

memetic-freedom.ml

Description

Research methodologies that apply memetics go by many names: Viral marketing, cultural evolution, the history of ideas, social analytics, and more. Many of these applications do not make reference to the literature on memes directly but are built upon the evolutionary lens of idea propagation that treats semantic units of culture as self-replicating and mutating patterns of information that are assumed to be relevant for scientific study. For example, the field of public relations is filled with attempts to introduce new ideas and alter social discourse. One means of doing this is to design a meme and deploy it through various media channels. One historic example of applied memetics is the PR campaign conducted in 1991 as part of the build-up to the first Gulf War in the United States.[\[33\]](#)

The application of memetics to a difficult complex social system problem, environmental [sustainability](#), has recently been attempted at [thwink.org](#)[\[34\]](#) Using meme types and memetic infection in several stock and flow simulation models, Jack Harich has demonstrated several interesting phenomena that are best, and perhaps only, explained by memes. One model, The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace,[\[35\]](#) argues that the fundamental reason corruption is the norm in politics is due to an inherent structural advantage of one feedback loop pitted against another. Another model, The Memetic Evolution of Solutions to Difficult Problems,[\[36\]](#) uses memes, the [evolutionary algorithm](#), and the [scientific method](#) to show how complex solutions evolve over time and how that process can be improved. The insights gained from these models are being used to engineer memetic solution elements to the sustainability problem.

Another application of memetics in the sustainability space is the crowdfunded Climate Meme Project [\[37\]](#) conducted by Joe Brewer and Balazs Laszlo Karafiath in the spring of 2013. This study was based on a collection of 1000 unique text-based expressions gathered from Twitter, Facebook, and structured interviews with climate activists. The major finding was that the global warming meme is not effective at spreading because it causes emotional duress in the minds of people who learn about it. Five central tensions were revealed in the discourse about [climate change], each of which represents a resonance point through which dialogue can be engaged. The tensions were Harmony/Disharmony (whether or not humans are part of the natural world), Survival/Extinction (envisioning the future as either apocalyptic collapse of civilization or total extinction of the human race), Cooperation/Conflict (regarding whether or not humanity can come together to solve global problems), Momentum/Hesitation (about whether or not we are making progress at the collective scale to address climate change), and Elitism/Heretic (a general sentiment that each side of the debate considers the experts of its opposition to be untrustworthy).[\[38\]](#)

Ben Cullen, in his book *Contagious Ideas*,[\[39\]](#) brought the idea of the meme into the discipline of archaeology. He coined the term "Cultural Virus Theory", and used it to try to anchor archaeological theory in a neo-Darwinian paradigm. Archaeological memetics could assist the application of the meme concept to material culture in particular.

[Francis Heylighen](#) of the [Center Leo Apostel for Interdisciplinary Studies](#) has postulated what he calls

“memetic selection criteria”. These criteria opened the way to a specialized field of *applied memetics* to find out if these selection criteria could stand the test of [quantitative analyses](#). In 2003 Klaas Chielens carried out these tests in a Masters thesis project on the testability of the selection criteria.

In *Selfish Sounds and Linguistic Evolution*,[\[40\]](#) Austrian linguist Nikolaus Ritt has attempted to operationalise memetic concepts and use them for the explanation of long term sound changes and change conspiracies in early English. It is argued that a generalised Darwinian framework for handling cultural change can provide explanations where established, speaker centred approaches fail to do so. The book makes comparatively concrete suggestions about the possible material structure of memes, and provides two empirically rich case studies.

Australian academic S.J. Whitty has argued that [project management](#) is a memeplex with the language and stories of its practitioners at its core.[\[41\]](#) This radical approach sees a project and its management as an illusion; a human construct about a collection of feelings, expectations, and sensations, which are created, fashioned, and labeled by the human brain. Whitty’s approach requires project managers to consider that the reasons for using project management are not consciously driven to maximize profit, and are encouraged to consider project management as naturally occurring, self-serving, evolving process which shapes organizations for its own purpose.

Swedish political scientist Mikael Sandberg argues against “[Lamarckian](#)” interpretations of institutional and technological evolution and studies creative innovation of [information technologies](#) in governmental and private organizations in Sweden in the 1990s from a memetic perspective.[\[42\]](#) Comparing the effects of active (“Lamarckian”) IT strategy versus user–producer interactivity (Darwinian co-evolution), evidence from Swedish organizations shows that co-evolutionary interactivity is almost four times as strong a factor behind IT creativity as the “Lamarckian” IT strategy.

Category

1. External Domains

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