



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Social practices and product efficiency policies



Hans-Paul Siderius

5 June 2015

eccee Summer Study



Take away

More insight in how people behave
does not result in
more policy instruments
for behavioural change regarding energy use



Overview

- Context
- Social practices in a policy framework
- Lessons learned, recommendations for product policy
- Questions, discussion



Do you recognize this?

- A study indicates a large energy savings potential.
- The following barriers prevent achieving the savings:
 - Lack of information
 - Lack of money
 - Split incentives
- Policy instruments are designed to address the barriers.
- However, the “full” savings potential is still not achieved.



You might also recognize this

- The rational economic (barrier) model is incomplete.
- Extending/replacing it with insights from psychology, sociology, etc. allows better/deeper/broader explanations of human behaviour (related to energy savings).
- However, what does this bring us on the policy side?



What is a social practice?

A social practice are doings and sayings that are
linked in a certain way ...
... as such that it carries meaning.

Social practices provide intelligibility to the stream of
actions (real life):

real life
providing ↓ *meaning*
social practice



Examples of a social practice



Washing: loading a washing machine



Rain dance



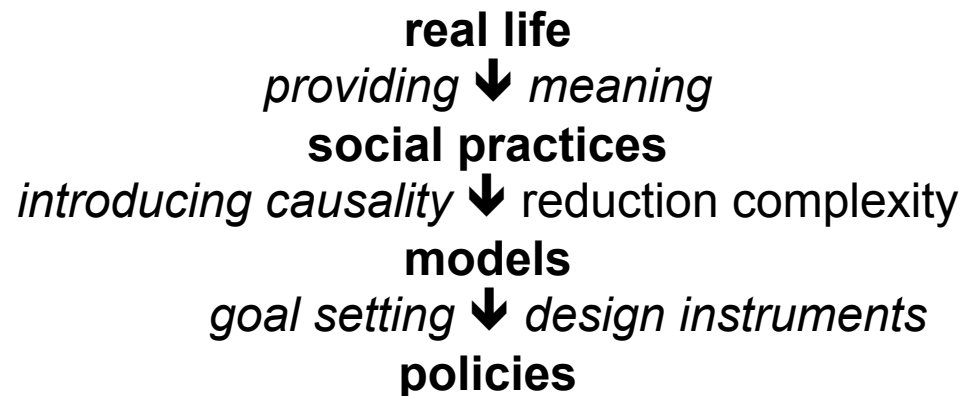
6 elements of a social practice

- Doings and sayings:
 - People
 - Artefacts (products)
 - Context (time and space)
- Links (organization of the practice):
 - Understandings (know how)
 - Explicit rules
 - Teleo-affective structures (ends, purposes; beliefs, emotions)



Social practice and policy (instruments)

- Social practices can give a fuller picture on real life than the barrier model.
- But:
 1. A social practice does not provide a goal for policy making
 2. A social practice is too complex for most instruments
 3. Accountability: policy impact
- Two further steps are required:



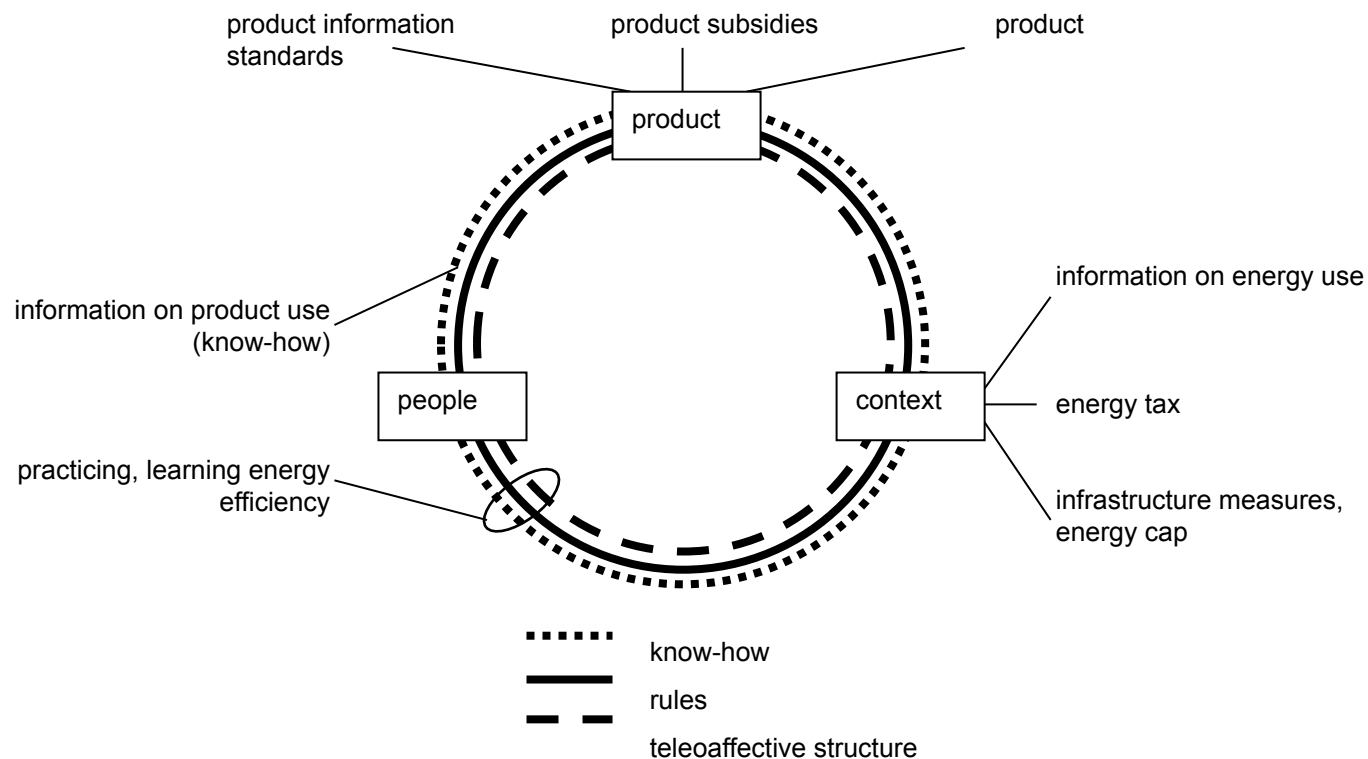


Policy instruments related to elements of a social practice

- ~~People~~
- Artefacts (products): MEPS
- Context: taxes
- Understanding, know how: product information, labels
- Explicit rules
- Structures



Policy instruments (examples)





Social practices versus barrier approach

- No irrational behaviour
- Multidimensional approach
- Not the potential but the policy goal drives instruments

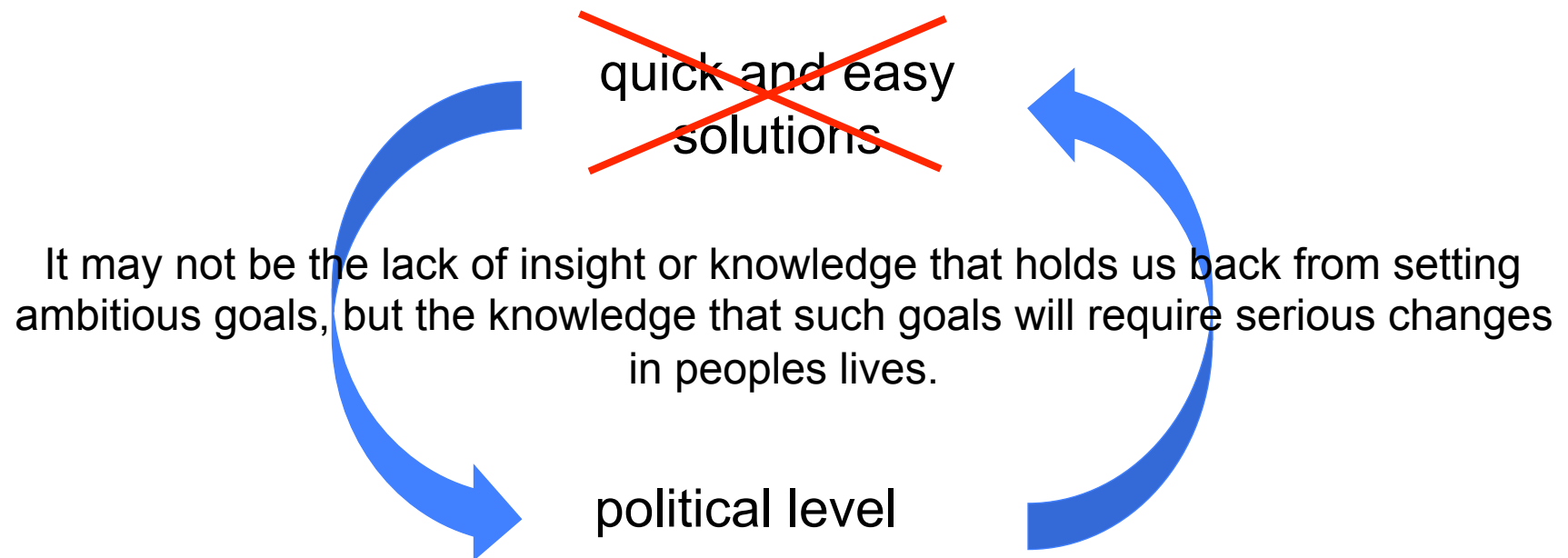


Lesson to learn from social practices

- Products are an “easy” target.
- Behaviour is key: individual responsibility vs social conditioning
- Changing mundane, day to day behaviour requires reflection which needs time that is scarce.
- Energy consumption is a consequence but often not a part of a social practice.
- Social practices provide no goals for policy.
- Insight in behaviour does not automatically provide the instruments to decrease energy consumption.



No magic hand or silver bullet





Recommendations for product policy

- Set a goal that fits in a broader, meaningful strategy.
- Exploit MEPS as much as possible.
- Use information instruments selectively.
- Provide feedback that fits in the social practice(s).



Thank you for your attention!

Questions and comments are welcome.

hans-paul.siderius@rvo.nl