Cultural Evolution of Sustainable Behaviours: Landscape of Affordances Model

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ODD Protocol

The following model description follows the ODD (Overview, Design concepts, Details) protocol for describing agent-based models (Grimm et al. 2006; 2010).

1. Purpose

This NetLogo model illustrates the cultural evolution of pro-environmental behaviour patterns. It shows how collective behaviour patterns evolve from interactions between agents and agents (in a social network) as well as agents and the affordances within a niche. More specifically, the cultural evolution of behaviour patterns is understood in this model as a product of:

1. The landscape of affordances (action opportunities) provided by the material environment,
2. Individual learning and habituation,
3. Social learning and network structure,
4. Personal states (such as habits and attitudes), and
5. Cultural niche construction, or the modulation of affordances within a niche.

More particularly, the model illustrates how changes in the landscape of affordances (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014) can trigger nonlinear changes in collective behaviour patterns. The model also

shows how several behavioural cultures can emerge from the same environment and even within the same network.

The model is an elaboration of Kurt Lewin's (Lewin 1936) heuristic equation, $B = f(P, E)$, where behaviour (B) is a function (f) of the person (P) and the environment (E). The model introduces several feedback loops (1–5 above) to Lewin's equation, and thus provides a framework for studying the evolution of dynamical and complex behavioural systems over time. The model should be considered an abstract model, since many of its parameters are unspecifiable due to limits to current understanding of human (social) behaviour. However, the model can be tuned to replicate real-world macro patterns, and be used as a sandbox environment to locate tipping points in social systems. In the present manuscript, for example, we use the model to reproduce real-world patterns of bicycle and car use in Copenhagen.

2. Entities, state variables, and scales

The model includes three types of agents: human individuals, represented by mobile circle-shaped agents (or 'turtles' in NetLogo lingo), affordances (static patches that occupy grid cells) and links (which connect agents in a social network).

Individuals: Agents represent a single human being, located within a broader collective social network and ecological niche. Each individual has two personal states. These personal states correspond to the individual's probability of engaging with a specific kind of affordance. Affordances are opportunities for action provided by the environment. The two personal states in this model are *pro-env* and *non-env*. The former, *pro-env*, defines the probability of an individual

to engage with pro-environmental affordances, and the latter, *non-env*, defines the probability of an individual to engage with non-environmental affordances.

The personal states of individual agents are sampled from a normal distribution with mean values *initial-pro* (for *pro-env*) and *initial-non* (for *non-env*), and SD 0.15. This standard deviation is roughly in line with empirical data related to environmental attitudes and self-reported behaviours (Chan 1996). Owing to the model's probabilistic representation of human behaviour, the values of *pro-env* and *non-env* must be bounded between 0 and 1. More specifically, the model assigns individual boundaries for the *pro-env* and *non-env* of each agent. The bounds are sampled from a normal distribution with mean values 0.2 (lower bound) and 0.8 (upper bound), with SD 0.05.

Individuals are coloured based on their personal states. This is purely cosmetic, but it aids in noticing changes in personal states. If *pro-env* > *non-env*, the agent is coloured black. If *non-env* > *pro-env*, the agent is coloured red.

Links: Individual agents are embedded in a social network which is connected by links. The model supports four types of networks: the Klemm-Eguíluz model (highly clustered scale-free network), the Watts–Strogatz model (small-world network), the Barabási–Albert model (scale-free network with preferential attachment) and the Erdős–Rényi model (random network). All network edges (links) are undirected (bidirectional).

The default network choice is the Klemm-Eguíluz model (Klemm and Eguiluz 2002). The Klemm-Eguíluz algorithm generates a network based on a finite memory of the nodes (agents), creating a highly clustered and scale-free network (see Figures 12–14). The Klemm-Eguíluz model was

chosen since it represents two features we know to characterize social systems: Societies have hubs (the network degree distribution follows a power law distribution, i.e. it has scale-free properties) and societies have highly clustered local communities (social networks have high clustering coefficients) (ibid.). See Klemm and Eguíluz (2002) and Caparrini (2018) for descriptions of how Klemm-Eguíluz model works, as well as Prettejohn et al. (section 3.4 in 2011) for useful pseudocode. We set the default Klemm-Eguíluz model's parameter *m0* (initial number of agents) to 5 and μ (probability to connect with low degree nodes) to 0.9.

Figure 1. A representative plot of the network degree distribution from a single model run with 300 agents. Notice how some agents have amounts of links that greatly exceed the mean (black dashed line) and median (red dashed line).

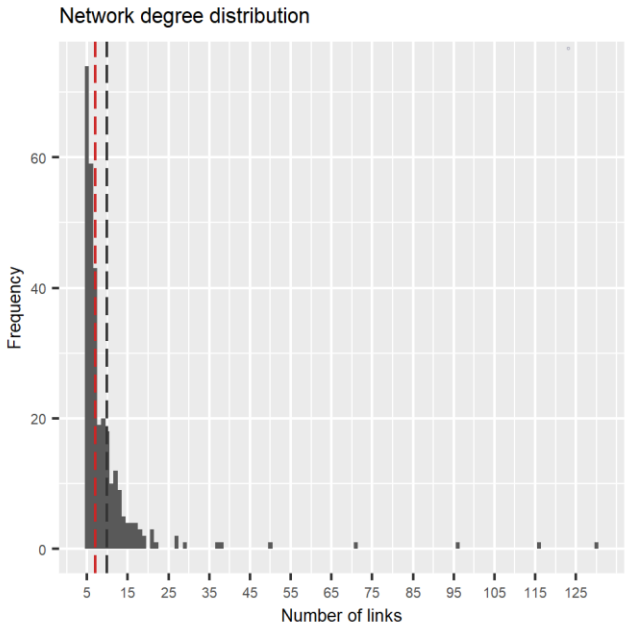


Figure 2. Cumulative network degree distribution of 1000 simulations (total of 300,000 agents) on a logarithmic scale. Notice the scale-free density distribution and relative infrequency of agents with above 150 direct links. Mean links are signified by the black dashed line and median by the red dashed line.

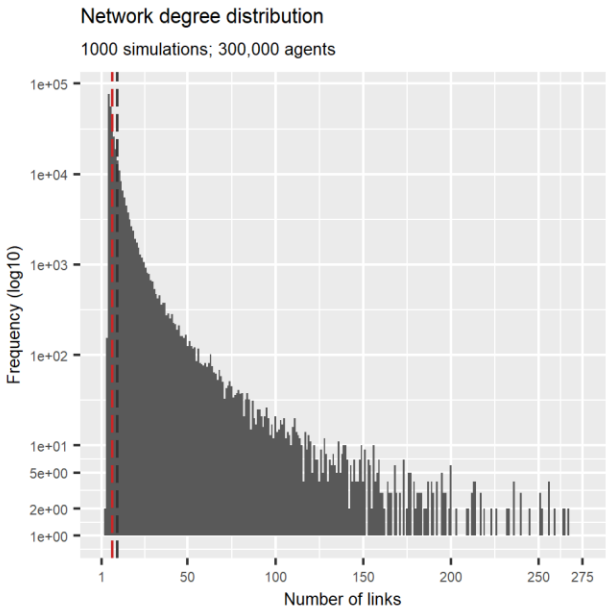
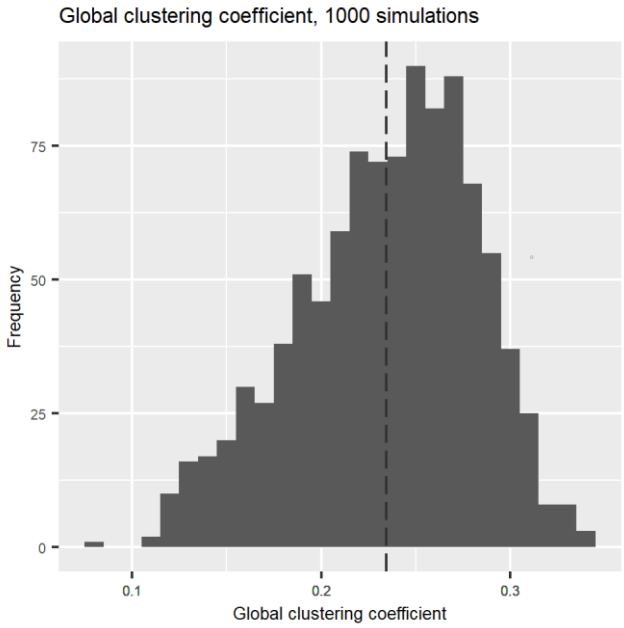


Figure 3. A histogram of global clustering coefficients from 1000 runs with 100 agents. Global clustering coefficients are calculated based on triplets of nodes. Triplets are three nodes which are connected either by two (open triplet) or three (closed tripled) edges (links). The global cluster coefficient is the number of closed triplets in a network divided by the total number of triplets. Dashed line is at the mean global clustering coefficient, 0.24.



Patches (environment): Patches represent the action-opportunities, or affordances, within the environment. An affordance is the functional relevance of the environment for an individual. The model has two affordances: One represents an opportunity for pro-environmental behaviour (represented by a violet patch) and one represents an opportunity for environmentally harmful behaviour (sky-blue patch). The latter are from here on referred to as non-environmental affordances. The affordances of the environment are therefore binary in this model, even though nothing prevents the addition of more kinds of affordances. Affordance-patches occupy the two-dimensional grid of the model. The grid wraps horizontally and vertically (i.e., it is torus-shaped). The total area of the grid is an arbitrary 201x201 patches.

Scales: The model can be adapted to represent different spatial and temporal scales. One time-step can be understood to either represent one instance of behaviour per agent, or a collection of behaviours. In the abstract version of the model (section 4.1 of the article), the spatial and temporal scales are not specifically defined. In empirical validation (section 4.2 of the article), the spatial area of the model represents the city centre of Copenhagen, with each tick representing one day.

3. Process overview and scheduling

The submodels of the model are described in more detail and pseudocode in the *Submodels* section. In this section, we describe a brief process overview.

Setup: The model begins with a setup phase where the patches, agents and links are created. Ticks are reset after the setup, so all setup processes occur before the first timestep.

First, the social network (agents and links) is created. This will create a network with individuals specified by the parameter *number-of-agents*. See section 2 of ODD protocol above for details on available network structures.

Second, each agent is assigned two personal states, *pro-env* and *non-env*.

Third, affordances are created. Affordances are binary patches-own variables: value 0 signifies a non-environmental affordance, and value 1 a pro-environmental affordance. First, all patches are assigned with a non-environmental affordance (and coloured sky-blue). Subsequently, the proportion of patches designated by the parameter *pro-amount* are turned into pro-environmental affordances. Therefore, the parameter *pro-amount* corresponds to the initial proportion of pro-environmental affordances within the total landscape of affordances.

Go: The "Go" procedure is the heart of the model.

First, agents behave. If the agent is on a pro-environmental affordance, it will interact with it with the probability of P(*pro-env*). For example, if an agent's personal state *pro-env* is 0.5, it has a 50% chance of interacting with a pro-environmental affordance.

Likewise, if the agent is on a non-environmental affordance, it will interact with it with the probability of P(*non-env*). Again, if an agent's personal state non-env is 0.7, it has a 70% chance of interacting with a non-environmental affordance.

A while-loop ensures that each agent behaves once every turn. Each agent owns a binary value, *behaved?*, which signifies whether it has behaved, or actualized an affordance, during the current

tick. If *behaved?* is TRUE, the agent will stop attempting to behave after completing the behaviour commands (including steps 1–5 below).

Once an agent behaves successfully, a sequence of procedures launched in the following order.

1. If the agent behaved pro-environmentally (i.e., it actualizes a pro-environmental affordance), it will increase its current personal state *pro-env* by the amount of *asocial-learning* and decrease its current *non-env* by the amount of *asocial-learning*.

   Conversely, if the agent behaved non-environmentally (i.e., it actualizes a non-environmental affordance), it will increase its current *non-env* by the amount of *asocial-learning* and decrease its current *pro-env* by the amount of *asocial-learning*.

2. If *niche-construction* is TRUE (niche construction is turned on) and if the agent behaved pro-environmentally, with probability *construct-pro* it will ask one of the eight patches in its Moore neighbourhood to turn into a pro-environmental affordance (which is then coloured in violet). *construct-pro* therefore defines the rate of pro-environmental niche construction. The procedure is identical for non-environmental niche construction (following non-environmental behaviour), whose rate is defined by *construct-non.*

3. If *networks* is TRUE and if the agent behaved pro-environmentally, it will engage in social learning with its network neighbours (the agents to which it is directly connected to by a link). Following pro-environmental behaviour, the agent will ask its network neighbours to increase their current *pro-env* by the amount specified by parameter *social-learning*, as well as to decrease their current *non-env* by the amount specified by parameter *social-*

learning. Again, the procedure is similar after non-environmental behaviour, except this results in an increase of *non-env* and decrease of *pro-env* by the amount of *social-learning*.

4. The agent will bound its personal states *pro-env* and *non-env*. If the agent's personal state is above its upper bound or below its lower bound, it will set its personal state to its upper and lower bound, respectively.

5. If mutate? Is TRUE, at each tick, the pro-env and non-env of all agents have a chance of mutating. The default probability for mutation (*mutate-prob*) is 0.005, and the default rate for mutation (*mutate-rate*) is 0.05. The probabilities for increasing or decreasing pro-env and non-env values (of all agents) are equal, i.e. mutation is not biased to any direction.

After each behaviour or attempt to behave, agents move in a random forward direction between 45 degrees right and 45 degrees left from their current heading. In one tick (time-step) agents will continue moving until they have behaved, i.e. until they have successfully interacted with an affordance.

The aforementioned steps are sequential: An agent completes the full set of actions before passing on control to the next agent. The order of agents is read in a random order on each tick.

4. Design concepts

Basic principles.

The model design elaborates on social psychologist Kurt Lewin's (Lewin 1936) heuristic equation: $B = f(P, E)$. Here, behaviour (B) is a function (f) of the person (P) and its environment (E).

The model adds five dimensions of detail into Lewin's equation.

1. The environment affords a variety of opportunities for action, or affordances ($E \rightarrow B$).
2. Behaviour modulates personal states through processes of habituation and individual learning ($B \rightarrow P$).
3. Personal states, such as habits and intentions, drive behaviour *(*$P \rightarrow B$).
4. Behaviour shapes the environment through processes of niche construction ($B \rightarrow E$).
5. Feedback loops 1–4 all occur within a social network where behaviour is transmitted via social learning ($B_{myself} \rightarrow P_{neighbors}$ and $B_{neighbors} \rightarrow P_{myself}$).

These assumptions are elaborated in detail in the manuscript's sections 2.1 to 2.5.

The basic principles can be summarized as follows: Through processes of individual and social learning as well as niche construction, any behaviour at time *t* will have an effect on the behaviour of an agent and other agents at time *t+1*. The model therefore presents a dynamical systems approach to the emergence of human behaviour, where the unit of study is a tightly coupled human-environment system – a dynamical system which evolves over time and can behave in nonlinear ways due to positive feedback-loops.

Emergence.

The model produces a complex and dynamical system which exhibits several kinds of emergent behaviour.

Firstly, the model displays nonlinearities in the development of behavioural cultures (collective behaviour habits). The behaviour of the agents in the network can be steady for long periods of

time, only to be followed by abrupt phase transitions into new states (this is illustrated in more detail in the manuscript sections 4.1 and 4.2).

Second, the model illustrates how two different behavioural cultures can emerge from the same environment, and even in the same social network. This is a macro-level pattern that is known (from studies of cultural evolution) to occur in real-world societies (Mesoudi 2011).

Third, the model has several leverage points. For instance, a small change (e.g., 5%) in the initial composition of affordances in the landscape can have radical effects on the evolution of the behavioural cultures (see section 4.1 of manuscript and Supplementary information for sensitivity testing). Thus, in a way which is typical to complex emergent systems, the model is sensitive to initial conditions, which makes its evolution difficult to predict at certain parameter ranges.

Fourth, whilst the model always starts with a random composition of the affordance landscape, this landscape gets more structured over time as individuals construct the niche around them.

Adaptation.

Through processes of individual and social learning, agents adapt their personal states to their behaviour and to their immediate social environment. Moreover, agents construct their environment to be more predictable by constructing niches which are in line with past behaviour.

Objectives.

Agents engage in active attempts to behave successfully (actualize an affordance) and to create an environment where past behaviour patterns are increasingly more likely.

Learning.

The model includes two learning processes, individual and social learning. Individual (asocial) learning occurs after behaviour and affects only the agent who behaved. Individual learning is thus a product of individual behaviour. Social learning occurs in the social network an agent is embedded in.

The rates of individual and social learning depend on the chosen representation of behaviours and time-units. Realistic rates of individual and social learning are therefore difficult to specify. However, by studying real-world patterns, it might be possible to infer reasonably accurate rates of social and individual learning (see section 4.2 of the manuscript).

Prediction.

Agents do not estimate future conditions or consequences of their decisions.

Sensing.

Agents sense the (colour of the) patch they are currently on as well as their network neighbours and neighbours' behaviour. Agents also sense their physical vicinity, i.e. the patches in their Moore neighbourhood (the 8 patches surrounding the patch they are currently on).

Interaction.

After behaving, agents interact with their network neighbours. This involves both influencing the network neighbours as well as being influenced by each network neighbour (both defined by the rate of *social-learning*). Niche construction also influences the behaviour of other agents, and is thus an indirect form of social interaction.

Stochasticity.

The following processes rely on random sampling:

The initial personal states of agents are sampled from a normal distribution (see section 2 of ODD protocol above). The initial configuration of affordances on the grid is random (the proportion of pro-environmental affordances, however, is fixed by the parameter *pro-amount*). The movement of agents on the grid is a random walk through the landscape of affordances. Each instance of behaviour and niche construction makes use of a floating random number generator. The model supports the use of a fixed random seed for replicability (if *random-seed?* is TRUE, a random seed can be fixed with the *rseed* parameter).

Collectives.

Individuals belong to a social network and construct their niche, as defined above. Individuals take part in shaping the collective network and niche which, in turn, shapes their behaviour.

Observation.

Observation generally involves tracking mean or specific values over time. The most relevant variables are the global variables *pro-behavior* and *non-behavior*, which track the total amount of pro-environmental and non-environmental behavior during each tick.

Parameter sweeps are conducted via NetLogo's native BehaviorSpace tool.

5. Initialization

The initialization of the model is allowed to vary among simulations. Since many values, such as the personal states of agents, are randomly sampled, each model run will differ from the next even when run with the same parameter values.

However, the model supports the use of a fixed random seed for replicability (if *random-seed?* is TRUE, a random seed can be fixed with the rseed parameter).

The initial state of the model at $t = 0$ will depend on the parameters *initial-pro*, *initial-non*, *pro-amount* and the network parameters (*networks*, *network-type*) as defined above.

In the abstract version of the model, the initial states are arbitrary. The abstract model can be used to study the dynamics and sensitivities of the model's general structure.

In empirical validation (section 4.2 of manuscript), the initial states of the model are tuned to reproduce real-world patterns, or the cycling and driving habits of people in central Copenhagen.

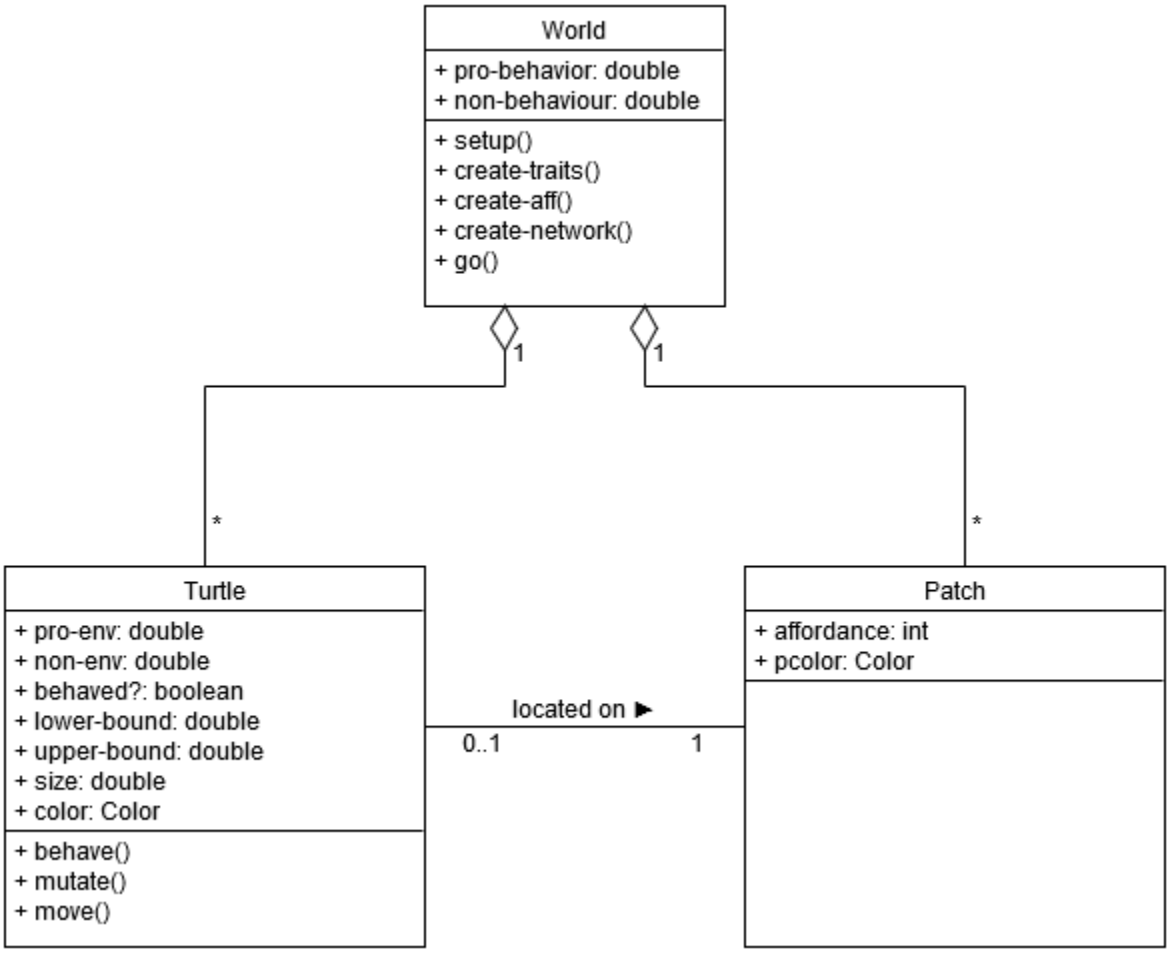
6. Input data

The model does not use input from external sources such as data files or other models.

7. Submodels

In the following, the processes mentioned in *Process overview and scheduling* (above) are described in more detail in pseudocode, flowcharts and natural language. Pseudocode is written by editing NetLogo code to resemble natural language. Whilst the descriptions below are comprehensive, please also refer to the fully annotated model code for details. The following section documents the *SETUP* submodels (*Social network, Personal states and Affordances*) and the *GO* submodels (*Behavior* and *Mutate*). *Behavior* includes descriptions of the processes of individual learning, niche construction and social learning.

Figure 4. Class diagram (UML).



SETUP

Social network

Since fully a full description of the Klemm-Eguíluz model would require a chapter-length analysis, we refer the reader to Caparrini's Complex Networks Toolbox (Caparrini 2018) for a description of the Klemm-Eguíluz small-world-scale-free network (we adapted, with permission, Caparrini's code for the present model). A full pseudocode description of the Klemm-Eguíluz model is openly accessible in Prettejohn, Berryman and McDonnell's (Prettejohn, Berryman, and McDonnell

2011) chapter ‘3.4 Klemm and Eguílez Small-World-Scale-Free Network’. A full mathematical description of the model is also available in Klemm-Eguíluz’ original work (Klemm and Eguiluz 2002).

Personal states

Personal states are created in the model setup. In pseudocode,

```
to set personal states
for each turtle in the list of all turtles [
  Set pro-env: sample a random value from a normal distribution with mean of initial-pro and a standard deviation of 0.15.
  Set non-env: sample a random value from a normal distribution with mean of initial-non and a standard deviation of 0.15.
  Set lower-bound: Set a lower bound for non-env and pro-env from a random normal distribution with mean 0.2 and SD 0.05.
  Set upper-bound: Set an upper bound for non-env and pro-env from a random normal distribution with mean 0.8 and SD 0.05
  ]
  end
```

Affordances

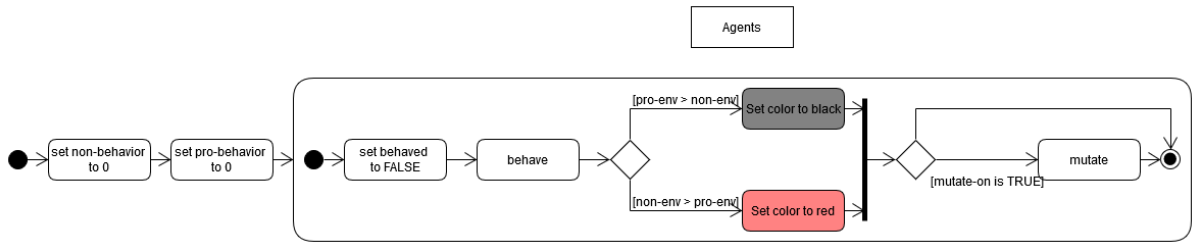
Affordances are patches-own variables. Affordances are created with the following procedure (pseudocode):

```
to create affordances
let total-patches be total count of patches
  ask all patches [
      set affordance to 0 ;; non-evironmental affordance
      set color to sky-blue ]
  ask n-of (total-patches * pro-amount) patches [
      set affordance to 1 ;; pro-environmental affordance
      set color to violet]
end
```

GO

The go-procedure begins with each agent resetting their global *pro-behavior* and *non-behavior* variables to 0 (these global variables measure the total pro- and non-environmental behaviours of all agents at the end of each tick). Then, agents set their *behaved?* variable (turtles-own variable) to FALSE. The *behaved?* variable ensures that each agent behaves (either pro- or non-environmentally) only once during a tick. After this, agents behave.

Figure 5. Go procedure, activity diagram (UML).



Behavior

This submodel is the heart of the model. It defines how agents interact with the environment and other agents. Since the procedure is identical for both pro-environmental and non-environmental behaviours, only pro-environmental behaviour is described here. To implement non-environmental behaviour, simply duplicate the code and replace "pro-environmental" (value 1) patch with "non-environmental" (value 0), "violet" with "sky-blue", and *pro-env* with *non-env* (and vice versa, *non-env* with *pro-env*). The processes of habituation, niche construction and social learning are included in this submodel, and are described below in pseudocode.

```
to behave
 while behaved? is FALSE [ ;; Start of while-loop
      if the patch the agent is currently on is pro-environmental
      and random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than
      pro-env [
;; Engage in individual learning
      set pro-env to (pro-env + asocial-learning)
      set non-env to (non-env - asocial-learning)
      set pro-behavior to (pro-behavior + 1)
      set behaved? to TRUE
;; And still complete the following commands (we are still in the
while-loop)


;; Engage in niche construction
if niche-construction is TRUE [
```

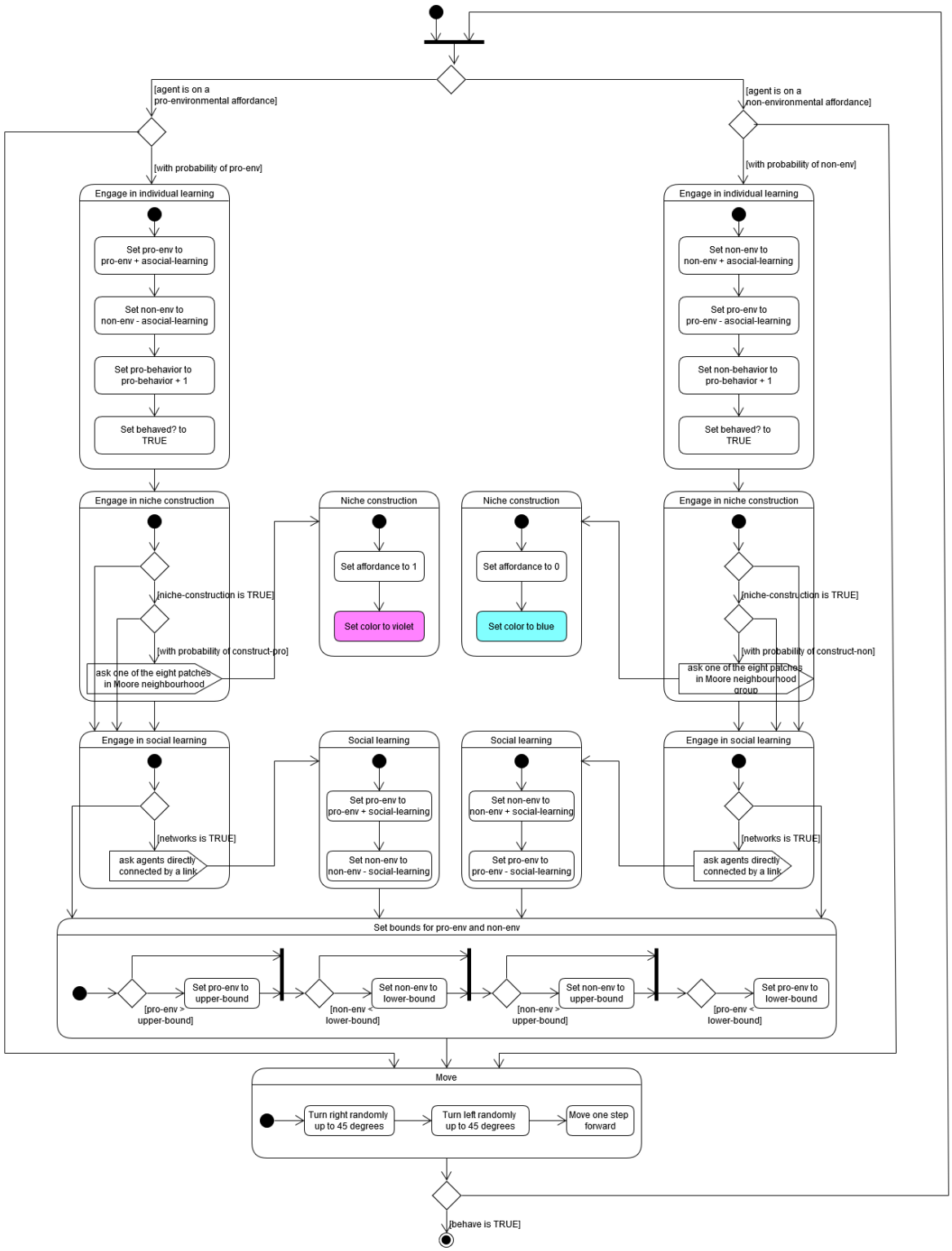
```
      if random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than
      (construct-pro / number-of-agents) [

        ask one-of patches in Moore neighborhood [

           set affordance to 1
           set color to violet ]

              ]

           ]


;; Engage in social learning

if networks is TRUE [

      ask link-neighbors [

        set pro-env to (pro-env + social-learning)

        set non-env to (non-env - social-learning)

            ]

     ]

]


;; Set bounds for pro-env and non-env

if pro-env > upper-bound [set pro-env to upper-bound]

if non-env < lower-bound [set non-env to lower-bound]

if non-env > upper-bound  [set non-env to upper-bound]

if pro-env < lower-bound [set pro-env to lower-bound]


;; Finally, move.

turn right randomly up to 45 degrees
```

```
turn left randomly up to 45 degrees

move one step forward

] ;; End of while-loop, and end the behave procedure

End
```

Mutate

```
to mutate

if mutate-on? = TRUE [

let mutate-probability 0.005

let mutate-rate 0.05

if random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than mutate-
probability [

    ask turtles [ set pro-env to (pro-env + mutate-rate)]]

if random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than mutate-
probability [

    ask turtles [ set non-env to (non-env - mutate-rate) ]]

;; ...and so on for all four possible configurations (mutation is not
biased to any direction.)

if random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than mutate-
probability [

    ask turtles [ set non-env to (non-env + mutate-rate) ]]

  if random-floating number in range [0,1] is smaller than mutate-
probability [

    ask turtles [ set pro-env to (pro-env - mutate-rate) ]]

]

end
```

Figure 6. The “behave” submodel, activity diagram (UML).



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