VALUING NATURE

Valuing nature: how do conservation decision-makers choose what to save and how to save it?

Dr. Sarah Papworth

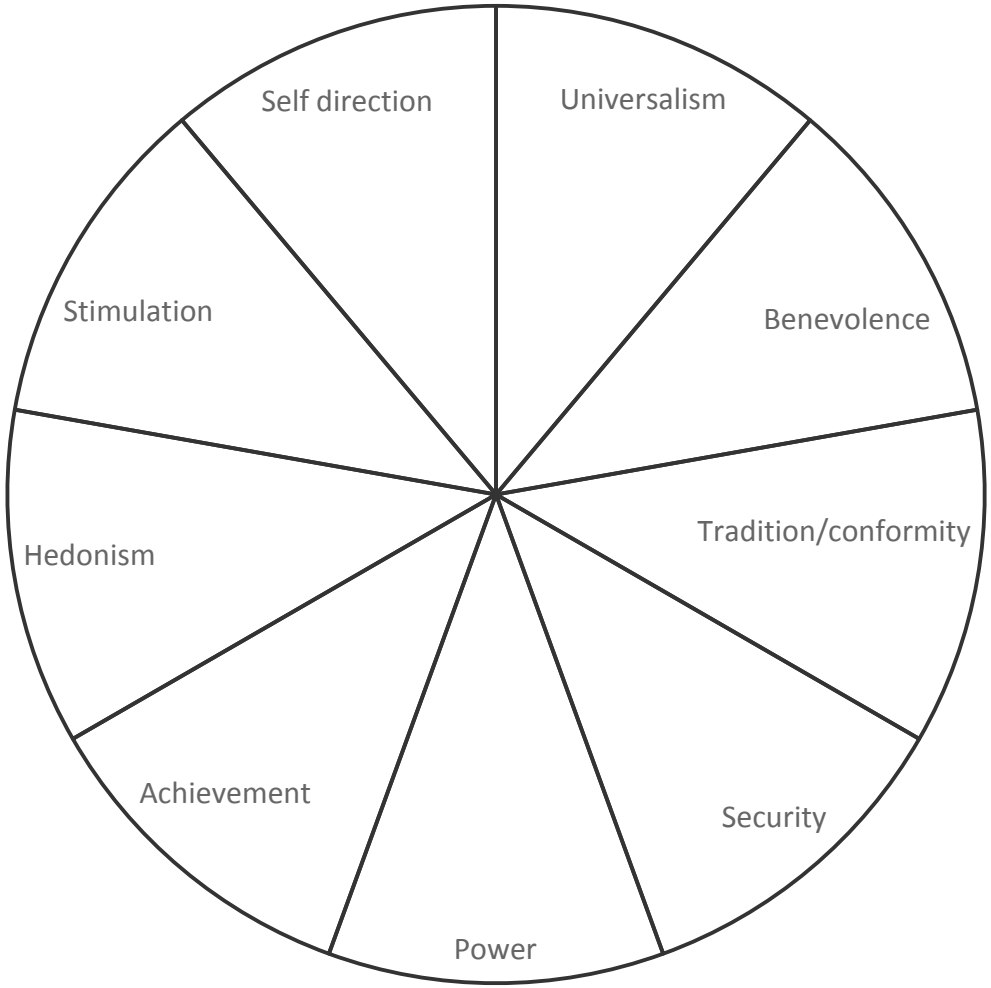
Royal Holloway, University of London

Placement objectives

- 3 month placement with Dr. Anat Bardi in the Department of Psychology, Royal Holloway to:
  - (i) gain understanding of key concepts and related methodological techniques in psychology and
  - (ii) use these skills to develop and undertake a research project to investigate the role of individual values in decision-making by conservation practitioners.

Project development: Dual processing and values

- Dual processing:
  - System I
    - intuition / experience / emotions / values
    - ‘gut feelings’
  - System II
    - analytical information processing
    - ‘rational’

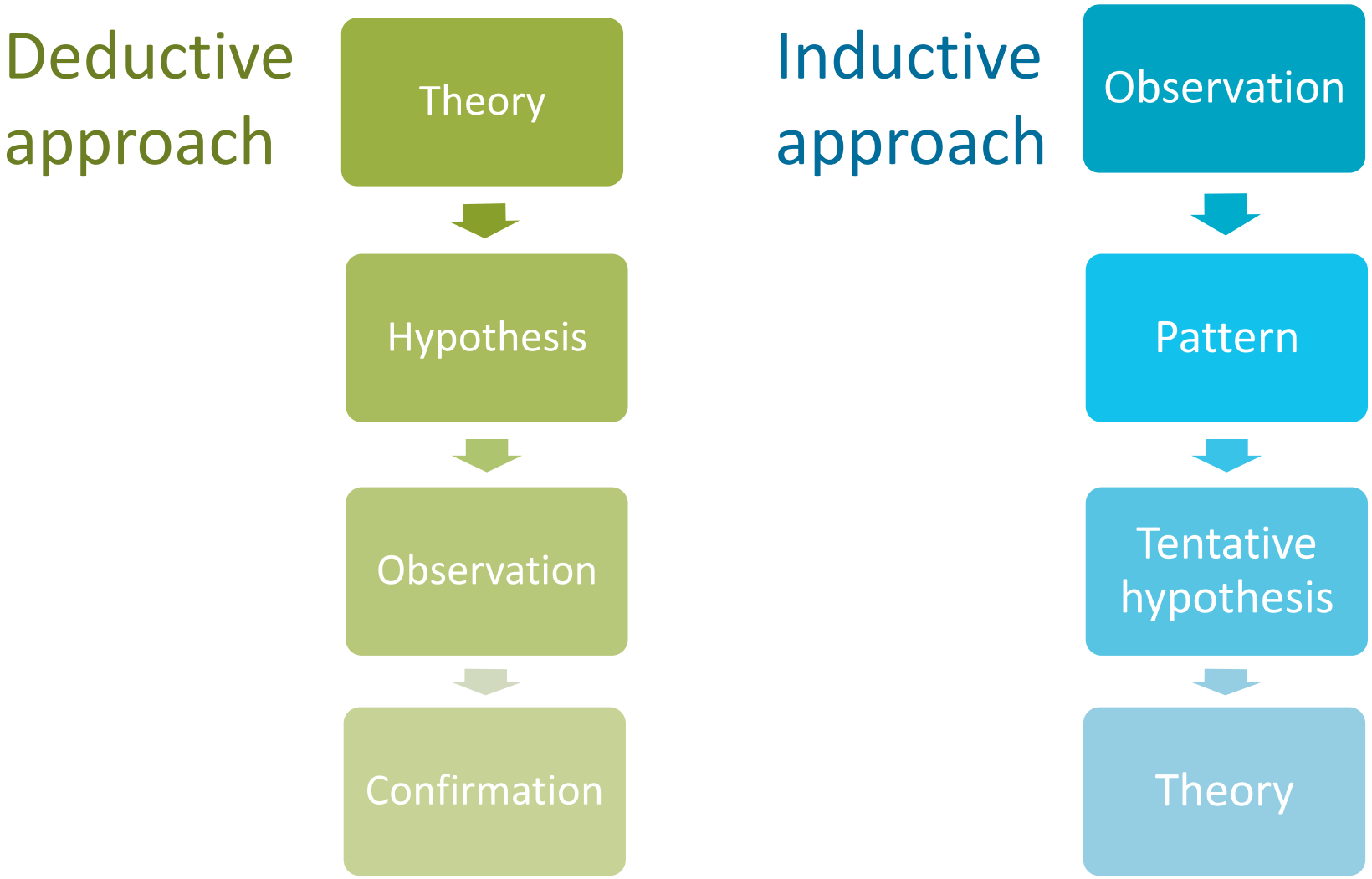


Is there evidence for dual processing decision-making in conservation practitioners?

Methods & analysis:

- Semi-structured interviews with conservation practitioners
- Discuss how they decide which species to conserve, where to conserve them, and which methods to use
- Analysed using applied thematic analysis to identify values and system I thinking associated with the decisions described

Inductive and deductive approaches



Evolution of methodology

Methods & analysis:

- Semi-structured interviews with conservation practitioners
- Discuss how they decide which species to conserve, where to conserve them, and which methods to use
- Analysed using applied thematic analysis to identify values and system I thinking associated with the decisions described
- Analyse using grounded theory to identify possible patterns and theories about decision making by conservation practitioners

The decision-making environment

"but I can't say I am going to go to Tanzania and protect every mountain, it's not my job or power or anything else. Yeah, I can work with people who have an interest in doing that and see what we can do, within existing law, policy, regulations, community interests and you know, money and all the other factors"

"so I worked on a project in Salford Quays, and I wanted green roofs there. But the architect came back and said that, you know, the favourite architectural term is that 'it needs to reflect the post-industrial nature of the site'. [...] And that put the kibosh on my green roofs, just because an architect wanted it to look like a certain thing"

Evolution of participants

Conservation practitioners

- Responsible for decision making
- Working in the field

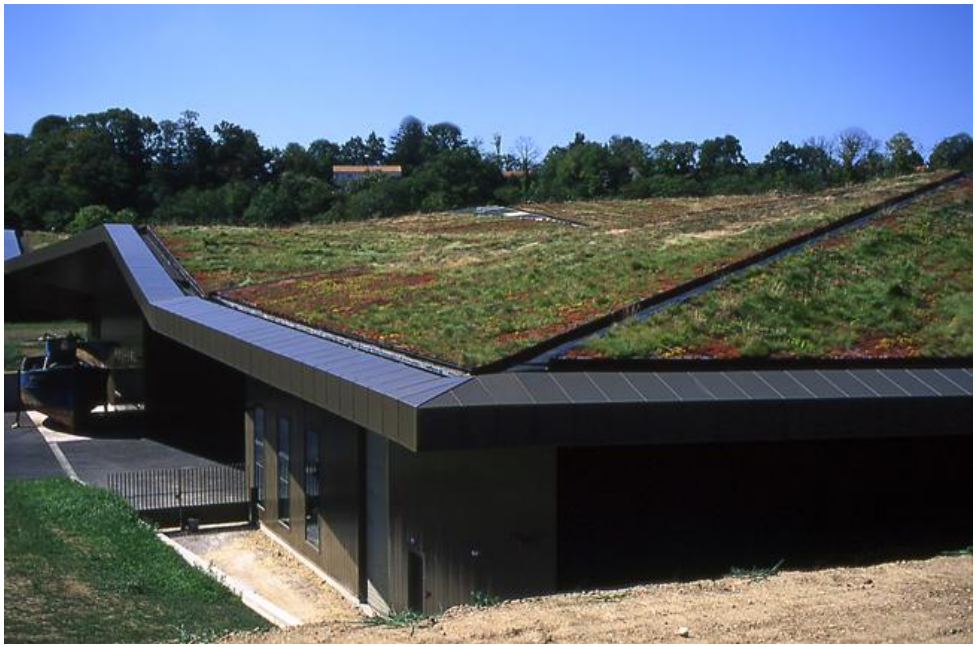
Conservation professionals

- Individuals who participate in decision making:
  - Practitioners
  - Funders
  - Managers

Recognition that decisions are often collective and depend on multiple participants

Costs of conservation

“Everyone likes biodiversity, but it can be quite costly, in their eyes, because of the up-front costs, or that they might have to think outside the box and change the design of their streets, or how the houses are laid out.”



Quantifying Nature

"Nobody wanted to make a guess, and one reason [was that] somebody had said, 'There's probably a maximum of eight here.' [...] and then ever since he said that, people were like, 'There are eight giraffe and rhino in this park,' for years and years, despite the fact that they were being killed. There was still always eight, and despite the fact it was originally a maximum and an estimate."

Personal and collective values

"I don't think I'd ever have given up on the gibbon, it just seems too big a psychological step to take"

"They're all busy people and they're not going to waste time on something that isn't a viable gain"

Next steps

- Analyse interviews using Nvivo
- Create a short document summarising results, suitable for participants and conservation NGOs
- Write a manuscript for submission to peer-reviewed journal