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SCORAI Newsletter (Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative)

1 message

SCORAI (Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative)

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Tue, Apr 7, 2015 at 6:04 AM

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April 2015

Dear Maurie,

Happy Spring! We are delighted to share this month's newsletter, complete with updates about the many publications, upcoming events, and news from the SCORAI community.

Catie, Debbie, & Maurie

**Subscribe to
SCORAI:**[Listserv](#)[eNewsletter](#)**7th SCORAI European Workshop**

SCORAI

Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative

EUROPE

On May 23, 2015, there will be a one day SCORAI Europe workshop taking place at the [National University of Ireland, Galway](#). This workshop is open to all SCORAI members and will adopt the format of a roundtable discussion, with updates and presentations from SCORAI colleagues. The workshop will offer opportunities to reflect on discussions and outputs from previous SCORAI events with a view to informing future activities and potential research proposals.

This workshop is organised by [CONSENSUS](#) researchers at NUI, Galway. CONSENSUS (Consumption, Environment and Sustainability), funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, is Ireland's largest research project on sustainable consumption and behaviour change. The SCORAI workshop commences the day after end of the [CONSENSUS International Sustainable Consumption Conference](#) on 'Sustainable Consumption Transformations: Implementation and Impacts'.

If you wish to attend the workshop, please email MARY.LAVELLE@nuigalway.ie before **April 15th 2015**.

SCORAI Colloquium Series on Consumption & Social Change: Summary of Session with Dorothy Holland

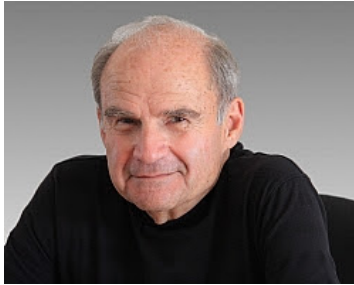
Other Worlds are Possible: A Brief Review of the SCORAI Colloquium Presentation by Dorothy Holland

Dorothy Holland opened her presentation during the most recent session of the SCORAI Colloquium Series on Consumption and Social Change with a metaphor of an iceberg, whereby the discourse about capitalism is the visible yet smaller part, while myriad non-market economic and social activities are hidden under the surface. She noted that the current dominant discourse about capitalism may blind us to these grassroots activities, which merit far more attention from researchers as potential agents of social change.

Holland drew on her own research on the environmental justice movement as one of these less visible grassroots phenomena. Her focus was on how, through identity formation, a social movement attracts new participants who initially considered themselves outside that movement. She focused on the activities performed by heterogeneous communities of practice (to which she refers to as complex cultural assemblages). These activities provide the necessary experience that in turn becomes the source of the new identity formation.



For further commentary on this colloquium session is available [here](#). The video of Holland's presentation is available via the [colloquium page of the SCORAI website](#).



The final session of the SCORAI Colloquium on Consumption and Social Change will feature a rescheduled presentation by [George Ritzer](#) (Professor of Sociology, University of Maryland) entitled "The Capture of the New World of Prosumption by Capitalist Interests: Is There Any Alternative" at noon on May 6. The session will be held at the Tellus Institute located at 11 Arlington Street in Boston and will be preceded by a light lunch. Please contact Ruby Woodside at rwoodside@clarku.edu to reserve a space as capacity is limited.

Downloadable recordings of material from prior SCORAI colloquium sessions featuring **David Snow, Claus Offe, John Sterman, Juliet Schor, and Doug Holt** are accessible on the [SCORAI website](#).

SCORAI Volunteer Tiy Chung Starts New Job



The SCORAI Executive Board is delighted to announce that Tiy Chung, a former graduate student in the Clark University Department of International Development, Community, and Environment and a SCORAI volunteer par excellence, will be taking up a new position with the United Nations Environment Program. Tiy will be based in Paris and be working as the Communications Officer for UNEP's Climate and Clean Air Coalition (part of the Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics).

In recent months, Tiy has provided invaluable assistance on a number of fronts: managing the SCORAI website, videorecording and editing the colloquium sessions on consumption and social change, and assembling outreach materials. We are tremendously disappointed to see him go but are heartened by the fact that he will be transitioning to a new (compensated!) position that will allow him to build on the experience and skills that he has honed while working with SCORAI.

SCORAI-ers based in Paris (or visitors to the city) are encouraged to contact Tiy for tips on where to find the best boulangerie!

Halina, Maurie, and Philip

IFHE Call for Abstracts for World Congress 2016 on Hope and Happiness

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) invites the submission of abstracts for the XXIII IFHE World Congress 2016 addressing the

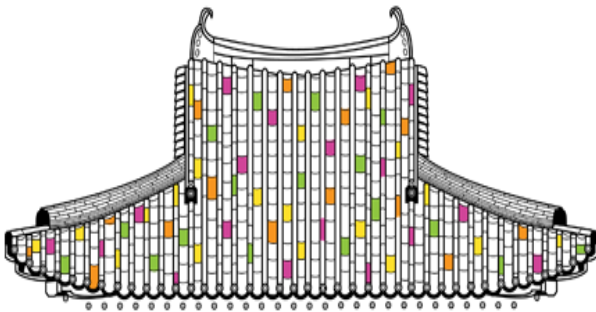
theme: Hope and Happiness.

The Congress is going to take place in Korea, Sunday July 31 - Saturday August 6, 2016.

Submission Deadlines:

- May 1, 2015: Closing deadline for abstracts where a full paper is to be submitted for refereeing (notification of acceptance for full paper submission will be sent by 30 May)
- July 1, 2015: Closing deadline for submission of full papers to be refereed
- August 31, 2015: Closing deadline for all other abstracts
- December 15, 2015: Notification of acceptance of all Congress presentations
- March 31, 2016: Registration deadline

For additional information please see <http://www.ifhe2016.org/>



XXIII IFHE WORLD CONGRESS 2016

Daejeon, Korea
Sunday July 31 – Saturday August 6, 2016

**CONSENSUS Hosts Public Lecture by Professor Gert Spaargaren on
'Agency, Power, and Transitions in Consumption Practices'**

When Friday 22 May, 2015 6:15-7:30 pm

Venue Lecture Hall ENG-G018 (Ground floor), [New Engineering Building, National University of Ireland, Galway](#).



Event Details CONSENSUS is hosting a public lecture by Professor Gert Spaargaren (Wageningen University, The Netherlands) on 'Agency, Power, and Transitions in Consumption Practices' on Friday May 22nd 2015 at the [National University of Ireland, Galway](#).

Speaker Biography Gert Spaargaren is Professor of Environmental Policy for Sustainable Lifestyles and Patterns of Consumption at the Environmental Policy Group of Wageningen University, The Netherlands. His main research interests and publications are in the field of environmental sociology, sustainable consumption and behaviour, and the globalisation of environmental reform.

This public lecture is co-hosted by the CONSENSUS research team, in conjunction with the National University of Ireland, Galway, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and supported by the School of Geography and Archaeology at NUI, Galway.

This is a free event and all are welcome to attend.

Please click here to view [poster](#) for this event.

Student Fellowship Opportunity: Project Drawdown

PROJECT DRAWDOWN

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THE TURNING POINT FOR HUMANITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMER FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Project Drawdown is continuing to crunch the numbers on 100+ existing technological, social and ecological climate solutions and making that data widely available through a major book, open-source database and broad partner network. Co-developed by our coalition of scientists, scholars, policymakers, students, advocates and business leaders from across the globe, Project Drawdown represents the collaborative input of over 200 individuals and organizations worldwide. The coalition is measuring the beneficial financial, ecological and social impact that the full range of climate solutions will deliver over the next thirty years- inspiring a shift from climate fatalism to a climate-inspired renaissance.

Project Drawdown is pleased to open applications for the summer cohort of the Drawdown Fellowship Program. This program is designed to foster the development of a new generation of leaders working on pragmatic solutions to our climate crisis. These students, scientists, entrepreneurs, and storytellers will learn how to describe a realistic future in which the world achieves drawdown - the point at which greenhouse gases in our atmosphere reach their modern day peak and then begin to decline.

Project Drawdown, a SF Bay Area- Based 501c3 non-profit, is excited to offer a small number of competitive fellowships to exceptional students, scholars, and professionals from around the world.

The fellowship program is designed to promote a new generation of climate and energy leaders. Fellows will work with our research team to develop solution-specific models, technical reports, and recommendations for solutions.

Applications for our Summer cohort are now open. For more information on the application process or to learn more about Project Drawdown and other opportunities, please check out our website at <http://www.drawdown.org>.

STEPS Centre Workshop on the Proliferation of Different Forms of Innovation for Sustainability



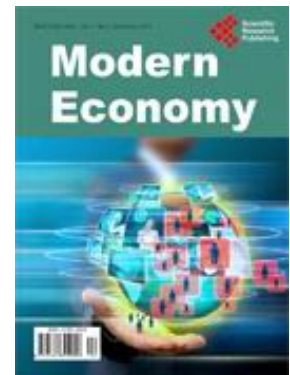
[Click here for a blog report](#) on a workshop the [STEPS Centre](#) held recently looking at the proliferation of different forms of innovation for sustainability: social innovation, inclusive innovation, frugal innovation, and so forth.

The blogpost argues that we need to prefix innovation alternatives with care, and not lose sight to the many asymmetric hybridisations between different innovative initiatives and categories in order that the promotion of innovation alternatives attends to the plural normativities involved. Read the blogpost [here](#).

CfP: Modern Economy Special Issue on "Consumption and Consumerism"

[The Modern Economy](#), a peer-reviewed open-access journal, is seeking papers for the upcoming special issue on "[Consumption and Consumerism](#)". We would like to invite you to submit or recommend original research papers to this issue through our [Paper Submission System](#).

It is recognizing an important fact that we all consume and we always will. With the development of economic globalization, consumerism is gradually spread to every corner of the world. Consumerism shapes our wants, desires, and longings in such a way to acquire material goods. The idea is not simply that wellbeing depends on a standard of living some threshold, but that at the center of happiness is consumption and material possessions. The unreasonable consumption patterns should be corrected by means of sciences and policies. It is great important to carry out the civilized, scientific and sustainable consumption mode.



In this special issue, we intend to invite front-line researchers and authors to submit original research and review articles on exploring consumption and consumerism. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- * Consumerist culture
- * Consumption bias
- * Media culture and consumption norms
- * Consumerist society

- * Difference between consumption and consumerism
- * Problems of consumerism
- * Sustainable consumption

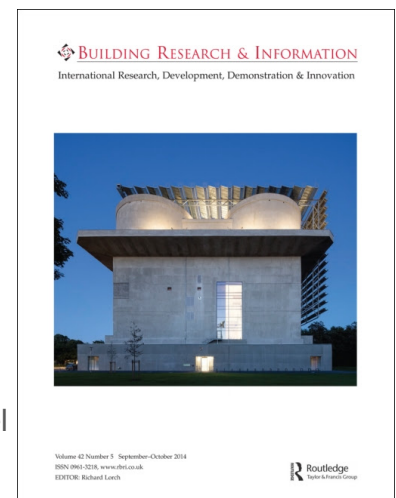
Submission Deadline: July 30, 2015

More information [here](#).

New Publications

Moore, Steven A., Sam Gelfand, and Dason Whitsett. 2015. "Epistemological Conflict: Modern and Non-Modern Frameworks for Sustainability." *Building Research & Information*.

A basic epistemological conflict is found to exist between modern and non-modern practitioners of sustainable development. These categories distinguish the ways professionals interpret or frame reality. The hypothesis developed is that this inconsistency, at least partially, explains the limited success that energy-efficiency research has realized in the prediction and control of climate change catalysed by the built environment. An analysis employs both historical and empirical methods to understand how the North American air-conditioning industry has framed, and subsequently regulated, the inseparable problems of human comfort and energy consumption. Historically, the dominant framework long-inhabited by moderns has constructed a unit-efficiency model of evaluation that is concerned with universal standardization and normal design. In the empirical analysis of the selected case, an emergent framework inhabited by non-moderns constructed a unit-efficacy model of evaluation concerned with local implementation and post-normal design. The two models came into conflict when designers applied code-required energy models and financing formula based on unit-efficiency assumptions to a case of sustainable, affordable housing. The analysis concludes with seven findings designed to move building energy research and practice beyond the current epistemological divide.



Get article [here](#).



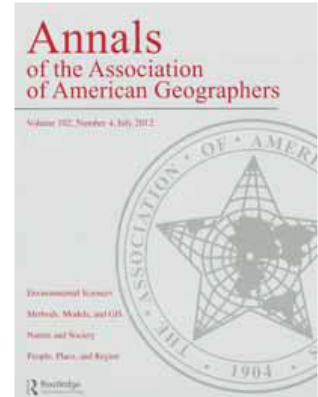
Ballantyne, Roy and Jan Packer. 2013. *International Handbook on Ecotourism*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

This Handbook brings together contributions from over forty international experts in the field of ecotourism. It provides a critical review and discussion of current issues and concepts - it challenges readers to consider the boundaries of what ecotourism is, and could be. The Handbook provides practical information regarding the business of ecotourism; insights into ecotourist behaviour and visitor experiences; and reflections on the practice of ecotourism in a range of different contexts.

The Handbook is designed to be a valuable reference book for tourism scholars and researchers. Get the book [here](#).

Davies, Anna R. and Ruth Doyle. 2015. "Transforming Household Consumption: From Backcasting to HomeLabs Experiments." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 105 (2):425-436.

Following the rhetoric of an impending "perfect storm" of increasing demand for energy, water, and food, it is recognized that ensuring sustainability will require significant shifts in both production and consumption patterns. This recognition has stimulated a plethora of future-oriented studies often using scenario, visioning, and transition planning techniques. These approaches have produced a multitude of plans for future development, but many valorize technological fixes and give limited attention to the governance and practice of everyday consumption. In contrast, this article presents empirical findings from a practice-oriented participatory (POP) backcasting process focused on home heating, personal washing, and eating. This process provided spaces for collaborative learning, creative innovation, and interdisciplinary interaction as well as producing a suite of ideas around promising practices for more sustainable household consumption. Further action is required, however, to explore how such ideas might be translated into action. The article concludes by outlining how collaborative experiments among public, private, civil society, and citizen-consumers, or HomeLabs, provide a means to test and evaluate the promising practices developed through POP backcasting.



Get the article [here](#).



Isenhour, Cindy and Kuishuang Feng. 2015. "Decoupling and Displaced Emissions: On Swedish Consumers, Chinese Producers and Policy to Address the Climate Impact of Consumption." *Journal of Cleaner Production*.

New developments in consumption-based emissions accounting suggest that the reductions claimed by wealthy, environmentally progressive nations have often come at the expense of increased emissions elsewhere - and thus net growth in global GHG concentrations. This paper traces Sweden's attempts to translate growing recognition of displaced emissions into national environmental policy. Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic research and policy analysis in Sweden and

China, we argue that while the logical implications of consumption-based analyses point to the need to address production and consumption as an integrated system, complex governance challenges and the political precariousness of these ideas have thus far limited policy to the reinvention of consumer awareness campaigns and an international extension of long-standing ecological efficiency efforts. We argue that consumption-based emissions indicators justify more ambitious demand-side policy response.

Get the article [here](#).

Dam, Ynte K. van and Arnout R. H. Fischer. 2015. "Buying Green Without Being Seen." *Environment and Behavior* 47 (3):328-56.

Sustainable consumption is viewed as a social dilemma, in which individual rational choices lead to long-term collective harm. Construal level theory explains social dilemmas by the underlying conflict between psychologically distant and psychologically proximate goals, in which distant (sustainable) goals are relevant, but proximate goals determine actual choices. Identity theory suggests that a sustainable self-concept could increase the psychological proximity of, and thus explain, sustainable behavior. This is tested in two empirical studies in The Netherlands. The first study (n = 229) shows that sustainable identity predicts sustainable preference, partly mediated by proximate self-confirmation motives. This mediation is moderated by sustainable identity. The second study (n = 1,453 households) confirms that sustainable identity directly and indirectly influences the proximate determinance of sustainable attributes, and through this determinance sustainable product choice. Jointly these studies suggest that sustainable identity explains sustainable consumption as it provides a psychologically proximate motive to act sustainably.

Get the article [here](#).



Vittersø, Gunnar and Torvald Tangeland. 2015. "The Role of Consumers in Transitions towards Sustainable Food Consumption: The Case of Organic Food in Norway." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 92 (April):91-99.

Political targets for consumption of organic food are set in many European countries and also in Norway. Organic food is in these policies often considered as a spearhead for transition towards more sustainable

production and consumption in the food sector. Measures such as consumer information and food labelling schemes are established in order to increase consumption of organic food. These policies are in line with a view within the academic discourse where the reflexive, political consumer is seen as a key agent for change. However, in spite of a major political effort to increase organic food consumption in Norway over the past 15 years, consumption has increased marginally. We therefore question this view of the consumer's influence and power to change the relations in - and developments of - the present food system. Based on the results of two consumer surveys carried out in 2000 and 2013, the article discusses the observed changes in perceptions of barriers towards purchase of organic food among Norwegian consumers. We found that organic food was considered more available in the stores in 2013 than in 2000. However, for other factors such as trust in the labeling system and the quality of organic food the perceptions had become more negative. Most important; more consumers saw no benefits from buying organic food in 2013 than in 2000. This means that the political emphasis on the self-regulating consumer has shown little effect. The article concludes that both the political tools and theoretical analyses to a greater extent must be turned away from a primary focus on the consumer towards identifying key economic and political conflicts of interest as important barriers to sustainable food consumption transition.

Get the article [here](#).

Boyer, Robert H. W. 2015. "Grassroots Innovation for Urban Sustainability: Comparing the Diffusion Pathways of Three Ecovillage Projects." *Environment and Planning A* 47(2):320-337

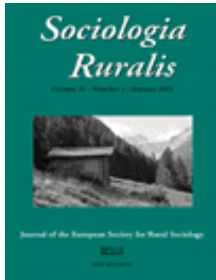
Grassroots innovation literature proposes that 'intermediately' situated community-based projects-those which are neither too radical, nor too embedded in the mainstream-play an important cross-contextual bridging role in processes of innovation for sustainable development. This paper explores this intermediacy claim by comparing how three established ecovillage projects engage outsiders and diffuse their lessons learned. Employing comparative case-study methodology, I find that while all three projects successfully replicate alternative practices outside their boundaries-for example through education, outreach, and on-site activities-one project has partnered with municipal planners to translate 'ecovillage concepts' into a new zoning category that will facilitate similar development by mainstream actors. The argument is made that the landscape for grassroots innovation is uneven, and that niche-to-regime translation occurs through projects that position themselves as part of two action domains at once.

Get the article [here](#).



Environment
and
Planning

Environment and Planning A



Sassatelli, Roberta. 2015. "Consumer Culture, Sustainability and a New Vision of Consumer Sovereignty." *Sociologia Ruralis*, April.

The article considers sustainable consumption and alternative food networks in the context of global consumer capitalism as a locus where a new form of consumer sovereignty can be developed. It offers a theoretical overview aimed at charting the emergence and consolidation of a relational, responsible vision of consumer sovereignty. Potentially alternative to neo-classical and neoliberal views, such a vision of consumers and their power involves both sustainability, equality and democracy, and private happiness, conceived as a form of responsibility for personal, creative well-being and fulfillment as opposed to acquisition and spending power. Ultimately the article offers a reappraisal of the economistic notion of utility of goods, and proposes a way forward for alternative ways of consuming and of thinking of consumption which aim at avoiding the mere reproduction of charity and at involving individuals' subjectivity working on their capacities to develop new pleasures in sustainable lifestyles.

Get the article [here](#).

Upcoming Conferences



Biofuels and (Ir)responsible Innovation Conference April 12-14, 2015, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

For as long as biofuels have prominently appeared in EU policy, they have been a contested energy source. Crops such as jatropha have been hailed as a "wonder crop," only to experience an "extraordinary collapse" within a decade. From the food vs. fuel discussion to indirect land use change, wicked problems have plagued biofuel developments and continue to provoke disagreement between societal actors. The impacts of biofuels' tumultuous history have been felt particularly in the Global South, where land grabbing and opportunistic behaviour of investors have caused great social and ecological problems. Proponents of biofuels claim that this is all the more reason to continue with investments and innovation: new sources of biofuels, such as plant residues and algae, will eventually solve all our problems. Given the great uncertainties and past harms, however, these claims should not be accepted lightly, nor should we assume that all encountered problems are technology-specific. Rather, we should realise that biofuels as a case study raise fundamental questions with regard to policy and governance, responsible innovation and sustainable development.

This conference is devoted to addressing these fundamental questions from a multidisciplinary perspective. As such, we welcome contributions from (but not limited to) the following disciplines: development studies; economics; environmental studies; ethics; policy studies; political ecology; science and technology studies and sociology.

[Visit the conference website.](#)

Futures Studies Tackling Wicked Problems: Where Futures Research, Education and Action Meet June 11-12, 2015, Turku, Finland



**FUTURES STUDIES TACKLING
WICKED PROBLEMS:**
Where futures research,
education and action meet
11–12 June 2015, Turku, Finland

This conference leads the way in combining academic conference tradition with new ways of participation. We are happy to organize a forum for the philosophies, ideas, methods and concrete examples of what's happening on the field of futures thinking and acting. Sub-themes: Philosophy of Futures Studies; Methodologies; Futures Education and Learning; Studies on Futures Research; Evolving Identity of Futures Research; Futures Movement and New Creative Cultures.

[Visit the conference website.](#)



**EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR
ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS**

**European Society of Ecological Economics 2015 Conference
ESEE 2015: Transformations**
June 30-July 3, 2015, Leeds, UK

Registration for the 11th International Conference of the European Society for Ecological Economics opens at the beginning of February. The overarching theme of the conference is "Transformations", and presentations will cover: (1) post-growth economics; (2) natural resources, ecosystem services and environmental quality; (3) development, consumption and well-being; (4) power, politics, institutions and the reality of achieving change; (5) new business models and understandings of human behaviour; and (6) theory, methods and practice of ecological economics, as well as over 30 special session themes.

[Visit the conference website.](#)



Our Common Future Under Climate Change
July 7-10, 2015, Paris, France

This four-day conference is the largest forum for the scientific community to come together ahead of the [COP21 of the UNFCCC in 2015](#). The Conference will address key issues concerning climate change in the broader context of global change. Organized around [daily themes](#), the Conference focuses on moving from present knowledge to future solutions.

[Visit the conference website.](#)

New SCORAI Affiliates

A warm welcome to the following new SCORAI affiliates joining us during the past month which brings our total number to 767.

Dorit Adler
Jay Bassett
Evan Carpenter
Liesbeth de Schutter
Daniella Elrom
Arieh Grumet
Spencer Harbo
Mandy Haggith

Tally Katz-Gerro
Eran Laish
Tomoo Machiba
Ruben Nelson)
Kate Olson
Karen Onthank
Peter Padbury
Tilly Pick
Galit Raz-Dror
Marnie Riddle
Pallavi Singh
Rosa Strube
Wayne Tomac
Marcus Williams

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