

**We won't nudge our way out  
of this**

**Ian Walker, University of Bath**



**“Nudging”**: Indirect suggestions that influence individual behaviour

# A few immediate concerns...

Lack of definition for what is and isn't a nudge

Confirmation and publication bias

Changing behaviour without changing minds requires indefinite supervision

If defaults are so powerful, why don't people walk everywhere?

BUT let's give the idea a fair shake anyway...

---

# Reverse Causality Hypothesis

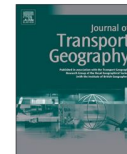
Journal of Transport Geography 80 (2019) 102540



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Transport Geography

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo)



## Impacts of the built environment and travel behaviour on attitudes: Theories underpinning the reverse causality hypothesis



Bert van Wee<sup>a,\*</sup>, Jonas De Vos<sup>b,c</sup>, Kees Maat<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Transport and Logistics Group, Faculty Technology, Policy and Management, Delft University of Technology, POBox 5015, 2600 GA Delft, the Netherlands*

<sup>b</sup> *Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, 14 Upper Woburn Place, WC1H 0NN London, United Kingdom*

<sup>c</sup> *Geography Department, Ghent University, Krijgslaan 281 S8, 9000 Gent, Belgium*

<sup>d</sup> *Department of Transport & Planning, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geosciences, Delft University of Technology, P.O. Box 5048, 2600 GA Delft, the Netherlands*

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

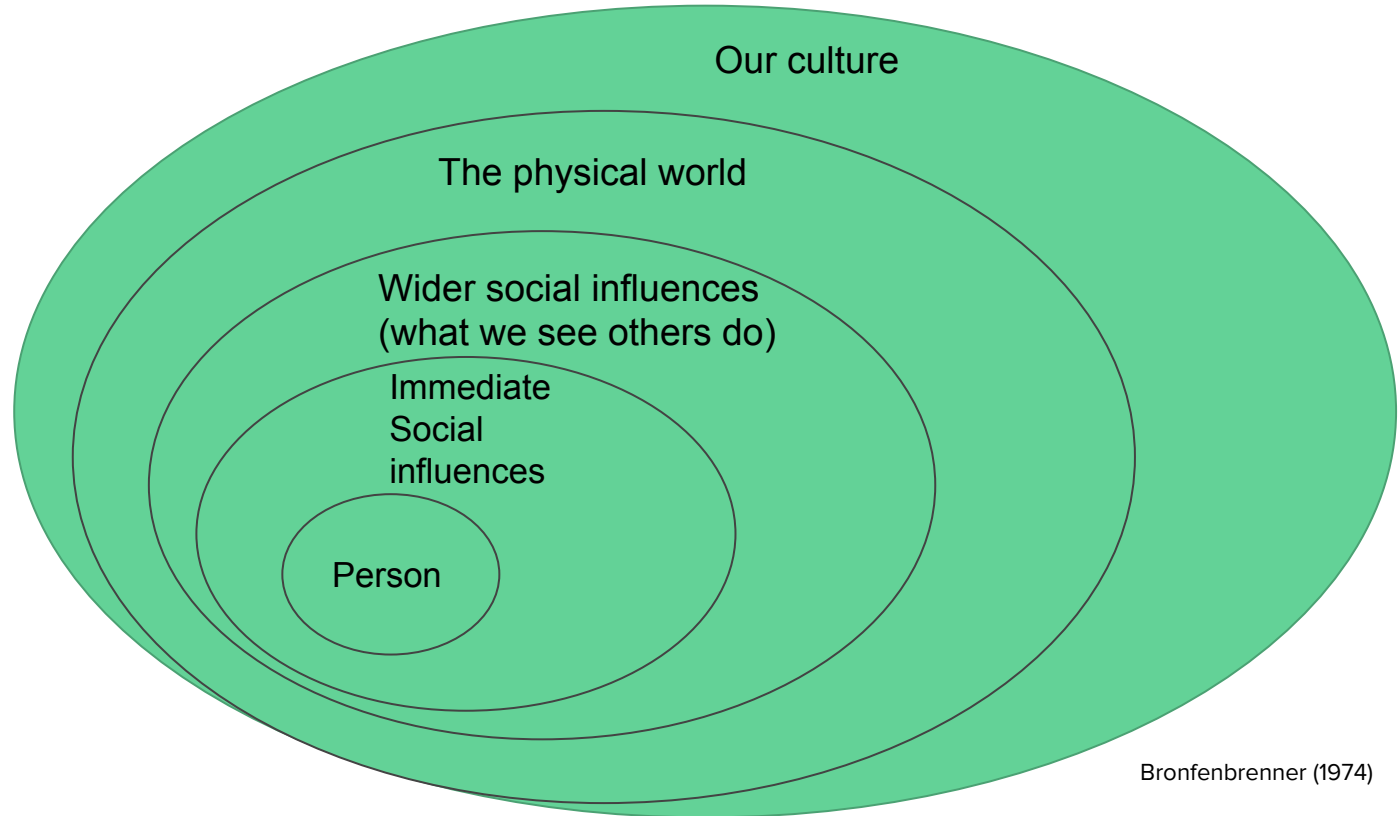
Built environment  
Travel behaviour  
Attitudes  
Cognitive dissonance theory  
Learning theories  
Research agenda

### ABSTRACT

The importance of attitudes in the relationship between travel behaviour (TB) and the built environment (BE) has been the subject of debate in the literature for about two decades. In line with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitudes – which affect behaviour – are generally assumed to be constant. However, it is plausible that attitudes can change, both directly, or indirectly, through the impact of the built environment on travel behaviour, a process which is referred to as reverse causality (RC). Based on literature from social psychology, this paper provides a conceptual model for the explanation of attitude changes. It also reviews the literature in the area of BE and TB concluding that two explanations dominate: a change in attitudes due to new experiences which can be underpinned by learning theories, and a change in attitudes due to mismatches between attitudes and behaviour which can be explained by cognitive dissonance theories. The literature also suggests a few additional explanations, while we also suggest explanations not provided in travel behaviour literature. Finally, we present an agenda for future research.

# Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

# Social Ecological Model



Perhaps above all, **SHOULD** we nudge our way  
out of car dependency?

Thank you

drianwalker.com

@ianwalker

