

BIOMOT – WP4 Current affairs

The aim of BIOMOT's work package 4 (WP4) is to connect the three other work packages (WP1, 2, 3) of the BIOMOT project, and to come up with concepts, practical ideas and approaches for a new motivational theory of action.

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From the start on until the first months of 2013 the WP4-team was feeding and at times leading the process of concept and method development of BIOMOT as a whole, in order to prepare the data collection by the other workpackages in 2013. In 2013 WP4-members will partly be engaged in this data collection, and prepare for the next phase, i.e. the main task of WP4: integrating, interpreting and enriching the central research results of the other work packages.

In the spring of 2012 the Radboud University WP4-team organized a workshop in Nijmegen for all the other BIOMOT partners. The goal was to develop a common research perspective, take stock of common concepts, define categories for the case selection in the other work packages, make appointments for concrete cases selection on the national and supra national level, divide tasks, and design and fill in the cooperation between BIOMOT and its sister project BESAFE.

The result of the workshop was such that the BIOMOT team was able to complete its draft common concept document at the end of May 2012, and publish the final theory and research document, including the joint research framework, in September 2012. The document, entitled, *Motivation for Biodiversity Action: vocabulary, theories and framework*, can be found at the website. The main purpose was to organize the case selection and methodological choices for the research protocol.

The document starts out with some basic definitions and then moves to the economic style of reasoning on motivation for biodiversity, with a strong emphasis on ecosystem services. Following are the elements from the on-going discussion on the limitations of economic valuation, touching for instance on the difference between the value of abstract categories and concrete, specified entities (e.g. you). The longest chapter goes into the proposals made mainly by psychologists on the deliberative and broader motivations for human action, examples of which are identity and personal significance. Subsequently a contribution from governance science, on leadership, institutions and legitimacy, and structure is added, followed by 'Steps towards a Common Framework: patterns of a theory'. It finishes with The Common Research Framework, and three appendices: a philosophical one, and epistemological one, and one on beauty and delight.

The main line of thought, laid down in this common concept and common framework document, can be summed up in the following formula:

M = VC (Motivation = Value x Connectness),

Whereas: C = FT (Connectness = Formation x Time)

People are motivated to act for nature if they value it and feel connected. This connectedness is shaped by the way (duration and intensity) people are formed during their life.

During the second part of 2012 and the first months of 2013, we used the above-mentioned document to discuss relevant philosophical notions and methods for the selection, collection and interpretation of data to construct an improved theory for motivational action.

We discussed for instance the distinction between motivations triggered by concrete things (de re motivations), and motivations triggered by statements (de dictum motivations), and the effect of this difference on the nature of and strength of motivations. We also discussed the issue of value comparability, and ways to overcome that sticky problem. The impact of feeling, habits, routines and longstanding norms on choices, and the feelings underlying these choices were thoroughly reflected on. Attention was also paid to the problem of dichotomist short-sightedness, which is the tendency to split up the world in two each other excluding entities, often resulting in an inclination to only look solutions that mirror the supposed problems.

We decided that we only would be able to test most of these ideas if we could acquire data that would enable deep qualitative discourse analyses, covering all kind of stories and narratives, and different formative periods of the people interviewed. It was, in other words, essential to also find and analyze the drivers underlying the evident motivations of the interviewees.

This required extra efforts with regard to the data collection. We needed special methods and specific training. The last part of 2012 was used to discuss these topics with the members of other work packages, especially WP2 and 3, in order to explore how it could be integrated in their research protocols. To enable this discussion and the selection of methods, we developed a list of 20 more or less ideal-type motivations. See *20 Motivations, with explanations, debates and examples*.

The last month of 2012 and first two months of 2013 were used to select, work out and train the needed methods. This was mainly done during two general BIOMOT sessions, prepared by small teams, with one session of several days in Koli, Finland, in December 2012, and one session of more than a week, in Manchester, United Kingdom, in February 2013.

The Koli workshop was very fruitful. Ample space was cleared for life story narratives and thick-description-oriented methods, controlled by quantitative interview methods, to ensure validity and relevance. In fact, the whole meeting resulted in a remarkable good and deep attuning and fine-tuning between WP2, WP3 and WP4, in content, case-selection and methods.

- We developed an open interview guide, focussing on life stories for WP3 that also could be used in WP2, and would be very useful for WP4 later on.
- We developed a web-based survey for WP3, also to be used for WP2, relevant for the validation and completion of the open interview guide, and as such delivering relevant extra controlled data for WP4.
- We also developed a motivational card-game to tap into, map, discuss and compare core-motivations, and their underlying meanings. The cases in WP2 were selected in such a way, that also all three the WP3 methods fitted in, comparison between countries was possible, and the whole of the policy circle was addressed, as was the link with similar cases in our sister-project BESAFE.

In the WP2 and WP3 research protocols and methods worked out in Koli there was specific attention for interlinks between WP2 and WP3 and for questions formulated by WP4, with regard to formation (routines and habits), de dictu/de re issues and hidden and unexpected meanings. In short, we developed a string of complementing and correcting concepts and quantitative and qualitative methods, brought up by the different participating disciplines (policy studies, sociology, social psychology, social environmental science, economy and philosophy). We also slowly and gradually developed a remarkable team spirit, which exceeded the boundaries of disciplines, countries and personalities.

The main event, for BIOMOT as a whole and for WP4 in particular, in the first months of 2013, was the BIOMOT meeting in Manchester, from February 19 until February 27, meant to finalize the research protocols and train the interviewers. The quality of the outcome of this meeting would determine the quality of the collected data and as a result the quality of the input for the analyses by WP4. In-depth-analysis of narratives and discourses, as strived for by WP4, requires eminent data, and that requires excellence before and during the phase of data collection. In other words, it requires the presence of good interview guides and highly qualified interviewers. For that reason the WP4-leader urged WP 1 to fine tune their approach with WP 2 and 3, and took the lead with regard to the (supervision of the) completion of the qualitative interview guides of WP 2 and WP3, and with regard to the preparation of the interview training, by bringing over an experienced trainer from Radboud University.

The end results of the Manchester meeting were promising, in protocols and training. We were in the position to start collecting the data, as we are doing now (April 2013).