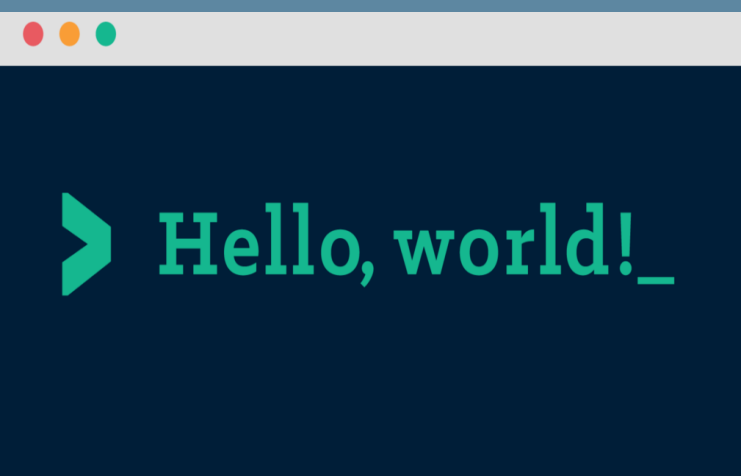


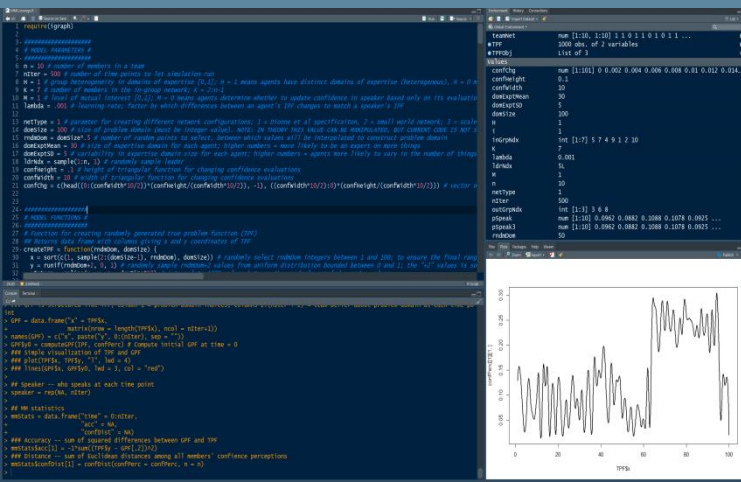


# HELLO WORLD!

## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES, AND GETTING STARTED WITH COMPUTATIONAL MODELING



36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology



James A. Grand



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

- **FORMAL & ALGORITHMIC** DESCRIPTION OF HOW A PHENOMENON UNFOLDS OVER TIME
  - “WHAT HAPPENS” TO PRODUCE “WHAT WE OBSERVE”

## Formal

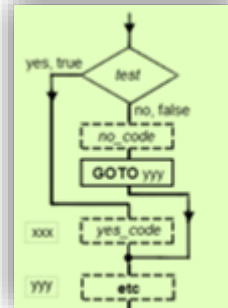
- Declarative logic and mathematical equations used to convey how, when, and why variables change

IF [ $goal_1 > goal_2$ ]:  
     THEN [ $choice_t = goal_1$ ]  
     ELSE [ $choice_t = goal_2$ ]

$$goal_n = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\lambda * (X_t - X_{t-1})}}$$

## Algorithmic

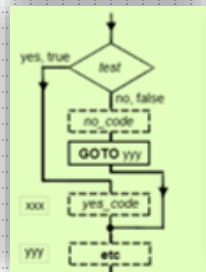
- Proposed sequence in which actions/events occur over time or in response to other actions/events



Step	Description
1	Initialize time clock to $t = 0$
2	Create $k$ organizations each containing $n$ employees, with $k/2$ organizations containing ST
3	Create a voluntary turnover schedule for each organization
4	Increment time clock to $t = t + 1$
5	Determine change in employee performance potential as a result of learning
6	Compute cumulative employee and organizational performance potential
7	Invoke voluntary turnover and immediate replacement scheduled for time $t$
8	If $t < t_{stop}$ , return to Step 4
9	Stop simulation

# WHAT IS A COMPUTATIONAL MODEL?

- **FORMAL & ALGORITHMIC** DESCRIPTION OF HOW A PHENOMENON UNFOLDS OVER TIME
  - TYPICALLY TRANSLATE MODEL INTO COMPUTER CODE THAT CAN ENACT MECHANISMS FOR US



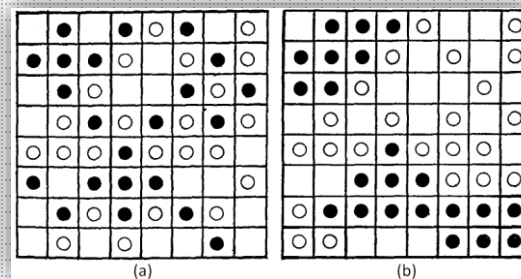
Step	Description
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6	Compute cumulative employee and organizational performance potential
7	Invoke voluntary turnover and immediate replacement scheduled for time $t$
8	If $t < t_{stop}$ return to Step 4
9	Stop simulation



```

1 // Overall function for creating a person and assigning all ST items
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```

- BUT NOTE THIS IS FOR CONVENIENCE/EFFICIENCY, NOT BECAUSE IT IS REQUIRED!



◀ Thomas Schelling won a Nobel Prize running computational models on a checkerboard! (sort of...)

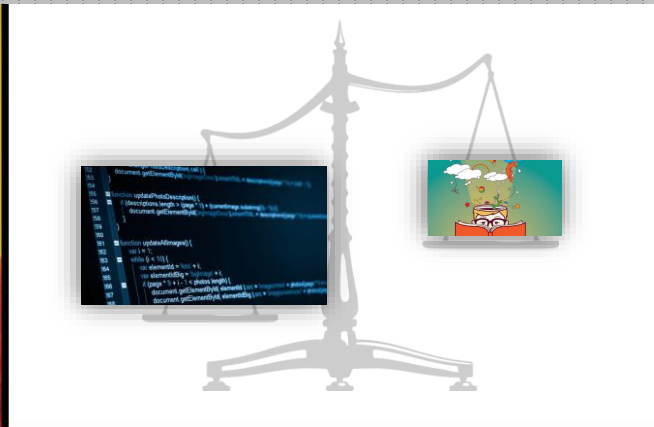
# WHAT IS A COMPUTATIONAL MODEL?

Step 1

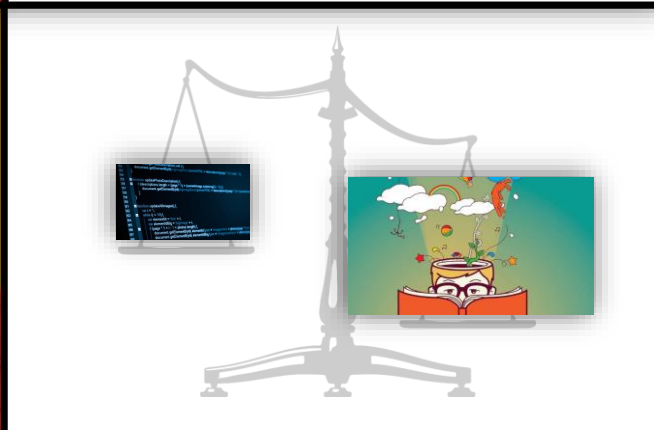
Train yourself to think in terms of actors, not factors

Step 2

Learn basic programming concepts



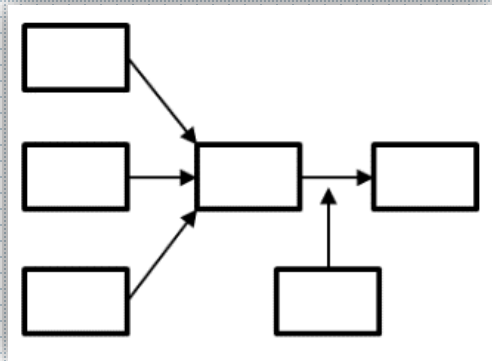
◀ People perceive most important skills for computational modeling are programming and/or quantitative



◀ But learning how to think computationally is much more important...and very different than how most of us were trained

# GETTING STARTED IN TWO STEPS

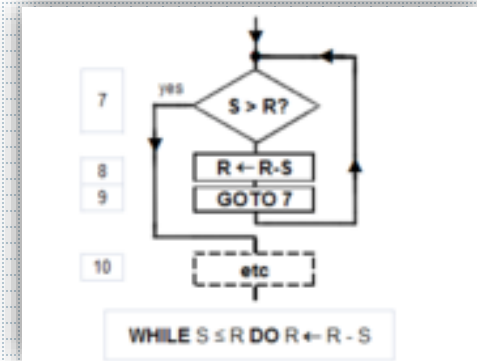
## "FACTOR" THINKING



- CAUSALITY = CONSISTENT COVARIATION
- STABLE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG "STATIC" VARIABLES
- STATISTICAL

- What are the antecedent and outcome variables?
- How strong is the covariation?
- What variables account for variance in other variables?

## "ACTOR" THINKING



- CAUSALITY = GENERATIVE MECHANISMS
- FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT LINK "DYNAMIC" VARIABLES
- COMPUTATIONAL

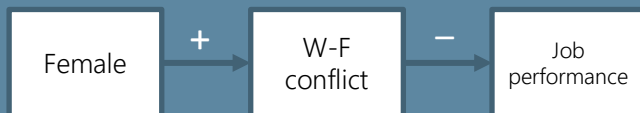
- What happens to individuals?
- How do individuals think, feel, and react?
- Which and how do actions/events unfold?

# ACTOR VS. FACTOR THINKING



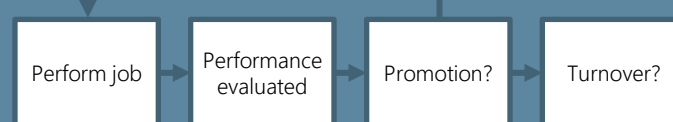
Why are women underrepresented in senior leadership positions?

### "FACTOR" THINKING



- Inference: Females experience greater work-family conflict which reduces performance and likelihood of promotion
- Causal mechanism: Career delays? Lack of opportunities? Discrimination/bias?

### "ACTOR" THINKING



- Inference: Male vs. female performance is evaluated differently leading to different promotion rates
- Causal mechanism: Bias in performance evaluations

# ACTOR VS. FACTOR THINKING



- **PSEUDOCODE** → THE “BOX AND ARROWS” OF COMPUTATIONAL THINKING
  - PROPOSED SEQUENCE OF STEPS FOR WHAT OCCURS
  - WHERE DOES THIS COME FROM?
    - » THEORY
    - » OBSERVATION
    - » EMPIRICAL RESULTS...SOMETIMES
    - » “DISCIPLINED IMAGINATION” (WEICK, 1989)

Pseudocode for Martell et al (1996) computational model of gender stratification

Step	Action
1	Create hierarchical organization with $k$ levels
2	Populate each organizational level with $n_k$ original employees
3	Assign each employee a gender such that $n_{male} = n_{female}$
4	Randomly assign each employee a performance evaluation score such that $performance_{female} \sim N(50, 10)$ and $performance_{male} \sim N(50, 10) + bias$
5	Randomly select $TO\%$ of employees to turnover from the organization
6	Determine if any open positions exist at level $k$ and promote highest performing employees from level $k-1$ into openings
7	Fill open positions in lowest organizational level with new hires using procedure in Steps 3 and 4
8	If number of original employees $> 0$ , return to Step 5
9	End

I may spend days or weeks developing the logic, functions, and structure of the pseudocode before I even consider coding!

### INITIALIZATION

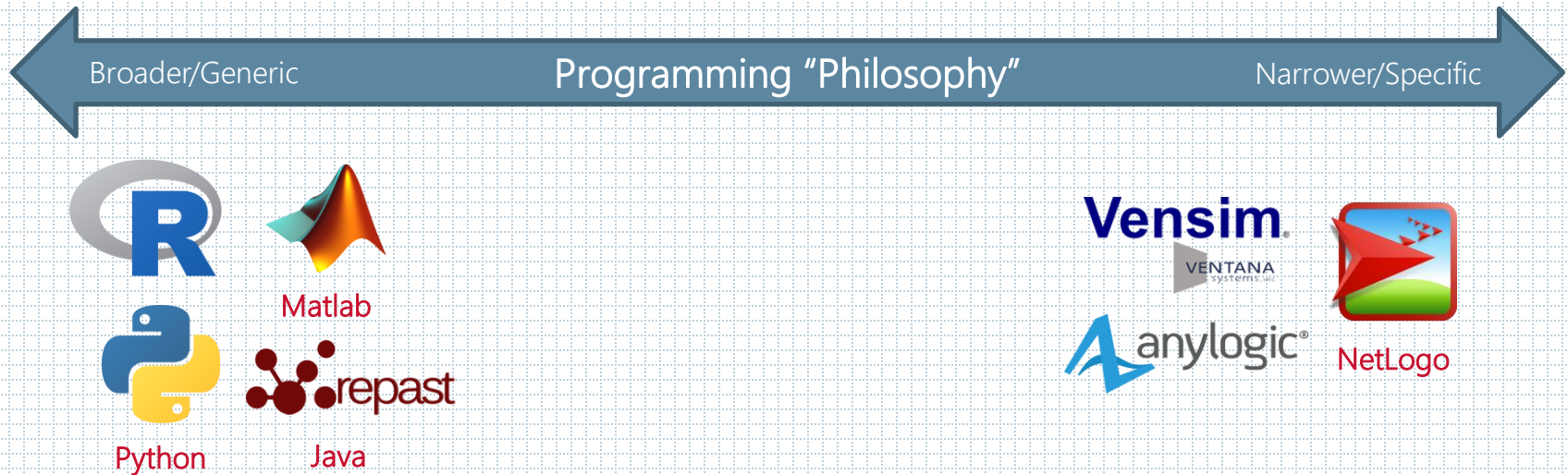
WHAT DOES THE “WORLD” LOOK LIKE?

### MODEL

WHAT HAPPENS? WHEN? HOW?

# ACTOR VS. FACTOR THINKING

- MANY CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO MODELING SOFTWARE:



- Do anything & everything
- Only syntax/coding
- Steeper learning curve (maybe?)

- Do particular things well
- Syntax & "point & click" hybrid
- Shallower learning curve (maybe?)

# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101



- HOW DO I CHOOSE? WHICH SHOULD I LEARN?



Are you comfortable with syntax-based software for statistics (R, Matlab, Python)?

No & not interested

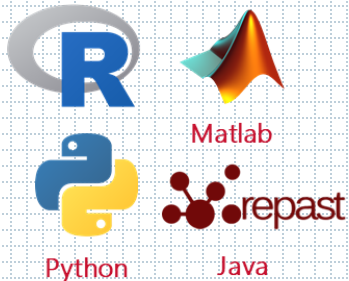
Yes

Do you know the "type" of model you want to run? (agent-based, system dynamics, neural network, etc.)

Yes & it's the only type I'm interested in

No, not sure, or don't care

BROADER/GENERIC



Ultimately, this choice is not that important...

Just pick one and start learning!

NARROWER/SPECIFIC



# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101

- THREE MUST-LEARN PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

1

IF-ELSE

- IF-ELSE STATEMENTS

- » *BRANCHING* → EXECUTE CODE BASED ON WHETHER SOMETHING IS TRUE OR FALSE
    - » E.G., =, ≠, <, >, ≤, ≥

A screenshot of the RStudio code editor. The window title is 'Untitled1\*'. The toolbar shows 'Source on Save' and other icons. The code is as follows:

```
1 if (x == 1) {  
2   ## Do this if pass the check  
3 } else {  
4   # Do this if fail the check  
5 }
```

# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101

- THREE MUST-LEARN PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

- LOOPS

- » *SEQUENCE* → EXECUTE STEPS IN CODE MULTIPLE TIMES IN A ROW
    - » FOR LOOP: EXECUTE CODE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TIMES
      1. USE AN *ITERATOR* THAT TAKES ON A SET OF PRE-DETERMINED VALUES
      2. RUN THE CODE **FOR** EACH VALUE OF THE ITERATOR
        - A. E.G, 1-10, NUMBER OF ROWS IN A MATRIX

1

IF-ELSE

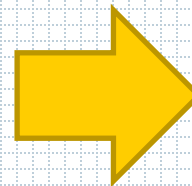
2

LOOPS



```
Untitled1* x
Source on Save
1 for (i in 1:10) {
2   print(i)
3 }
```

1. Set i to first value (i = 1)
2. Do code in between { }
3. Set i to next value (i = 2) and repeat Step 2 until all values for i have been selected (i = 10)



```
Console Terminal x
C:/Users/grandjam/Dropbox/Modeling & Related Resources/Learning how to
> for (i in 1:10) {
+   print(i)
+ }
[1] 1
[1] 2
[1] 3
[1] 4
[1] 5
[1] 6
[1] 7
[1] 8
[1] 9
[1] 10
```

# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101

- THREE MUST-LEARN PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

- LOOPS

- » *SEQUENCE* → EXECUTE STEPS IN CODE MULTIPLE TIMES IN A ROW

- » WHILE LOOP: EXECUTE CODE UNTIL A CONDITION IS SATISFIED

- 1. KEEP RUNNING CODE **WHILE** SOMETHING IS TRUE

1

IF-ELSE

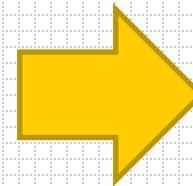
2

LOOPS



```
Untitled1* x
1 x = 0
2 while (x < 10) {
3   print(x)
4   x = x + 1
5 }
```

1. Check if  $x < 10$
2. If so, do code between `{ }`  
If not, stop doing code



```
Console Terminal x
C:/Users/grandjam/Dropbox/Modeling & Related Resources/Le
> x = 0
> while (x < 10) {
+   print(x)
+   x = x + 1
+ }
[1] 0
[1] 1
[1] 2
[1] 3
[1] 4
[1] 5
[1] 6
[1] 7
[1] 8
[1] 9
```

# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101

- THREE MUST-LEARN PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

- FUNCTIONS

- » *EFFICIENCY* → PERFORM CALCULATIONS AND RETURN OUTPUT
  - » USEFUL FOR RUNNING FREQUENTLY USED/REQUIRED PROCEDURES
- 1. WRITING FUNCTIONS NOT STRICTLY NECESSARY...BUT ARE POWERFUL!

1

IF-ELSE

2

LOOPS

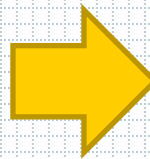
3

FUNCTIONS



```
Untitled1*  
Source on Save  
1 myFunction <- function(arg1, arg2) {  
2   out = arg1 + arg2  
3   return(out)  
4 }
```

1. Name function (i.e., myFunction)
2. Name *arguments* of function between ( )
3. Carry out calculations between { }
4. Specify what to *return* when function is run



```
Console Terminal  
C:/Users/grandjam/Dropbox/Modeling & Related Resources/Learning how to m  
> myFunction <- function(arg1, arg2) {  
+   out = arg1 + arg2  
+   return(out)  
+ }  
> myFunction(arg1 = 1, arg2 = 1)  
[1] 2  
>
```

1. Use function by assigning values to arguments
2. Function returns results

# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101

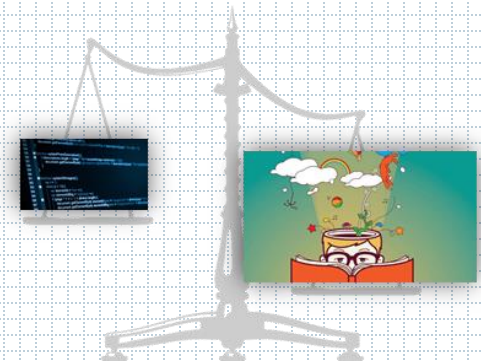
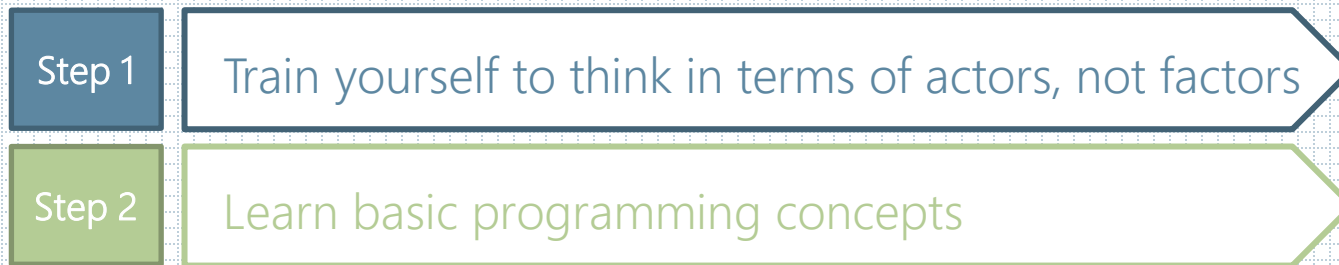
- MY ADVICE FOR THE FIRST-TIME MODELER/PROGRAMMER
  - **BREAK THE PROBLEM DOWN**
    - » WHAT DO YOU WANT ACCOMPLISHED?
    - » WHAT STEPS ARE INVOLVED?
    - » WHAT SHOULD THE RESULT OF EACH STEP LOOK LIKE?
  - **FAIL FAST BY TESTING OFTEN**
    - » RUN NEW CODE FREQUENTLY
    - » CONFIRM THAT WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN DOES HAPPEN
  - **COMMENT EVERYTHING**
    - » CODE DOESN'T RUN SLOWER
    - » YOU & OTHERS WILL KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING



# PROGRAMMING FUNDAMENTALS 101



- **POWERFUL APPROACH** FOR THINKING ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA
  - TOOL FOR REPRESENTING DYNAMICS, PROCESS, AND *WHAT HAPPENS*
- NECESSITATES A **WAY OF THINKING** AND **SKILLSET** THAT OUR SCIENCE IS NOT WELL VERSED IN → *MASSIVE OPPORTUNITY!*
- NEXT STEPS
  - READ MORE ABOUT MODELS AND MODELING
  - LOOK AT, RUN, AND TRY TO CODE SOME SIMPLE MODELS



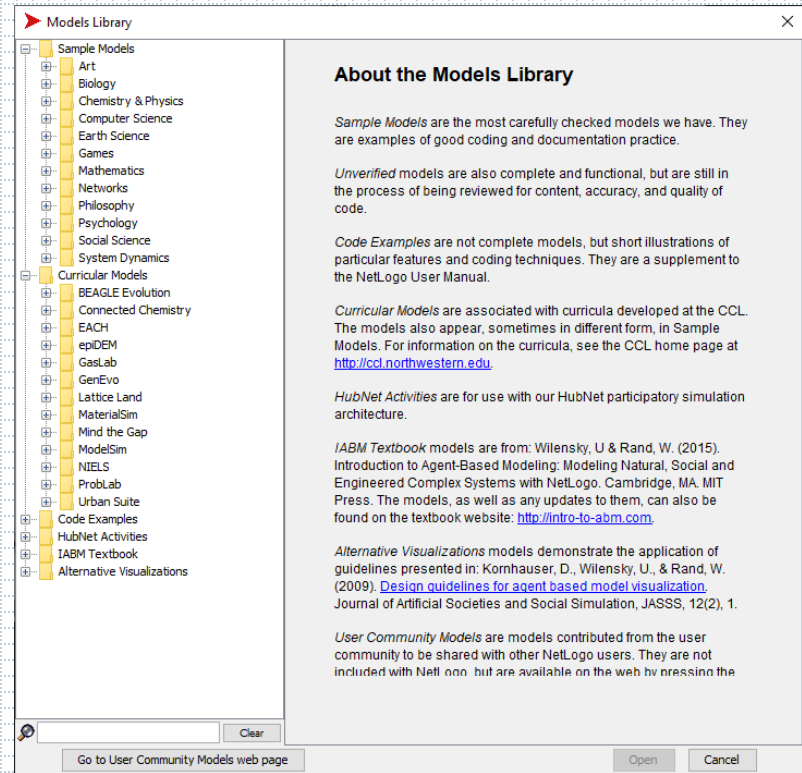
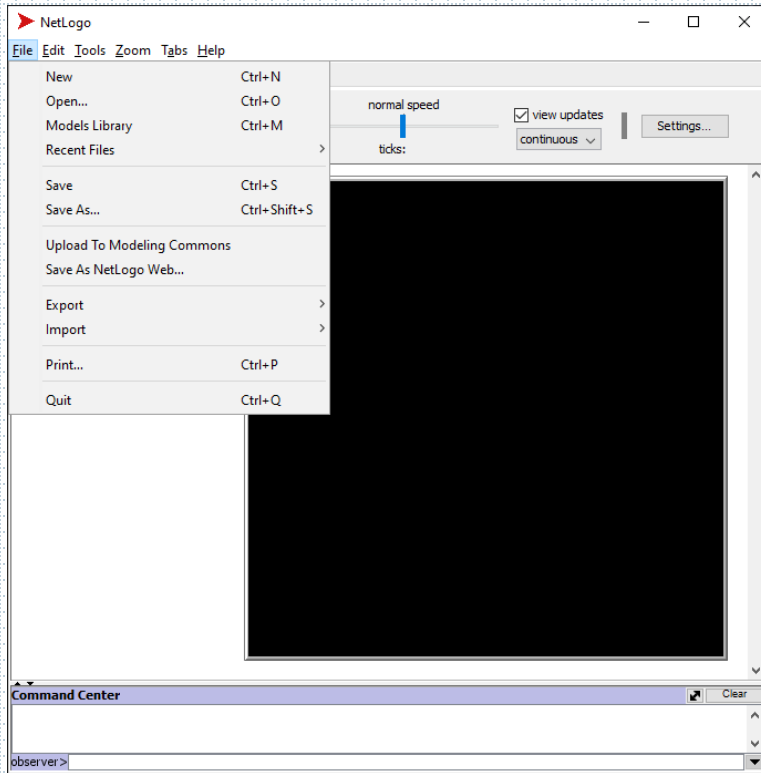
# CONCLUSION & WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

- FURTHER READING ON COMPUTATIONAL MODELING (FOR THE ORG SCIENCES)
  - **Journal articles**
    - » Davis, J.P., Eisenhardt, K.M., & Bingham, C.B. (2007). Developing theory through simulation methods. *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 480-499.
    - » Harrison, J.R., Lin, Z., Carroll, G.R., & Carley, K.M. (2007). Simulation modeling in organizational and management research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 1229-1245.
    - » Kozlowski, S.W.J., Chao, G.T., Grand, J.A., Braun, M.T., & Kuljanin, G. (2013). Advancing multilevel research design: Capturing the dynamics of emergence. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16, 581-615.
    - » Vancouver, J.B., & Weinhardt, J.M., (2012). Modeling the mind and the milieu: Computational modeling for micro-level organizational researchers. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15, 602-623.
    - » Weinhardt, J.M., & Vancouver, J.B. (2012). Computational models and organizational psychology: Opportunities abound. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 2, 267-292.
  - **Books**
    - » Sterman, J.D. (2000). *Business dynamics*. Irwin/McGraw Hill.
    - » Wilensky, U., & Rand, W. (2015). *An introduction to agent-based modeling: Modeling natural, social, and engineered complex systems with NetLogo*. MIT Press.

# CONCLUSION & WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

- LEARNING TO CODE MODELS

- NetLogo (<https://ccl.northwestern.edu/netlogo/download.shtml>)
- File → Models Library



# CONCLUSION & WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

- LEARNING TO CODE MODELS

- Start by replicating simple models
  - » Don't worry if you're not "interested" in the topic per se...the point is to practice fundamentals!

Martell, R.F., Lane, D.M., & Emrich, C. (1996). Male-female differences: A computer simulation. *American Psychologist*, 51, 157-158.



Why are women underrepresented in senior leadership positions?

Scullen, S.E., Bergey, P.K., Aiman-Smith, L. (2005). Forced distribution rating systems and the improvement of workforce potential: A baseline simulation. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 1-32.



How does the quality of a selection system impact an organization's performance potential?

- Full R code for both models can be downloaded from my GitHub

<https://github.com/grandjam/SIOP2021Models>

# CONCLUSION & WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

<https://github.com/grandjam/SIOP2021Models>

# THANK YOU!

JAMES A. GRAND

E-MAIL: GRANDJAM@UMD.EDU

