

The Psychology of Sustainable Consumption

SPSSI/SASP Small Group Meeting
University of Pennsylvania
May 18 - 20, 2018

What we're planning

Humanity's current pace, volume, and habits of consumption threaten to overwhelm the resources of our planet: the UN estimates that if the global population reaches 9.6 billion, we would need almost three planets to sustain our current lifestyle. Psychology has a lot to offer the understanding of current consumption levels, as well as in promoting strategies for reducing and mitigating the impact of our consumption on the planet.

To this end, in this small group meeting we seek contributions from psychology and related disciplines, that consider the issue of sustainable consumption. How is sustainable consumption defined and perceived? What are the barriers to achieving it – both at the individual level (e.g. when making purchasing decisions) and at the societal level (e.g. environmental policy)? How can sustainable consumption be promoted?

During the two-and-a-half days of the meeting we will have a wide range of empirical and theoretical talks, data blitz presentations, and ample time for discussion and collaboration on these important issues. Early career researchers and researchers from outside North America are especially encouraged to apply, and we will provide small travel stipends on a needs basis.

Small Group Meeting
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA
May 18 - 20, 2018

Email the organizers
[Matt](#), [Hanne](#), [Iain](#), & [Geoff](#)



Sponsoring Organizations
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Presenters



BETH ARMSTRONG

Lancaster University

DOES ETHICAL FOOD TASTE BETTER? THE EFFECT OF ETHICAL INFORMATION ON CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF FOOD

Information regarding the ethical status of food, such as whether the product is organic or sustainable, can influence consumer expectations and perception of the item. The current research investigated the influence of consumer values and information about the ethical status of orange juice, chocolate and lobster on product expectations and experience. Study 1, an online study presented participants with nine vignettes, in which product descriptions varied by valence and ethical information. Participants rated their expectations of the product qualities (taste, nutrition, how good it makes them feel, how good the food is) and indicated their attitudes toward environmental issues, the treatment animals and ethical motivations. Study 2 explores how ethical information influences both consumer expectations and experience of chocolate. Participants will receive five vignettes which provide ethical information about accompanying samples of chocolate. Product expectations will be indicated before the sample is tasted and rated. Participants will indicate their ethical attitudes and motivations. Mixed-models will be used to explore how ethical information and consumer values can influence product expectations and consumer experience. This offers insight into how ethical information can be used in marketing communications to promote sustainable products and encourage consumers to make sustainable purchase decisions.



RAINER ROMERO-CANYAS

Environmental Defense Fund

A CARBON PRICE BY ANOTHER NAME MAY SEEM SWEETER: CONSUMERS PREFER UPSTREAM OFFSETS TO DOWNSTREAM TAXES

Costs labeled as "taxes" are more odious to consumers than other equivalent financial costs. We explore a novel dimension of carbon price labeling: whether the regulation is described as an "upstream" charge on the production and importation of fossil fuels or a "downstream" charge on goods and services, and how this "upstream" vs "downstream" labeling interacts with other frames. According to classic economic theory, these two points of regulation are economically equivalent. In a series of studies, we test upstream vs. downstream carbon regulation labels on consumer choice in the aviation industry, along with three different policy frames: tax, permit, and offset. In each of the resulting six unique conditions, the end cost to consumers is identical and is clearly presented. We compare these labels with two control conditions: a "no-fee" control in which there is no carbon price, and a "no-information" control in which there is an additional price not highlighted or explained.

Across studies, consumers were more likely to choose a flight when the additional carbon price was described as a "carbon offset for aviation fuel production and import" than when it was described using other frames. Mechanisms that may account for this pattern are explored.



SAMUEL CHNG

Singapore University of Technology and Design

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT DECISIONS: CAR USE, CAR PURCHASE, AND ... BEYOND

Driving carbon-fuelled cars contributes substantially, and increasingly, to CO2 emissions thereby damaging the environment. Driving is also a sedentary form of travel that does not promote health. Thus reducing car use could benefit travellers and their environments. This talk will explore how psychological theory and methods can be more effectively applied to understand car purchase, car use and car use reduction. Four studies will be briefly reviewed and their results discussed. These are (1) a statistical analysis of a large-scale survey identifying predictors of car purchase decisions, (2) a cross-cultural interview study investigating transport decisions and experiences among two culturally different cities (Singapore and London), (3) a conceptual review of theories used to understand car use, and, finally, (4) a statistical analysis of a large-scale survey exploring the relationships between travel mode choice and connectivity, and two aspects of wellbeing (life satisfaction and mental distress). It will be argued that (i) a more comprehensive theoretical representation of decisions regarding car purchase and car use is needed and that (ii) more rigorous methods are required to evaluate evidence of intervention effectiveness. Theoretical and methodological recommendations will be considered.



KELLEY DENNINGS

New Dream/University of South Florida

WASTE REDUCTION: THE FORGOTTEN R AND HOW IT IMPACTS HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING...

The document Principles of Ethical Practice of Public Health, describes how people and their physical environment are interdependent. People depend on natural resources and a damaged environment has an adverse effect on health. However, people also effect the environment through consumption of resources and generation of waste. This is the basis for this project. Consumption effects our environment and our environment affects our health and well-being. The presentation will provide advice about how to link environmental issues to personal health creating a new way to motivate behavior change. The audience will gain new insight into the attitudes, awareness, motivation, barriers and benefits to waste reduction along with recommendations, guidelines, key take-aways and steps for integrating waste reduction topics into campaigns to help reduce consumption. My presentation would include a summary of research and intervention results conducted around waste reduction between June 2017 and March 2018. The goal of this behavior change campaign is to motivate individuals to shift some purchases from material gifts to experiential gifts during the winter holidays, thus increasing time spent with friends and family and in the out-of-doors leading to a boost in long-term happiness and overall well-being, along with supporting the environment by decreasing consumption.



STACIA DREYER

School for the Future of Innovation in Society, ASU

WORKSHOP: UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD-ENERGY-WATER NEXUS AND WHAT PSYCHOLOGY _ CAN CONTRIBUTE

Many sustainability issues of interest to psychologists can be studied from the perspective of a food-energy-water (FEW) nexus. Psychologists have the qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand the social and behavioral factors related to this nexus. In this workshop, we will discuss current FEW research, the variety of qualitative and quantitative methods used to investigate psychological factors related to the FEW nexus, and will identify research gaps that should be addressed in future research, possibly scoping out a research agenda. This workshop will be led by Dr. Stacia Dreyer, a co-PI on an Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy, and Water Systems USDA grant and Tim Kurz, from the University of Bath.



MATTHEW FEINBERG

University of Toronto

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF MORALIZATION: HOW EATING MEAT BECOMES A MORAL _ ISSUE

A large literature demonstrates that moral convictions guide many of our thoughts, behaviors, and social interactions. Yet, we know little about how these moral convictions come to exist. In the present research we explore moralization – the process by which something that was morally-neutral takes on moral properties – examining what factors facilitate and deter it. In three longitudinal studies participants were presented with morally-evocative stimuli about why eating meat should be viewed as a moral issue. Study 1 tracked students over a semester as they took a university course that highlighted the suffering animals endure because of human meat consumption. In Studies 2 and 3 participants took part in a “mini-course” we developed which presented evocative videos aimed at inducing moralization. In all three studies, we assessed participants’ beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and cognitions at multiple time points to track moral changes and potential factors responsible for such changes. Capitalizing on natural variability between participants, results indicated that a variety of factors, both cognitive and affective, predicted participants’ moralization or lack thereof. Model testing further pointed to two primary conduits of moralization: the experience of moral emotions (e.g., disgust, guilt) felt when contemplating the issue, and moral piggybacking (connecting the issue at hand with one’s existing fundamental moral principles). Moreover, we found individual differences, such as how much one holds their morality as central to their identity, also predicted and moderated the moralization process. We discuss the broad theoretical and applied implications of our results.



JULIAN FERNANDO

University of Melbourne

UTOPIAN THINKING AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The achievement of an environmentally sustainable future is likely to require significant cultural transformation. One way in which individuals can effect this kind of change is through the pursuit of an ideal society or 'utopia'. Here we present research examining the content of people's ideal societies and associations with attitudes and behaviour related to sustainable consumption. Firstly, we present a cluster analysis of a range of utopia prototypes which produces two broad utopian themes – the Green and Sci-Fi utopias – and show that these themes tend to be associated with different attitudes towards consumption: the Sci-Fi utopia with a more materialist orientation and the Green with more sustainable consumption. We also present a study of 7200 Australian participants who completed a measure of the utopia prototypes as well as a choice-based conjoint study in which they rated the desirability of various attributes in their choice of consumer products. In this study, we examine the kinds of cues used by consumers when selecting products for purchase and the consistency of those cues with their vision of an ideal society. The use of consumption behaviour as a means of achieving a utopian society is discussed.



JOEL GINN

UMass

NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO MEAT AS A CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION STRATEGY

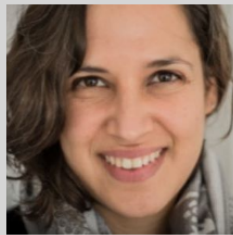
Reducing meat consumption is a highly effective strategy for reducing carbon emissions. Despite its effectiveness, past research has consistently found that people rate meat reduction as an ineffective strategy for reducing their climate footprint. Some work has found that even when confronted with the idea that meat could have a negative impact on the environment, people are still generally resistant and dismissive to the meat-climate link. However, not everyone may have the same response to messages about this link. A community sample (N = 305) read one of three brief messages about the impact that meat, fuel, or general behaviors have on their climate footprint. Those who read the meat message had marginally more negative responses than those who read about fuel use or general behaviors. However, these reactions were moderated by identification as a meat-eater. There was no difference in the reactions to the three messages for those lower in meat-eater identification. Additionally, there was no relationship between meat-eater identification and reactions to the fuel or general behavior messages. However, those who were highly identified as 'meat-eaters' had more negative reactions to the message about meat consumption as a climate change mitigation strategy.



KAREN HAMANN

MY INFLUENCE ON THE WORLD (OF OTHERS) - CONTRASTING COLLECTIVE AND SELF-EFFICACY ABOUT CO2 REDUCTION IN AN EXPERIMENTAL SETTING

This presentation will give insights to an experimental study in the environmental behavior domain. In a 2x2 design, we confronted participants with success stories about sustainability challenges that highlighted either self-efficacy or collective efficacy (belief that one vs. one's group has an impact) by presenting the success of one student or a student initiative. Further, we focused on either goal-directed or other-directed efficacy (influence on one's own vs. other people's actions) by mentioning a CO2-reduction or a success in motivating others. Additionally, we included a baseline condition. As dependent variable, intentions and environmentally-friendly behavior in the private, public and activist sphere were recorded. Among other hypotheses, we expected that self-efficacy (vs. collective efficacy) leads to more pro-environmental intentions in the private sphere and that the opposite is true for public and activist spheres. While there were no significant effects of the experimental manipulation, we were able to draw conclusions from correlational data. Some of our hypotheses were confirmed such that collective efficacy (vs. self-efficacy) related to pro-environmental public-sphere behavior. Other results were rather surprising though plausible. Thus, it is crucial to distinguish behavioral categories as proposed by Stern (2000). In our presentation, we will discuss main hypothesis and innovative findings.



ATAR HERZIGER

The Ohio State University

SELFISHLY GREEN: AN ANTI-CONSUMPTION INTERVENTION

Anti-consumption is traditionally promoted as a sustainable consumer lifestyle, as part of the voluntary simplicity movement. This research investigated whether anti-consumption could only be promoted through biospheric, self-transcending goals, or whether egoistic, self-enhancing goals could also motivate this lifestyle. A one-week mobile intervention tested this question. Inspired by the online social-media trend of minimalism, the intervention employed video-stimuli based on user-generated minimalism content. Convenience sampled participants interested in reducing their non-essential consumption were randomly allocated into a self-enhancement, self-transcendence, and control group. Post-intervention results found that promoting self-transcending goals for consumption-reduction (e.g., reduce carbon footprint) performed worse out of all three conditions in changing consumption behavior, and attained the highest intervention dropout rates. The control condition, which provided only a reminder to participants, was successful in changing overconsumption. Finally, promoting self-enhancing goals for consumption-reduction (e.g., reduce stress) performed best, by both changing behavior and increasing consumption-reduction motivation. The intervention conditions using user-generated content significantly changed consumers' mindsets, by reducing materialism and increasing voluntary simplicity adoption. The paper proposes that social marketing of anti-consumption avoid self-transcendence messages, and possibly utilize self-centered goals to foster sustainable consumption.



MADELINE JUDGE

The University of Melbourne

FOLK THEORIES OF ARTIFACT CREATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Research on how people understand the material world can inform efforts to promote more sustainable forms of consumption. Recent research has shown that highlighting the role of people in production systems can increase the perceived value of artifacts. However, further research is needed to identify the mechanisms underlying these effects and the implications for sustainable consumption. In this paper, we draw on research and theory from cognitive psychology and consumer behaviour to develop three contemporary folk theories of artifact creation: art, craft and manufacturing. Our framework integrates folk beliefs about intentionality during the creation of artifacts with causal reasoning about the transfer of properties from humans to artifacts. We propose that individuals employ these folk theories when evaluating artifacts, and that the theories are best understood in relation to one another and within a specific historical context. We present evidence from three experimental studies comparing the effects of different production cues on the kinds of properties transferred to an artifact, its perceived value and the implied relationship between the producer and the consumer.



BYUNGDOO KIM

Cornell University

JUDGING THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF "GREEN" CONSUMPTION: EVIDENCE OF QUANTITY INSENSITIVITY

Despite the increasing importance of consumption of green consumer goods, little is discussed on the role of its quantity in people's judgments about the ecological impact of pro-environmental goods. It is a notable omission given that it takes more resources to produce more goods—even green goods. Prior research about scope insensitivity may attribute this gap to affective cognitive processing. Building on the prior literature, we propose that it may also partially stem from a halo effect in judgment. We report on two experiments in which participants ($n > 600$ total) judged the ecological impact of a fictional middle-class family who were portrayed as owning either one or two "green" (hybrid) or "non-green" (conventional) vehicles. Across both experiments, we find evidence of quantity insensitivity in the green consumption condition: participants judged a family with two hybrid vehicles as having the same carbon footprint as a family with just one hybrid. In contrast, participants in the non-green condition judged the family's footprint as larger when they drove two conventional vehicles versus just one. Results suggest that the pro-environmental halo effect may obscure the environmental impact of green goods, potentially licensing greater consumption.



JAN ANDRE KOCH

University of Groningen

DISGUSTING? NO, JUST DIFFERENT: UNDERSTANDING CONSUMERS' SKEPTICISM TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION ALTERNATIVES

The currently unsustainable Western diet is spreading globally, increasing the worldwide need for interventions. Firms and governments continue to find sustainable consumption alternatives that deviate from established foods, for instance, edible insects and lab-meat. These alternatives, however, are rejected by consumers. Current studies argue that consumers' rejection is due to 'rational' skepticism about the alternatives' functional attributes (e.g., insects look unpalatable, lab-meat is unnatural); hence marketers focus on addressing these attributes. Based on a set of five empirical studies we argue that the skepticism towards these attributes is merely a result of post-hoc reasoning and not the cause of the rejection. Instead, we argue that consumers' rejection is fueled by moral disgust elicited by the violation of what consumers perceive to be normal—consumers' internalized norms. Seeking support for their foregone rejection, consumers cling to seemingly rational but ultimately flawed arguments, criticizing, for instance, functional attributes. This novel account has important implications for the positioning of sustainable consumption alternatives: well-meant marketing strategies and consumer policies trying to accommodate for post-hoc rationalizations tackle the wrong cause and cannot effectively accelerate the societal uptake of sustainable consumption alternatives. Instead, the consumers' perception that sustainable consumption alternatives are abnormal needs to be changed.



TIM KURZ

University of Bath

COULD VEGANS AND LYCRA CYCLISTS BE HELPING TO KILL THE PLANET? THEORISING THE ROLE OF MORALISED MINORITY PRACTICE IDENTITIES IN PROCESSES OF SOCIETAL-LEVEL CHANGE

Many everyday practices that environmental policy makers might wish to be widespread are currently minority pursuits. For example, only a minority of British people follow plant-based diets or cycle to work. Such minority practices often come to form the basis of social identities (e.g., as 'vegans' or 'cyclists'). These Moralised Minority Practice Identities (MMPis) represent the focus of this paper. We theorise how MMPis shape interaction within social networks and resulting implications for societal-level change. This leads to the contentious suggestion that, contrary to the assumptions of Social Identity Theory (SIT), people identifying strongly with 'green practice' groups may actually hamper rather than facilitate societal change. We highlight shortcomings in SIT's ability to capture the dynamics of sustainability challenges within democratic societies, including its focus on intergroup conflict (rather than conversionary) dynamics and neglect of the role of material elements. Conversely, while sociological perspectives like Social Practice Theory have paid more attention to the role of material elements in shifting societal practices, they have ignored the role of identities within such systems. We propose an integrative theoretical approach focused on the ways in which social identities and material infrastructures interact over time to produce/inhibit changes towards societal 'tipping points'.

Tim Kurz is also co-facilitating a workshop with Stacia Dreyer.



ZOE LEVISTON

Edith Cowan University

'I'M NOT AN ENVIRONMENTALIST, BUT...': NAVIGATING CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

As warning bells of environmental collapse ring louder, so too does moral messaging stressing the importance of 'going green'. These messages are nested within prevailing economic and social systems deeply reliant on conspicuous consumption. How do we as individuals navigate the tensions these competing forces arouse? And what are the psychological and environmental ramifications of the course we choose? Psychology can approach these questions at multiple levels: from the intra-psychic, through to the interpersonal, up to the socio-cultural. In this talk, we draw on empirical examples from our own research programs to provide a multi-level account of how tension resolution might occur. First, we visit how distorted social comparisons – comparing what we do with what others do – can licence the continuation of our own unsustainable consumption behaviours. Second, we explore how social group membership exacerbates errors in our social perceptions, and dampens threat to our standing as good moral citizens. Third, we look at how tensions are rhetorically managed to maintain both moral worth and support for existing socio-cultural systems. To conclude, we reflect on strategies we might use to promote consumption that is both environmentally and psychologically sustainable.



ILONA MCNEILL

University of Melbourne

EXAMINING INTRAPERSONAL GOALS AND INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT AND NORMS AS PREDICTORS OF LOW CARBON BEHAVIOURS IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

Climate change mitigation necessitates a serious alteration of carbon emissions at all levels of society. At the household-level this includes switching to non-fossil-based energy sources, reducing the general demand for energy and engaging in green travel options. To increase such behaviors we need to understand to what extent they may be influenced by personal low carbon goals as well as by household support for, and the greater social climate around low carbon living, including community support and social norms. A large nationwide phone survey study amongst residents of Australia (N=1414) shows that some low-carbon behaviors (e.g., purchasing an energy efficient fridge or washing machine) are mainly predicted by the strength of one's personal low carbon goal (captured by the Low Carbon Readiness Index), whereas others (e.g., temperature curtailment, avoidance of car usage, purchasing green electricity) are predicted by a combination of low carbon goal strength, available household and community support for low carbon living, and perceived descriptive norms around low carbon living. Further, for some behaviors (e.g., installing solar panels) these predictors do not explain any unique variance. We discuss implications for interventions aimed at increasing a variety of low carbon behaviors in the household.

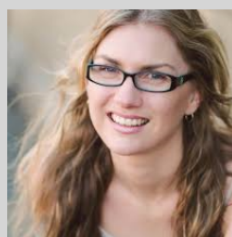


JARED PIAZZA

Lancaster University

TESTING SELF-PERSUASION AS A MEAT REDUCTION STRATEGY

Livestock and meat production has a number of externalising costs to the environment and human health related to waste disposal, soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, fresh water depletion, energy consumption, global warming, and disease. Meat reduction at the consumer level would be an effective way to counteract some of these issues, but the popularity of meat and beliefs about its utility pose formidable psychological barriers to change. In this talk I will outline the major reasons consumers give for consuming meat and using animals, and present ongoing research from my lab examining the application of self-persuasion to the problem of meat attachment, a method which has consumers themselves confront their beliefs and attitudes towards meat.



LUCY RICHARDSON

Monash University

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR RESEARCH RELEVANT FOR CAMPAIGN DESIGNS

Research reveals an increase in the adoption of some sustainable consumption behaviours. Studies find several key determinants are linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in sustainable behaviours, yet there is growing evidence that research knowledge has not translated into sufficient behaviour change. While social marketing guides provide general lists of potential determinants for targeting, the attendant lack of specificity can lead to targeting behaviour triggers that may in fact be unrelated to the targeted behaviour/s. In order to develop behaviour change campaigns that elicit the desired actions for a range of a sustainable consumption behaviours, two studies were conducted to test an integrated model tailored specifically for campaign relevance. This presentation will outline the findings of these two studies—a meta-analysis of internationally published research, and an analysis of Australian survey data—and the relevance of these findings for designing campaigns.

Lucy Richardson is also co-facilitating a workshop with Hanne M Watkins.

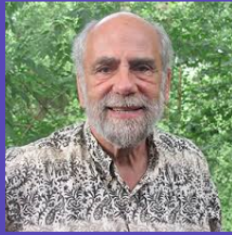


JOSHUA ROTTMAN

Franklin & Marshall College

TREE-HUGGERS VS. HUMAN-LOVERS: DIFFERENCES IN MIND PERCEPTION PREDICT ATTRIBUTIONS OF MORAL WORTH TO NATURE

Living sustainably is facilitated by perceiving intrinsic moral worth in nature (de Groot & Steg, 2008). What leads moral concern to be extended to the natural world? We investigated whether some people would extend greater moral worth to animals and ecosystems than to marginalized or stigmatized persons. We predicted that the tendency to morally prioritize environmentalism over humanitarianism would exist in portions of the U.S. population and that it would correlate with increased anthropomorphism (perceiving more mental attributes in animals) and increased dehumanization (perceiving fewer mental attributes in outgroup members). These hypotheses were confirmed. First, a substantial proportion of our sample ($N=92/201$) assigned more moral value to nature (e.g., bees, rivers) than outgroups (e.g., Arabs, atheists) on a modified Moral Expansiveness Scale (Crimston et al., 2016). Second, participants who attributed greater moral value to nature than outgroups perceived marginally more mind in animals, $p=.057$, and less mind in outgroup members, $p=.023$. We have replicated these findings in two additional samples. Overall, results indicate that extending moral value to nature and humans may be zero-sum. Morally prioritizing nature involves attributing relatively more mind to animals and relatively less mind to certain humans – suggesting that valuing sustainability could detract from valuing humanity.



PAUL ROZIN

University of Pennsylvania

KEYNOTE: MANAGING THE MORAL MOVEMENT TO MEATLESS MEALS: MANOEUVRING AT THE MARGINS.

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DEBORAH A. SABER

University of Maine

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES ARE EVERYWHERE: HEALTH CARE AS A WASTE GENERATING BEHEMOTH

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Many organizations have yet to be recognized for their large and damaging footprints in producing waste. As a result, their importance as possible targets for interventions has gone unrecognized. Health care organizations, particularly hospitals, are just such entities. They have largely been absent from the sustainability conversations. Yet hospitals bring to the forefront the conundrums with sustainability when attempts are made to balance several goals such as the goal of safety and that of sustainability. Hospitals have tackled the problem of diseases that may be communicable by adopting procedures that create enormous waste. Measuring this waste—as we have done in typical patient cases—show the prodigious amounts of waste created (e.g., 3,322 items of solid waste generated in 168 hours for treatment of two representative patients) despite the ambiguity of the effectiveness of or need for such practices. Examining hospital practices is only one example of the need to invest studies of sustainability with a clear understanding of the context in which particular behaviors take place. The University of Maine is home to an interdisciplinary sustainability research team that brings together faculty from nursing, social psychology, anthropology, engineering, economics, and food sciences to illustrate the value of an integrated approach to analyzing and addressing the contexts in which sustainability problems occur. We will highlight the need for integrated approaches if innovative solutions to sustainability conundrums are to be achieved.



MICHAEL T. SCHMITT

Simon Fraser University

A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY EXPLANATION FOR WHY NATURE CONNECTION PREDICTS SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

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Many studies have found that a subjective connection with the natural world predicts pro-environmental behaviour. We extend those findings by examining the process by which nature connection affects environmental behaviour. We conceptualize nature connection as a collective identity, and thus refer to it as “identification with nature”. We hypothesize that the relationship between identification with nature and pro-environmental behavior (PEB) is mediated by identification with a politicized environmental identity, such as environmental activists. Studies 1 and 2 provided correlational evidence that politicized environmental identification mediated the relationship between identification with nature and PEB. In Study 3 we found longitudinal evidence for mediation. We next examined moderation of the effects of identification with nature. In Study 4, we found longitudinally that initial levels of nature identification predicted increases in politicized environmental identification, but only among those participants who perceived injustice in society. In Study 5, identification with nature predicted environmental activist behaviour for people experimentally primed with injustice, but not for people primed with justice. In sum, results suggest that identification with nature affects PEB only indirectly, and that politicized environmental identification is a stronger and more proximal predictor of both environmental activist behavior and more sustainable consumption.

Michael Schmitt is also co-facilitating a workshop with Iain Walker.



MICHAEL SIEGRIST

KEYNOTE: SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION: KNOWLEDGE, LABELING, AND NUDGING



JANET SWIM

Penn State University

**KEYNOTE: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE:
FROM ASKING QUESTIONS TO TAKING ACTION**

The currently unsustainable Western diet is spreading globally, increasing the worldwide need for interventions. Firms and governments continue to find sustainable consumption alternatives that deviate from established foods, for instance, edible insects and lab-meat. These alternatives, however, are rejected by consumers. Current studies argue that consumers' rejection is due to 'rational' skepticism about the alternatives' functional attributes (e.g., insects look unpalatable, lab-meat is unnatural); hence marketers focus on addressing these attributes. Based on a set of five empirical studies we argue that the skepticism towards these attributes is merely a result of post-hoc reasoning and not the cause of the rejection. Instead, we argue that consumers' rejection is fueled by moral disgust elicited by the violation of what consumers perceive to be normal—consumers' internalized norms. Seeking support for their foregone rejection, consumers cling to seemingly rational but ultimately flawed arguments, criticizing, for instance, functional attributes. This novel account has important implications for the positioning of sustainable consumption alternatives: well-meant marketing strategies and consumer policies trying to accommodate for post-hoc rationalizations tackle the wrong cause and cannot effectively accelerate the societal uptake of sustainable consumption alternatives. Instead, the consumers' perception that sustainable consumption alternatives are abnormal needs to be changed.



HANNAH UREN

Curtin University

THE KERMIT COMPLEX: ARE YOU REALLY GREEN OR JUST A MUPPET?

Engagement in sustainable consumption is known to be influenced by the actor's environmental identity. However the measurement and definition of environmental identity has been inconsistent, and attracted a variety of interpretations. An important distinction is for whom the identity is enacted; is it for oneself, or for others? Our research tested whether environmental self-identity (i.e., how one sees oneself), differentially predicts engagement in sustainable consumption behaviours compared with environmental public-identity (i.e., how one wishes to be seen by others). We conducted a survey of Australian adults (N=561) who completed a new measure of environmental identity incorporating both environmental public-identity and self-identity items. A 5-item measure of public-identity and an 8-item of self-identity were identified and validated against reported engagement in sustainable consumption behaviours, environmental values, materialism and social status seeking. Self-identity was shown to be a significantly better predictor than public-identity of sustainable consumption behaviours. Importantly, public-identity was more strongly related to materialism and status seeking values. This has implications for how we promote sustainable consumption behaviours. We must be careful to avoid appealing solely to the public rewards of consuming sustainably through status-driven messaging. Rather, we must continue to stress the environmental benefits accrued through sustainable actions.



IAIN WALKER

Canberra University

WORKSHOP: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION INTERVENTIONS

What makes for an effective sustainable consumption intervention? How do we determine effectiveness? What do our approaches to interventions reveal about our assumptions about human nature? Is it possible that some approaches to interventions might have the ironic effect of deterring the social, economic, technological and behavioural transformations necessary for meaningful mitigation of climate change and other environmental crises? In this workshop, we explore these and many other challenging questions. By expanding our conceptualizations of interventions, we aim to generate insights into how to design more effective interventions. This workshop will be facilitated by Michael T Schmitt and Iain Walker.



ABIGAIL ABRASH WALTON

Antioch University New England

POSITIVELY DEVIANT LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION: THE PHENOMENON OF INSTITUTIONAL FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

This presentation focuses on U.S.-based foundation leaders' readiness to engage in pro-climate-solutions investing behavior on behalf of their institutions. This study deepened understanding of leaders' role in enacting one approach to sustainable consumption: institutional fossil fuel divestment. Since 2011, a growing movement has emerged focused on divestment of fossil fuel company holdings and reinvestment of those resources in climate solution-oriented approaches, including clean energy technologies. Pledged and/or already-divested global institutional assets total more than \$5.5 trillion. The study used a qualitative research design to explore leaders' motivations and actions in pursuing divestment, while simultaneously exercising their fiduciary duty to steward institutional assets. Research questions focused on the divestment behavior change process and the outcomes of divestment on leaders and their organizations. Data analysis was derived from two datasets: 34 foundation divestment commitment statements and semi-structured interviews with 18 foundation leaders. Total combined assets of the population organizations equaled US\$3 billion. Findings suggested that leaders engaging in fossil fuel divestment may experience higher levels of satisfaction, pride, happiness, and engagement with their organizational roles. This study extends scholarship on psychology of climate change, pro-environmental behavior, socially responsible investing, and the Trans-theoretical Model of Behavior Change (TTM).



HANNE M WATKINS

The University of Pennsylvania

WORKSHOP: FLEXIBLE CONSISTENCY FOR COMPARATIVE AND CUMULATIVE RESEARCH PROGRESSION

Come join us for a collective problem-solving session where we will discuss some of the critical methodological issues facing researchers of sustainable consumption. This workshop will engage you to help identify these problems, and actions we can separately and collectively take to address them. Such issues affect us all and must be addressed by all, so we encourage both new and experienced researchers to participate. That way we can make the most of both the fresh eyes of ECRs and the wider experiences of longer careers. This workshop will be lead by Lucy Richardson from Monash University, and Hanne M Watkins from the University of Pennsylvania.