



# Using theory-based evaluation to assess communications approaches

Caroline Wilson





# Introduction

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- Evaluation of different communication approaches encouraging sustainable energy-use behaviours
- Findings confirm added value of ‘bottom-up’ engaging methods rather than ‘top-down’ informational
- Also identifies what’s different about them
- A method that can be applied elsewhere



# Evaluation and social science tensions

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- Evaluation
  - review of whole system – complex, multi-level
  - what works in specific local setting
- Social science
  - limited number of key variables
  - seeks generalisable principles
- Approach here:
  - shared objective as programme organisers – assessing behavioural outcomes



# Defining using literature

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- Top-down:
    - expert-led, paternalistic, authoritarian
    - asymmetrical or even one way
    - scientific persuasion, instructional, transmission of information
  - Bottom-up:
    - two-way dialogue, negotiation and deliberation
    - participation, collaboration, partnership
    - explores issues from a user-needs perspective.
- For a review of engagement types see Oxley Green and Hunton Clarke, 2003, also Bass et al, 1995)**



# Top-down vs. Bottom-up

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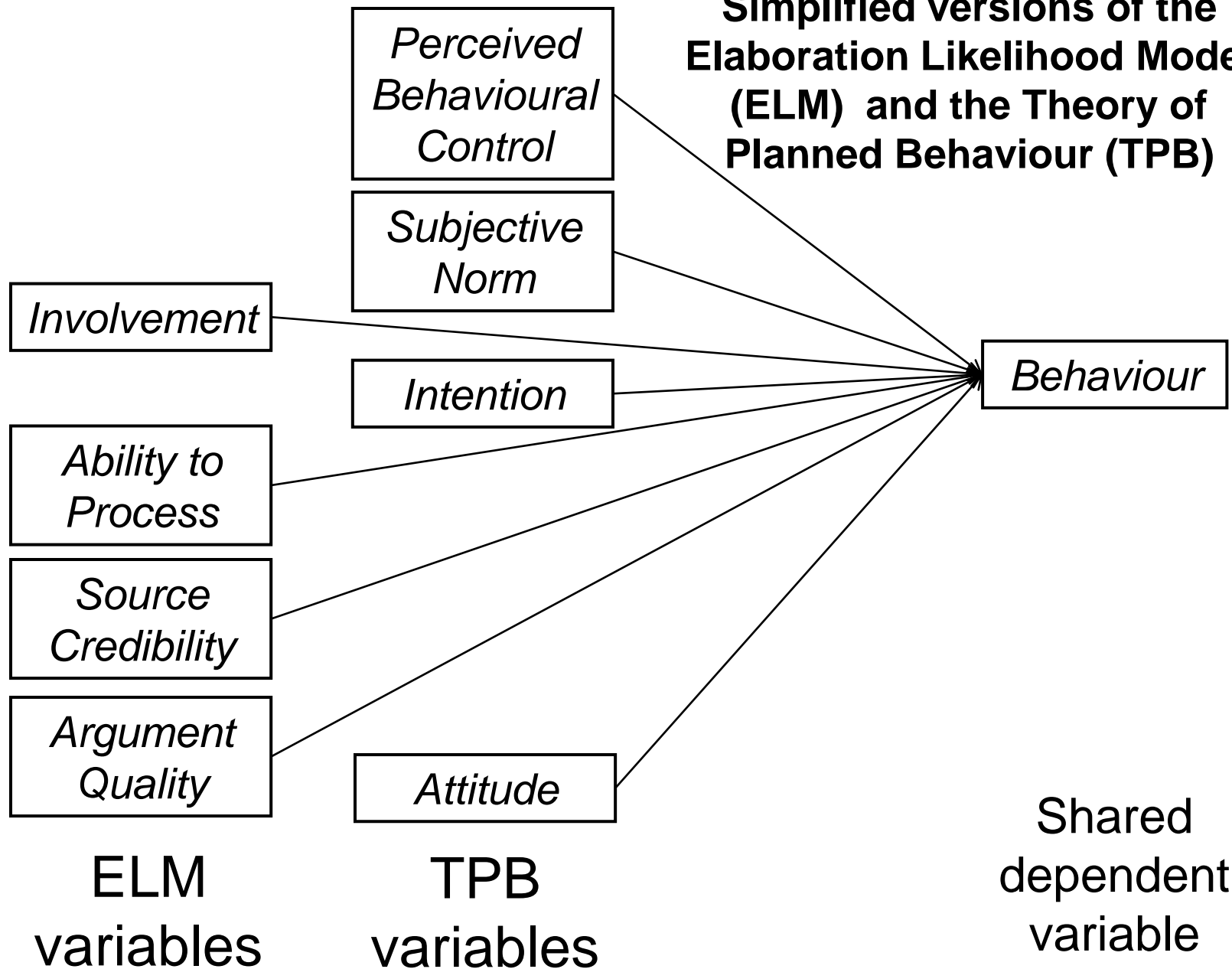
- Bottom-up more likely to achieve objectives (Filmer-Wilson and Anderson, 2005)
- Absence explains why top-down campaigns like Going for Green (1995), Are You Doing Your Bit? (1998-2000) had little impact (Barr, 2003)
- But no empirical comparison (Abelson et al, 2003)
- Emerging disillusion at non-delivery of bottom-up projects (Reed, 2008)



<b>Activity name</b>	<b>Activity summary (descending from top-down to bottom-up)</b>
<b>SIO media</b>	Participants read newspaper article about Switch It Off campaign
<b>SIO bags</b>	Participants approached in town centres and engaged in conversation about SIO campaign
<b>SIO univ</b>	Inter-schools university-style quiz with questions about energy saving and SIO campaign.
<b>SIO vols</b>	Volunteer employees act as champions supporting SIO campaign within host organisation.
<b>A21 peace</b>	Participants sought advice at a peace festival stand in the locality.
<b>A21 REC</b>	Renewable energy 'self-help' group. Typical projects - loft insulation, wood burning stoves and solar panels.



# Simplified versions of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)





# Example of materials

Since the first survey and as a result of your contact with ~~the Renewable Energy Club~~, to what extent have you -

	A great deal	To some extent	Not very much	Not at all
Thought further about <del>renewable energy</del> ?				
Changed any activities in your personal or work life?				
Become more interested in <del>renewable energy</del> when you have seen or heard it discussed by others				
Sought out further information on <del>renewable energy</del>				

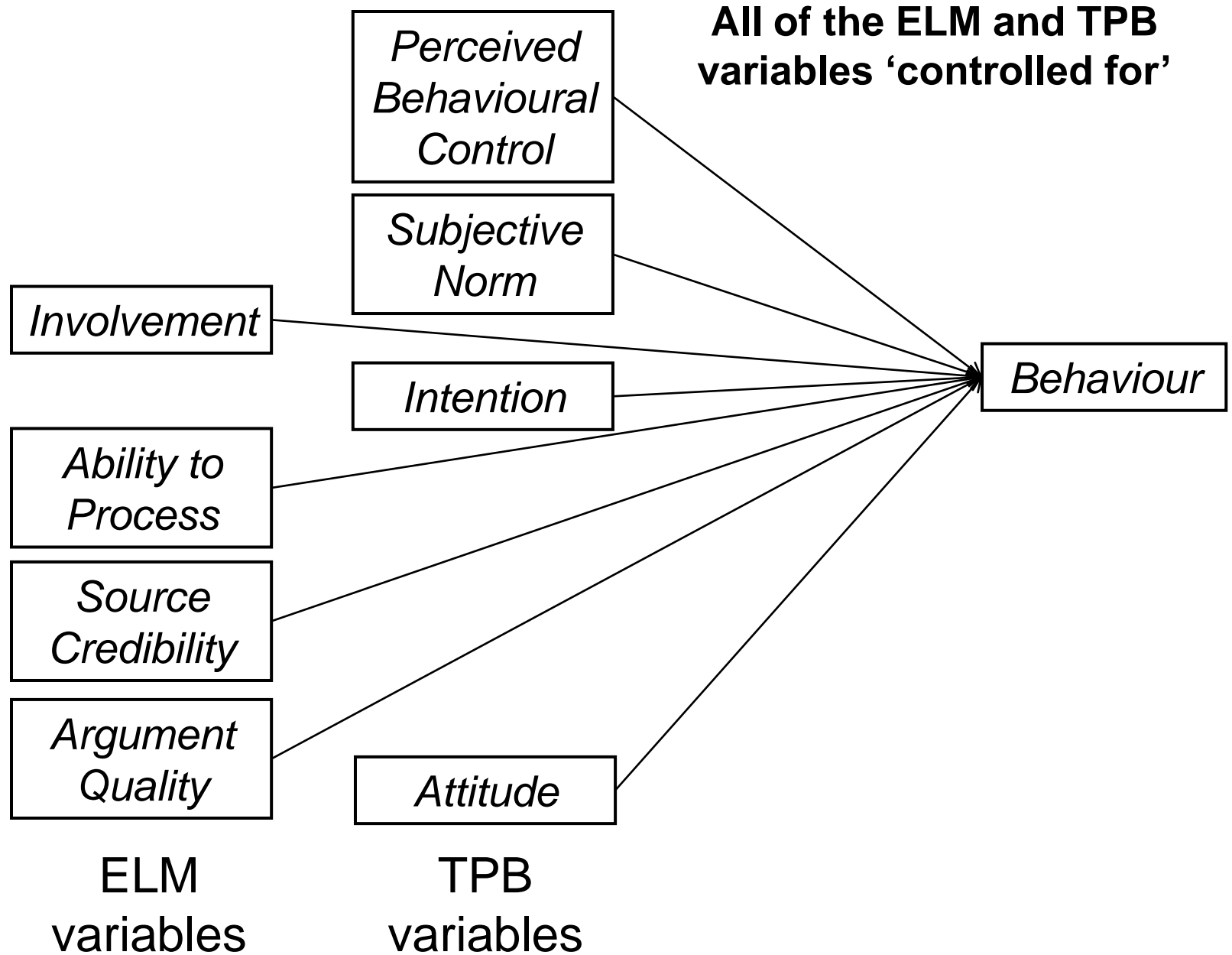


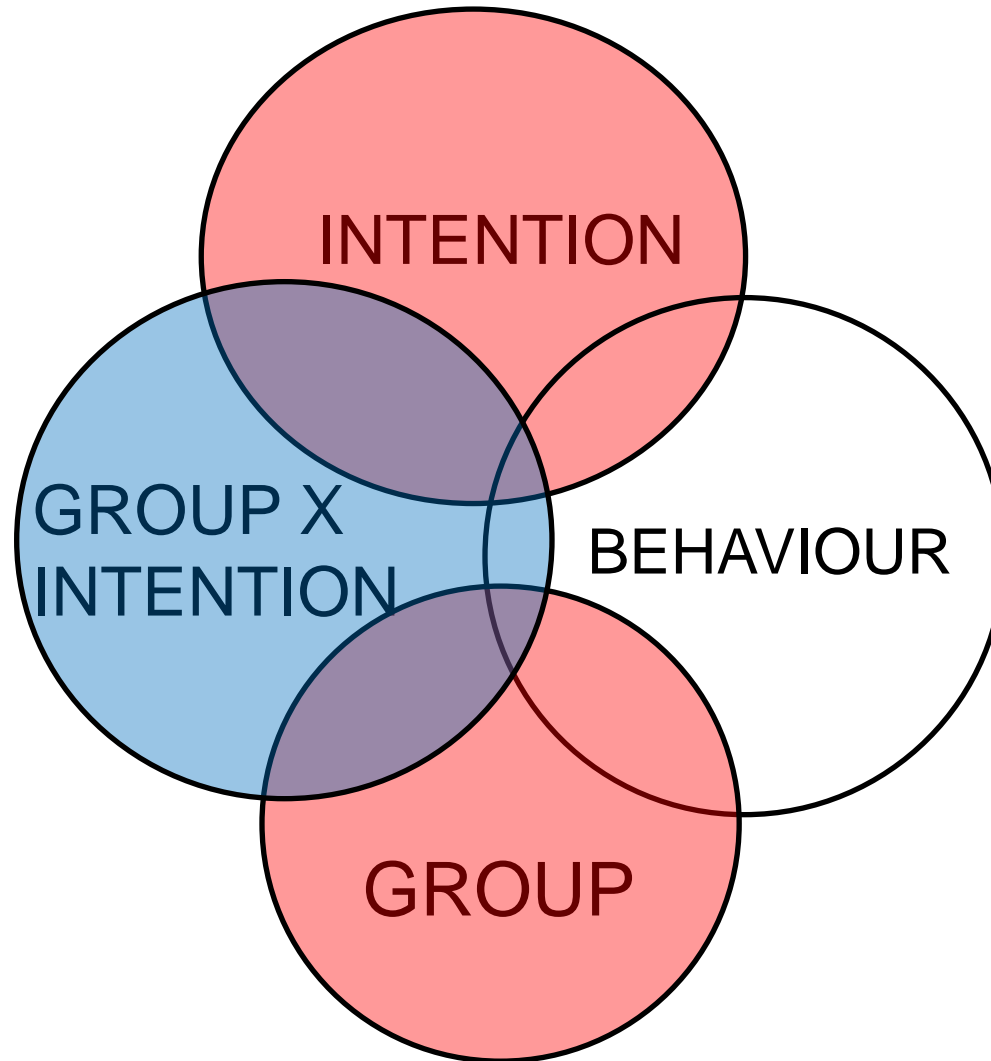


# Simple result

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	B	Sig.
<b>A21 REC</b>	<b>1.699</b>	<b>.000</b>
A21 Peace	-1.090	.080
SIO Vols	-.891	.146
SIO Media	-4.094	.000
SIO bags	-2.086	.001
SIO univ	-2.033	.001







# The differing impact of intention

Differential units of behaviour change:

SIO Media 0.689

SIO Bags 1.211\*

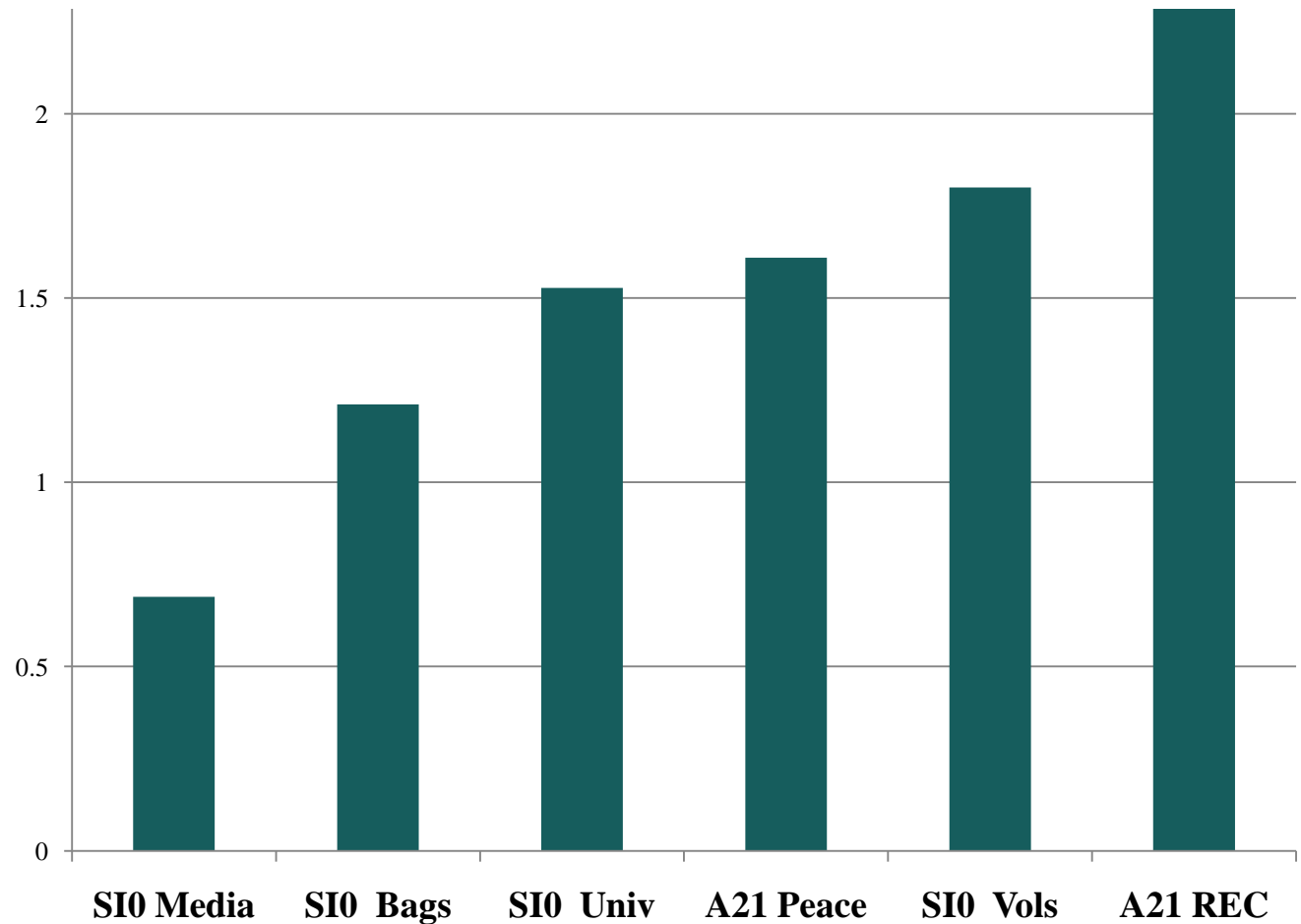
SIO Univ 1.527

A21 Peace 1.609

SIO Vols 1.8

A21 REC 2.362

\*SIO bags  $p > .05$





# Practical value

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- Method
  - multiple settings has tested a template capable of application to different projects
  - useful survey format capable of application with little specialist knowledge



# Policy value

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- Bottom-up methods appear to boost intentions
  - strengthens resolve?
- Balanced against
  - top-down has better reach (cost effective)
  - bottom-up isn't for everyone
- But... the agenda now is
  - behaviour rather than awareness



# Any questions?

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- e.g. limitations
- e.g. practical use to programmes studied?
  
- Contact details:
  - [cwilson@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:cwilson@dmu.ac.uk)
  - <http://goodgreenpr.blogspot.com>