS AT THE REHABILITATION CENTER, WHERE HE IS GIVEN MEDICAL CARE, TALKS TO MENTORS AND WORKS IN THE COMMUNITY CENTER IN WHICH THE REHABILITATION CENTER IS HOUSED. HE IS ALSO GIVEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE GARDEN, REPAIRING CARP AND HANDLES.

5. AFTER A FEW WEEKS HE MEETS WITH THE VICTIM TO REK FORGIVENESS AND RESTITUTION IS AUTOMATICALLY AWARDED UPON.

6. HIS SENTENCE IS COMPARED OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND HE AGREES TO HELP HIS WIFE HOLD A VEGETABLE GARDEN.

7. AFTER HE SERVES HIS SENTENCE, HE IS GIVEN THE OPTION OF JOINING THE COMMUNITY. HE IS RESPECTED FOR HAVING PAID HIS DEBT AND BEGINS TO COUNSEL 'AT RISK' YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY.

GROUP NAME

FRIENDSHIP RESIDENTS

SNAPSHOT PROFILE

At what level of scale is your snapshot situated?
(The household, neighborhood, city or region)

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

What fears/concerns/hopes/aspirations does it address?

LACK OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, OVERALL LACK OF SAFETY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, MORE "EYES ON STREET" POLICING THAT INVOLVES THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, SOME OF THE ROOT CAUSES OF CRIME ARE BEING ADDRESSED (DRUG ADDICTION, LACK OF COMMUNITY ROLE MODELS, INABILITY TO MAKE A LIVING/UNEMPLOYMENT)

What basic needs (according to Mas-Neef) are met by this snapshot from the future?

PROTECTION, UNDERSTANDING, PARTICIPATION, SUBSISTENCE, CREATION, IDENTITY, FREEDOM.

Transition Design Tools: Irwin & Kossuff, Carnegie Mellon University 2017

How do complexity
scientists approach
social systems?

Computational models of social systems in sustainability - examples

Systems of differential equations

Slow Response of Societies to New Problems: Causes and Costs

Marten Scheffer,^{1*} Frances Westley,² and William Brock³

Agent-based models

Agent-Based Modeling and Industrial Ecology

*Robert L. Axtell, Clinton J. Andrews,
and Mitchell J. Small*

System dynamics

Navigating towards sustainable development: A system dynamics approach

Peder Hjorth^{a,1}, Ali Bagheri^{a,b,*}

Networks

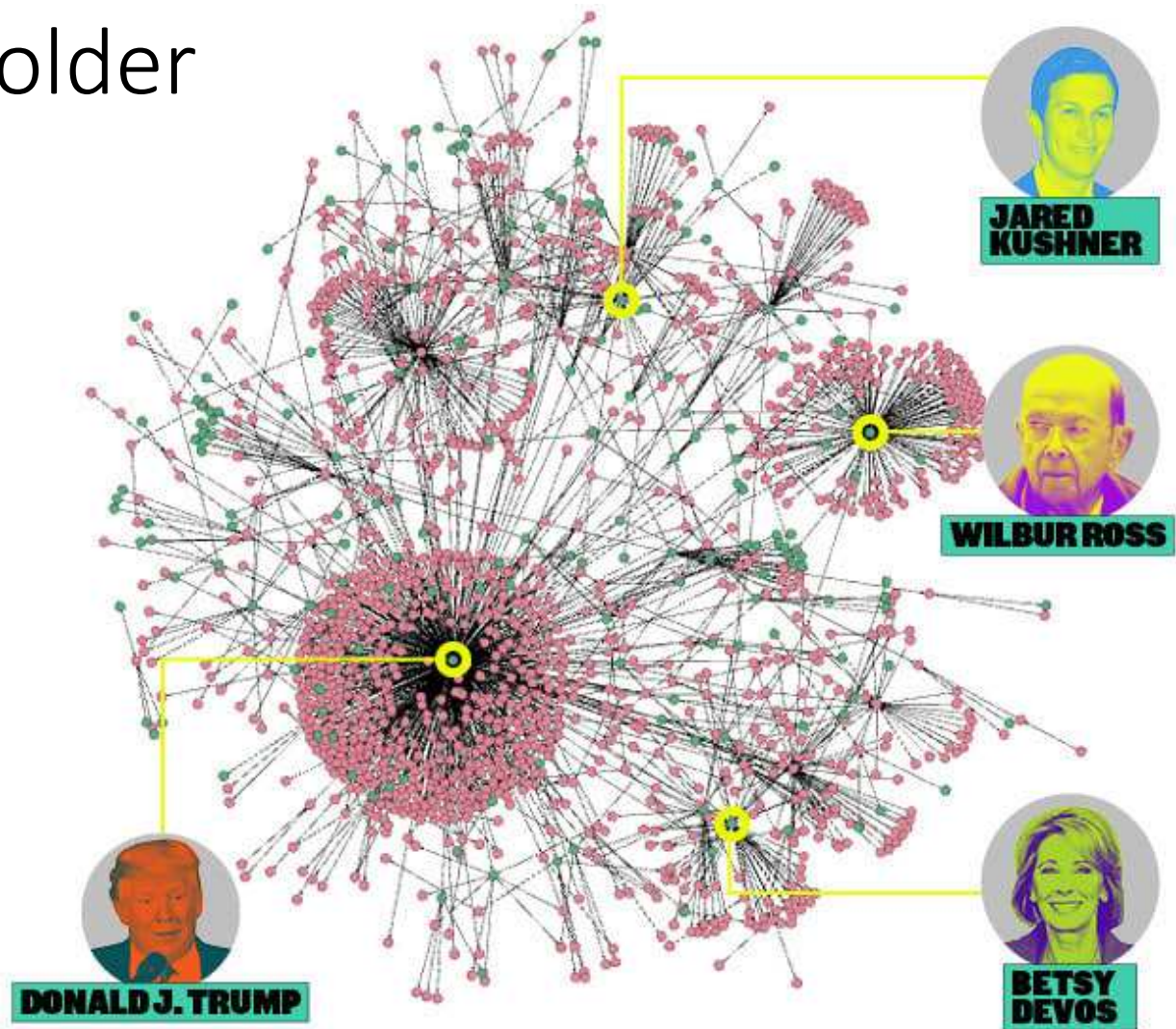
Disentangling intangible social–ecological systems

Örjan Bodin^{a,b,*}, Maria Tengö^{a,b}

Are there opportunities
to apply these
techniques to design?

Prioritise stakeholder engagement

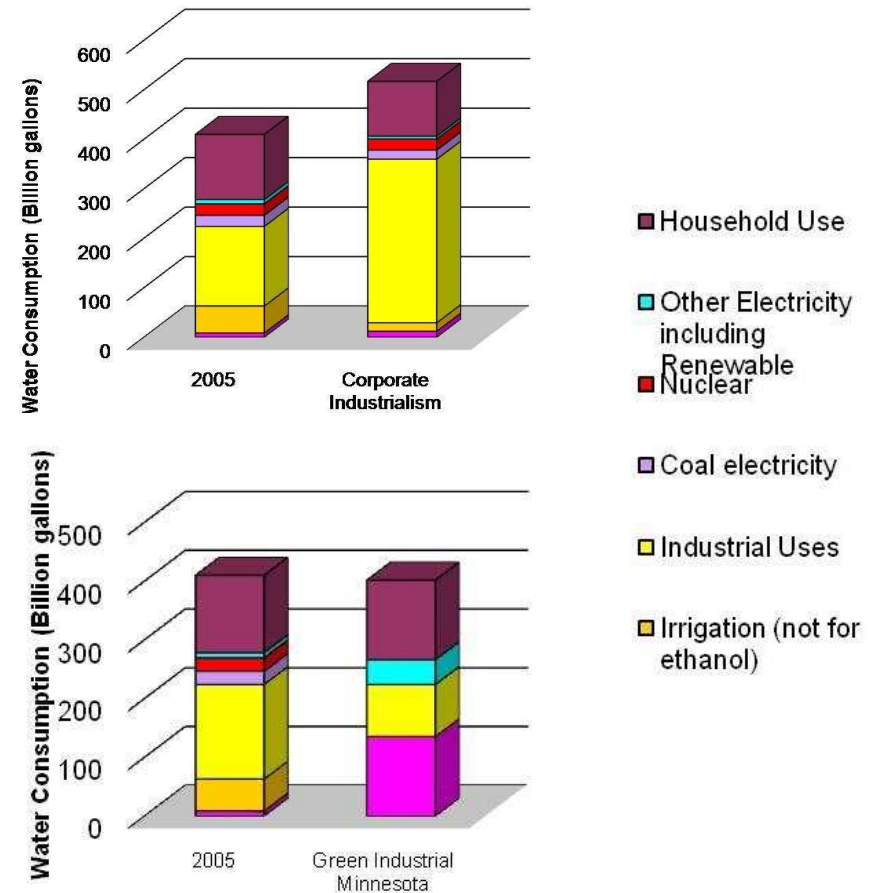
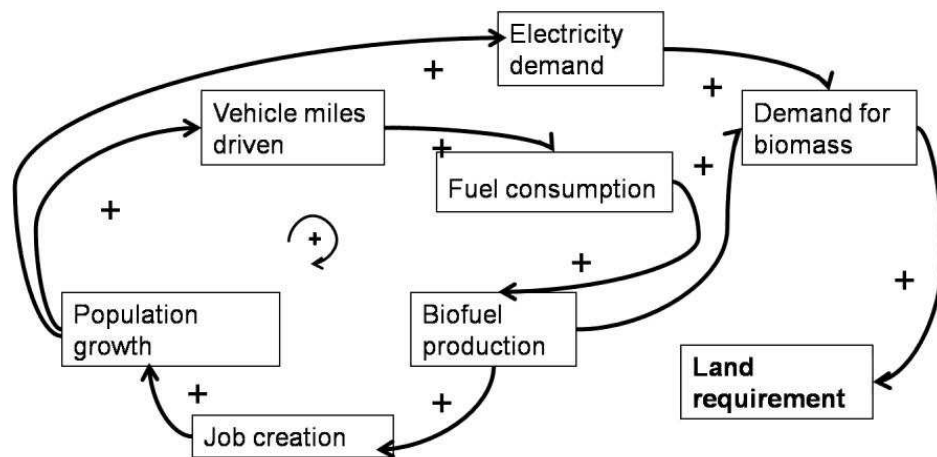
- Network science
- Data scraping and crowd-sourced data



Source: Templon, J., Cormier, A., Campbell, A., Singer-Vine, J., BuzzFeed.

Prioritise interventions

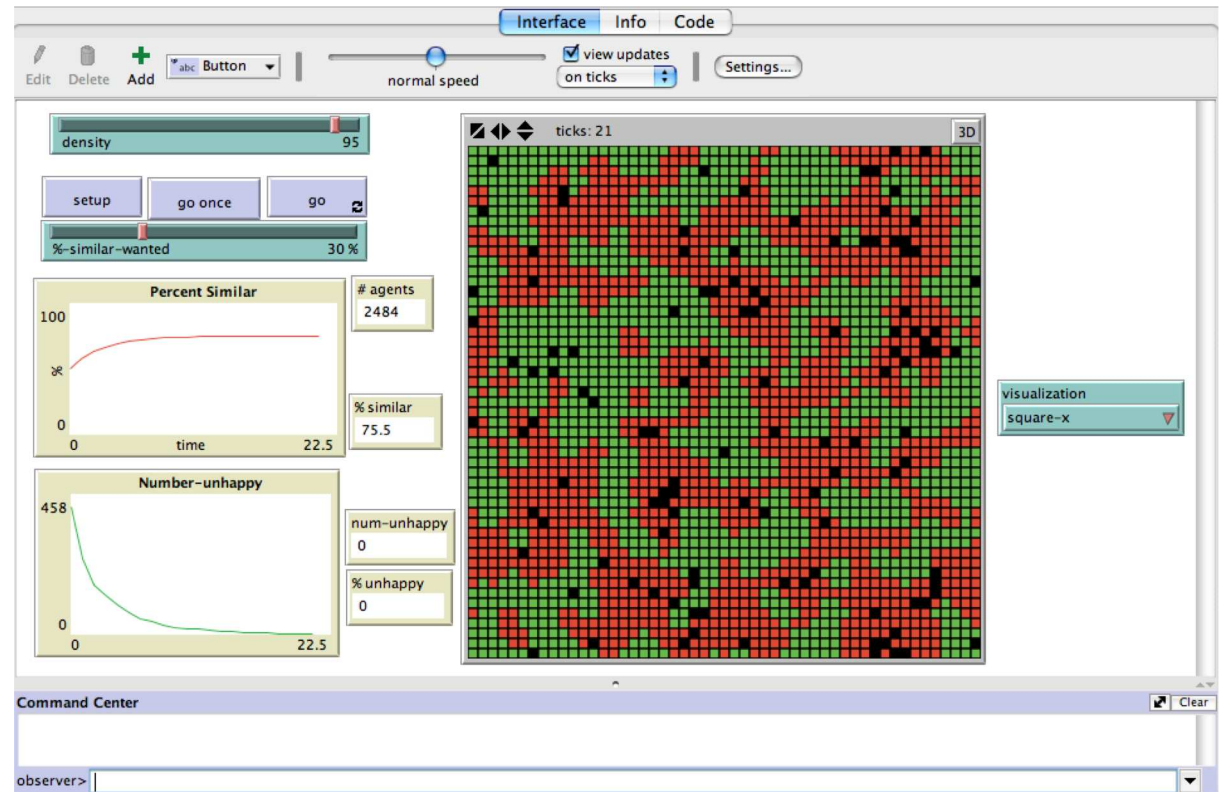
- System dynamics
- Participatory modelling



Source: Schmitt Olabisi, L., et al., 2010, Using Scenario Visioning and Participatory System Dynamics Modeling to Investigate the Future

Simulate stakeholder / user behaviour

- Agent-based model
- Purely theoretical



Source: Schelling, T., 1978, Micromotives and Macrobehavior; Wilensky, U., 1997, NetLogo Segregation model.

Opportunities for design - examples

Stakeholder analysis

- Prioritise stakeholder engagement
- Simulate stakeholder/user behavior

Future visions

- Simulate sustainable business models
- Simulate future supply chains and industries

Design choices

- Prioritise potential interventions

What may have prevented
computational modelling in
design for sustainability to date?

1) Can humans be modelled?

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge assumptions and values
- Leverage data from online tools
- Address ethics issues

2) Are design and modelling compatible?

Recommendations:

- Leverage designers' intuition as a starting point
- Develop designer and stakeholder-friendly interfaces
- Involve stakeholders in the development of the model

3) Can you model with limited data?

Recommendations:

- Don't underestimate data available
- Work with plausible models and multiple scenarios
- Develop models in an iterative way

Take aways

- Make your assumptions explicit and consider ethics questions
- Leverage data from online tools and big data analysis methods
- Develop simulation interfaces for designers and stakeholders
- Leverage stakeholders' intuition
- Adopt an iterative approach to model building

Next steps: demonstrator case studies

Case requirements

- Social complexity, sustainability objectives, designers involved
- Curiosity, willingness to experiment
- Access to data

Case 1: Designing a marketplace for material reuse in the **built environment**

- Modelling the current and future built environment ecosystems
- Prioritizing stakeholder engagement

Case 2: Redesigning the **psychiatry** system

- Identifying sources of stagnation in current system
- Prioritizing stakeholder engagement

Thank you!