

Appendix 5. Protocol for phone interviews to derive mental models.

Individual Mental Models Interviews – Protocol for UK

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Objectives

1. Understand how farmer apprehend the functioning of the local agricultural landscape where they work daily.
 - What are the main stakeholders at stake?
 - What are the key operating processes?
 - Is biodiversity part of the landscape system for farmers?
 - Understand and compare social representations (Moscovici and Markov 1998), in each different region.

General recommendation

The protocol proposed below should be tested first with a few farmers in order to ensure that all questions are clear and understandable AND to check for the time it takes.

For the « free-listing » questions, attempts to elicit further answers from a respondent must not bias the answers, for example by giving examples or too much specificity: they must be neutral and there must be the same amount of further explanation for every person interviewed.

Material and methods

Material

Location: East Anglia

Sampling: 30 farmers amongst those who have at least one field on a selected landscape [NB technically we should do only 24, but six could be “tests”].

Duration: to be tested one or twice before. Shouldn't be more than 15min

Equipment: laptop or paper to write down the answers

Interviews method

Based on Mathevet et al. (2011), we will ask each farmer to identify the stakeholders, the components, and the processes that constitute the main drivers and state variables of the landscape as a socio-ecological system (Etienne 2010).

To do this, the participants answer questions by listing words or short expressions. The frequency of the uttered words and the rank of citation will be analyzed. It is thus important to note the words in the same order that people mention them.

Proceedings

Introducing the subject

This interview is part of a PhD work on the agricultural landscape that compares how farmers perceive the functioning of their landscape in different agricultural regions in Europe.

We define the landscape as: “An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”¹

This is what we mean by “functioning”: natural influences on the landscape, things that people do to shape the landscape and ways in which natural factors affect human actions or human influences change the natural factors.

The area of interest for the study in UK is East Anglia (Norfolk, West Suffolk, North Essex, Cambridgeshire, and South-east Lincolnshire). Can you visualize the agricultural landscape of East Anglia? This is what we'd like to talk about in 15min.

There are not “right” or “wrong” answers to the questions I'll ask, everyone has its own perception; we would like to know more about your own vision. The results will be analyzed anonymously.

The questions I'll ask are called “free-listing” questions. I will give you a word or a short sentence and I'd like you to answer with a few individual words (not whole sentences) that come freely to your mind. It can be anything, and there is no limit regarding the numbers of words (it can be one or several).

Questions to elicit the representations of the agricultural landscape

There will be 5 questions, with East Anglia in mind. Are you ok with that?

The first word is:

1) “Landscape”

What does it trigger in your mind?

There is no limit of length for the list but the respondent shall not “look for something to say” too long (1-10, average 4-5). When nothing more comes easily to his/her mind the question is over

The second word is

2) “Agricultural landscape”

What does it trigger in your mind?

Ok, now we would like to know about your personal vision about “what makes the agricultural landscape” in East Anglia.

We would like you to list different elements that make and transform the agricultural landscape.

3) What are, according to you, the main stakeholders who have an impact on the agricultural landscape? They may have direct or indirect, positive or negative effects.

¹ Council of Europe 2000, European Landscape Convention

By stakeholder we mean a person, a group of people or an institution. A “direct stakeholder” has an impact on the landscape with no intermediary; an “indirect stakeholder” has an impact by influencing choices and actions of “direct stakeholders”

...

4) What do you think are the main components of the agricultural landscape?

By components we mean “biophysical component”, anything that is part of the landscape or its “functioning”. It can be human-made or not, it can be tangible or conceptual, it can be alive or not.

5) What do you think are the main drivers of change and processes that change the agricultural landscape? Please think over the last 10 years and the next 10 years.

These can be natural processes, or economic or social drivers of change. The timeframe is the decade (past or to come).

Context questions

We need to collect a little information on people who we interview to be able to interpret the data. These data will be used anonymously.

- What area within East Anglia do you know best? [This can be the area in which they live, in which case, that’s all we need to know.]
This information allows us to link the answers to the geographical area best known by each farmer and thus see whether the close environment has a significant influence on the results.

6) Do you often (more than one a month) use the landscape for leisure beside work (shooting, walking, running, cycling, fishing, etc.). If yes do you go around your farm or far away?

- Finally, I need to ask a few “context questions”:
 - Age
 - What level of formal education do you have? (1) left school to 16, (2) left school/college to 18, (3) went through higher education; if (3) then in agriculture or in other subject.
 - year of starting to work on the farm
 - name of the place where the respondent grew up
 - Membership if any (association/farmers’ union, etc.)

That's all, thank you very much for your time. Can I just check whether you can come to the discussion workshop we are holding on 22nd August?

Data analyses

We will use social representation and cultural consensus analysis (Stone-Jovicich et al. 2011; Mathevet et al. 2011) to explore the degree to which different farmers share mental models of stakeholders, components, and processes.

References

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