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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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Fri, Jun 5, 2015 at 3:04

AM



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June 2015

Dear Maurie,

Happy summer everyone! Take a moment to check out the SCORAI news this month - there is a lot going on both in Europe and North America.

Catie, Debbie, & Maurie

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT & PRE-CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Second International Conference of the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI)

Transitions Beyond the Consumer Society

University of Maine, Orono, Maine, USA

June 15-17, 2016

Aims and Objectives

The Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) is organizing its Second International Conference on June 15-17, 2016 at the University of Maine located in Orono, Maine, USA. The conference theme is "*Transitions Beyond the Consumer Society*" and is intended to provide a space for:



- The continued development of a network for the interdisciplinary and international exchange of ideas, research, and best practices related to sustainable consumption practice and policy.
- The presentation of innovative research and applied projects which improve our understanding of consumerist lifestyles and/or provide original insights into processes of societal transitions in the context of ecological limits, unequal distribution, and economic globalization.
- The generation of collective insights into key strategies, policies, and institutions designed to foster alternative means to pursue individual and societal well-being.

We invite diverse participation--including theoretical and applied contributions from representatives in academia, industry, government, and civil society organizations. Interdisciplinary perspectives and the work of emerging young scholars and practitioners are especially encouraged. SCORAI will establish a prize for the best paper by a young scholar or practitioner with details to follow.

Work to be considered might address, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- **Visions of societies where the economy and culture are not principally built on mass consumption:** sustainable lifestyles, steady state economies, degrowth, systemic change, new economies (sharing, solidarity, local, grassroots), sustainable business/production, alternative financial systems, the commons, equity of wealth and income, sufficiency, sustainable cities, well-being, and post-capitalist/alternative futures.
- **Insights into the obstacles to a transition beyond consumerist societies:** dominant consumer culture, *laissez-faire* market capitalism, institutional lock-in and path dependency, prevalent value systems, dominant power relations, peer/social pressure, materialism and focus on economic growth, income and wealth inequality, class and gender inequality.
- **Strategies for successful transitions:** leverage points for systemic change, government policies, new business practices, partnerships, multi-stakeholder collaborations, grassroots innovations and bounded socio-technical experiments, design for sustainability/roles for designers, law as agent of change, communication and framing, teaching sustainable consumption, and methodologies for measuring progress/indicators
- **Theories of social change:** socio-technical transitions, social movement theories, theories of cultural change, social learning theories, communication (including mass and social media), scenarios, visioning and backcasting.
- **Thematic domains of consumption** including agribusiness and food, transportation, building and housing, energy, the energy transition, and climate change, leisure and vacation, households, cities and urbanism, and others.

Instructions for Submissions

We invite the submission of proposals for academic and dialogue sessions, papers, and posters. Session proposals should include an abstract (maximum 250 words) and a list of prospective participants and be e-mailed to conference co-chairs Philip Vergragt (pvergragt@tellus.org) and Cindy Isenhour (cynthia.isenhour@maine.edu) by **August 15, 2015**. From August 15, the conference website will be open for paper and poster submissions; abstracts for papers and posters (maximum 250 words) should be submitted online at the conference website (<https://www.confmanager.com/main.cfm?cid=2865>) by September 30, 2015. Additional information about the conference, timetable, registration instructions and fees, and accommodations will soon be available on the SCORAI and conference websites.

Important Dates

2015

End of May	Conference announcement and pre-call for participation
August 15	Official call for participation and opening of conference website
August 15	Session abstracts and list of presenters due via email to co-chairs
September 7	Notification of acceptance of session abstracts
September 30	Deadline for submission of paper and poster abstracts
November 15	Notification of acceptance of papers and posters

2016

January 15	Publication of draft conference program and opening of registration
March 15	Early-bird registration closes
May 1	Full paper submission deadline
June 15-17	Second International SCORAI Conference

About the Sustainable Consumption Action and Research Initiative (SCORAI):

Established in 2008, SCORAI is a knowledge network of professionals working at the interface of material consumption, human well-being, and technological and cultural change. We aim to provide a forum for scholars and practitioners striving to understand the drivers of the consumerist economy in affluent technological societies; to formulate and analyze options for post-consumerist lifestyles, social institutions, and economic systems; and to provide the knowledge for emergent grassroots innovations, social movements, and public policies. Since its first highly successful international conference hosted at Clark University in 2013, SCORAI has evolved into a network of more than 700 affiliates. Recent activities include co-sponsorship (with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network and the City of Eugene, Oregon, USA) of a workshop on sustainable consumption and cities in October 2014 and a colloquium series on consumption and social change in collaboration with the Tellus Institute. SCORAI also supports collaborating networks in Europe, China, and Israel

SCORAI 2016 Conference Organizing Committee

Cindy Isenhour (University of Maine), Conference Co-chair and Local Coordinator
 Philip Vergragt (Clark University, Tellus Institute, and SCORAI Board), Conference Co-chair
 Anders Hayden (Dalhousie University)
 Ahmad Mahdavi (University of Tehran)
 Caroline Noblet (University of Maine), Local Organizer
 Rachael Shwom (Rutgers University)
 Esther Zipori (New Jersey Institute of Technology)

**Call for Papers:
 'Beyond' Transition? Understanding and
 Achieving Sustainable Consumption through
 Social Innovation**



SCORAI Europe and the [TRANSIT \(Transformative Social Innovation Theory\) project](#) entitled "'Beyond' Transition? Understanding and Achieving Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation."

The workshop will take place on 17 November 2015 in the Vienna Impact Hub, before a two-day conference on social innovation.

Abstracts are invited on one of the following themes which provide the foci for the workshop:

- a) The similarities and differences between notions of 'transition' and 'transformation'
- b) Case studies/examples of social innovation or sustainable consumption and their relevance to transformation
- c) Actions, roles and interactions of diverse participants

Abstracts can be submitted until **12 June**.

The detailed call and abstract submission details can be found at the following website link:

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/events/item/1667/17-nov-2015-scorai-europe-transit-workshop-vienna/>

New Economy Coalition Update



NEW ECONOMY COALITION

From Halina Brown

Jonathan Rosenthal is the new President of New Economy Coalition. Mr. Rosenthal has been a leader in the fair trade movement. He is a co-founder of [Equal Exchange](#), a worker-owned fair trade company the pioneering fair trade company established in 1985, long before the fair-trade brand became a household name. In 2005 Rosenthal co-founded Oké USA, the first US fair trade fruit company in the US, and, recently he also co-founded Belmont-Watertown Local First. He has been a consultant on fair trade issues, is a board member of the Coffee Trust and an emeritus board member of Root Capital. He lives in the Boston area.

The 2015 Annual Meeting of NEC was held in Philadelphia on May 15th. The theme of the conference was Grass Roots Economic Organizing, with a focus on co-ops. Notably, after many years of parallel existences, NEC has joined hands with the solidarity economy movement.

SCORAI CONSENSUS Conference Summary

From Frances Fahy

Members of SCORAI and SCORAI EU met at the National University of Ireland, Galway on May 23, 2015 for a one-day roundtable discussion with brief updates and presentations from SCORAI colleagues. The purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the discussions and outputs from previous SCORAI events with a view to informing future events and potential research proposals.



The meeting followed the [two-day CONSENSUS Conference](#), an international conference on sustainable consumption which took place in Galway from 21-22 May, 2015. The [CONSENSUS](#) (Consumption, Environment, and Sustainability) project uses innovative social science and collaborative research

methods to explore trends and solutions for sustainable household consumption in Ireland. Launched in 2009, this 7-year large scale research project involves researchers from NUI Galway and Trinity College Dublin. CONSENSUS is funded by the STRIVE (Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment) Programme which is administered by the Irish Environmental

Protection Agency.

The theme of the conference was 'Sustainable Consumption Transformations: Implementation and Impacts'. This two-day conference provided an international platform for both scholars and policymakers in the field of sustainable consumption to discuss and debate on-going research in this important area. The CONSENSUS conference focused on implementation and impact of research on policy and action. The conference programme comprised of a mix of presentations, panel discussions and lightning talks from policymakers, researchers and practitioners. Professor Martina Schäfer of Technische Universität, Berlin, provided the keynote address on Friday, 22 May on 'Take-home messages for Sustainable Consumption'. The



address explored the formulation of eight 'consumption messages' directed at promoters in politics and administration as well as environmental and consumer organisations that emerged from a three-year project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research - 'From Knowledge to Action - New Paths towards Sustainable Consumption'.

The conference also featured a joint plenary from Professor Philip Vergragt, Tellus Institute and Clark University, USA; Gemma Adams, Forum for the Future, London; Neil Coles, Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP); and Kathleen Stokes, NESTA.

According to the CONSENSUS project manager Frances Fahy, the Chair of the Conference and Head of Geography at NUI Galway: "Our conference intended to explore opportunities for future research collaborations and facilitate exchange between currently existing sustainable consumption networks. All conference participants at this event are active members of US and European sustainable consumption research communities. The public lecture and panel discussion provided all delegates an opportunity to reflect on household consumption and the various ways in which it impacts negatively on the environment as well as to explore how a shift towards more sustainable consumption might be encouraged, measured and governed."

A feature of the first day of the Conference Programme was the launch of the final CONSENSUS research report. This report outlines the insights gained from foundational and exploratory research in relation to household consumption detailing international good practice and tools for governing that may enable consumption to become more sustainable. Novel methods and approaches are outlined which support more collaborative and co-produced transdisciplinary action for attacking the complex dimensions of transforming consumption. All output from the CONSENSUS project are available

from <http://www.consensus.ie>.

In response to the launch of the final CONSENSUS research report Mr Kevin Woods, of the Irish EPA said: "This research marks a significant and important step in moving towards sustainability in the key areas of water, energy, transport and consumer behaviour. This report has an important role to play in influencing policy as a greater understanding of why many people consume unsustainably is an essential prerequisite for building appropriately formed and coordinated policy to enable more sustainable consumption. Such understanding needs to be developed across different spaces of

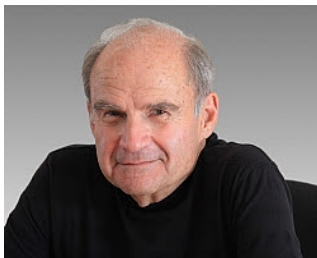


consumption and spheres of governance, recognising that consumption is influenced by many factors including but also beyond individual attitudes and values." The CONSENSUS conference was supported by NUI Galway's School of Geography and Archaeology, the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies and was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Introducing Robert Orzanna: New SCORAI Webmaster

My name is Robert Orzanna. I am enrolled in the master's programme Sustainable Development: Energy & Resources at Utrecht University (The Netherlands). I am currently devoting my master's thesis to the relationship between food waste, everyday household practices and the potential for households to reduce waste considering the systemic factors they are embedded in. For the upcoming years I am thinking about a PhD research on the extent to which people can live 'better' (qualitatively a good life and increase subjective well-being) while reducing environmental impact. My methodological approach is a mobile application platform that aims to help people transform their practices while providing a 'gamified', playful experience. I love bouldering (a form of climbing), to travel by bicycle and to help with sustainability outdoor education programmes in summer camps for school children. Generally speaking, I try to live consciously and believe that small is beautiful and being slow is wonderful. I am passionate and with almost endless energy to help whoever needs my help for a good cause.

Concluding Session of SCORAI Colloquium Series on Consumption & Social Change: Summary of Session with George Ritzer



The final session of the SCORAI Colloquium on Consumption and Social Change was held on May 6 and featured a presentation by George Ritzer (Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland) entitled "The Capture of the New World of Prosumption by Capitalist Interests: Is There Any Alternative. The video and a summary of Ritzer's presentation is available [here](#).

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

Job Opportunities



The University of Manchester
Sustainable Consumption Institute

Senior Lectureship/ Readership in Politics to be based in the Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester

Based at the [Sustainable Consumption Institute](#) within the School of Social Sciences, you will specialise in green political thought and/or environmental regulation and governance, with particular expertise in the study of sustainable consumption. You will be research-focused, with a limited teaching contribution, for at least the first three years, with you developing a programme of research at the interface of the SCI and the Politics Discipline Areas.

More information available [here](#).

Early Career Faculty Fellowship in Sustainability Studies



Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

Yale University invites applications from emerging scholars and early career faculty for appointment as the James and Mary Pinchot Fellow in Sustainability Studies. The Fellow will display early promise of excellence in research focused on issues of broad environmental significance using perspectives from the humanities, social sciences or biological/physical sciences. We are especially interested in scholars who demonstrate a commitment to excellence through diversity and who would contribute to the diversification of the field of environmental and sustainability studies.

The appointment is available for up to three years. It will be held in the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, but the Fellow will have opportunities to interact with faculty, students, and leadership across the University. Interest in collaborating with other faculty in a strongly interdisciplinary School, as well as with faculty working in cognate departments within Yale College, would be advantageous.

More information is available [here](#).

New Publications

Zehner, Ozzie. 2014. "Conjuring clean energy: exposing green assumptions in media and academia." *Foresight* 16(6):567-585

This paper contrasts green energy expectations with material factors to develop unasked questions about potential: urban myths (e.g. solar cells are made from sand), assumptions (e.g. alternative energy is of comparable quality to fossil fuel energy and can offset its use), strategic ignorance (e.g. solar cost drops reflect Moore's law), and trained incapacity (e.g. solar and wind energy is low- or zero-carbon). The article is available [here](#).





Fischer-Kowalski, M., F. Krausmann, I. Pallua. 2014. "A sociometabolic reading of the Anthropocene: Modes of subsistence, population size and human impact on Earth." *The Anthropocene Review* 1:7-33

We search for a valid and quantifiable description of how and when humans acquired the ability to dominate major features of the Earth System. While common approaches seek to quantify the human impact upon the carbon cycle by identifying the area of land cleared by humans, our point of departure is different human modes of subsistence, and we base our analysis on their social metabolism, in particular their energy metabolism. As a starting point, we use Ehrlich's classical IPAT formula, and give it a specific interpretation: human impact on Earth = population size × affluence (interpreted as energy available per person) × technology - for each mode of subsistence. The overall impact (or rather human pressure) then equals the composite sum of these. We qualitatively describe the functional characteristics of hunter gatherers, agrarian and industrial modes of subsistence such as population dynamics, energy regime and the technologies by which they interact with their environment. In a 'toy' model, we translate these considerations into global numbers for the past millennia: we estimate the respective population sizes and affluence (energy), and finally also technology concerning its impact on the carbon cycle. We see a major historical dividing line around AD 1500: until then, human population growth and metabolic rates carry about equal weight in increasing human pressure on the environment approximately fivefold from the year AD 1 onwards. From then on, the overall pressure of humanity upon the Earth increases by one order of magnitude; energy intensity contributes to this rise by roughly tripling the impact of population growth. Technology, because it is based upon a shift from biomass to fossil fuels (and other 'modern' energy carriers), does not moderate this impact, but enhances it by a factor of 1.5. Get the article [here](#).

Fischer-Kowalski, M., 2015. "Social Ecology." In: James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Vol 22. Oxford: Elsevier. pp. 254-262.

Social Ecology is a highly dynamic interdisciplinary research field rooted in both social science and natural science traditions. The common denominator of this research field is not so much a shared label but a shared paradigm. The core axioms in this paradigm are that human social and natural systems interact, co-evolve over time, with causality pointing in both directions. Social Ecology deals with energy and society, land use and food production, the metabolism of societies and the environmental impacts of human activities. It offers a conceptual approach to society-nature co-evolution that integrates historical and current development processes and future sustainability transitions. Get the article [here](#).



Kawajiri, K., T. Tabata, and T. Ihara. 2015. "Using a Rebound Matrix to Estimate Consumption Changes from Saving and its Environmental Impact in Japan." *Journal of Industrial Ecology*.

We investigate the extent to which Japanese people can change their consumption and the corresponding environmental impact. We propose a new analytical framework with a rebound matrix that captures the monetary flow from potential savings to their respending (referred to as rebound). A questionnaire is used to derive the matrix. On average, respondents spent 3.4 million Yen annually, resulting in 12.4 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in their daily lives. The survey results suggest that acceptable spending reductions would correspond to a CO₂ emissions reduction of nearly 6%. However, the CO₂ emissions would increase by nearly the same amount when the respondents spend their savable money (rebound CO₂



emissions). The annual CO₂ emissions and the annually reducible CO₂ emissions both increase with the increase in annual expenditure. Consequently, the net CO₂ emissions also increase with the increase in annual expenditure. The rebound spending is approximated using the rebound matrix. Finally, it is suggested that the net CO₂ emissions can be reduced through lifestyle changes whereby spending on energy items is reduced and the resulting savings are spent on telecommunication, clothes, shoes, education, and housing. Get the article [here](#).

Nässén, J., D. Andersson, J. Larsson, and J. Holmberg. 2014. "Explaining the Variation in Greenhouse Gas Emissions Between Households: Socioeconomic, Motivational, and Physical Factors." *Journal of Industrial Ecology*.



Consumption-accounted greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (GHGEs) vary considerably between households. Research originating from different traditions, including consumption research, urban planning, and environmental psychology, have studied different types of explanatory variables and provided different insights into this matter. This study integrates explanatory variables from different fields of research in the same empirical material, including socioeconomic variables (income, household size, sex, and age), motivational variables (proenvironmental attitudes and social norms), and physical variables (dwelling types and geographical distances). A survey was distributed to 2,500 Swedish households with a response rate of 40%. GHGEs were estimated for transport, residential energy, food, and other consumption, using data from both the survey and registers, such as odometer readings of cars and electricity consumption from utility providers. The results point toward the importance of explanatory variables that have to do with circumstances rather than motivations for proenvironmental behaviors. Net income was found to be the most important variable to explain GHGEs, followed by the physical variables, dwelling type, and the geographical distance index. The results also indicate that social norms around GHG-intensive activities, for example, transport, may have a larger impact on a subject's emission level than proenvironmental attitudes. Get the article [here](#).

Upcoming Conferences



**Futures Studies Tackling Wicked Problems:
Where Futures Research, Education and Action Meet .**
June 11-12, 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.](#)

Beyond' Transition? Understanding and Achieving Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation

November 17, 2015 in the [Vienna Impact Hub](#)

The European branch of the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI Europe) and the Transformative Social Innovation Theory (TRANSIT) project are jointly organising a one-day workshop. [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 782.

Amy Cohen
 Nicole Darnall
 Eefje De Gelder
 Suren Erkman
 Peter Evans
 Mads DahlGjefsen
 Oliver Graf
 Diana Ivanova
 Dexter Locke
 Thomas Mansell
 Thomas Piekarczyk
 Brent Ranalli
 Marc Saner
 Jennifer Scattergood
 Heinz Schandl
 Abby Scher
 Sjak Smulders
 Brian Valbjörn Sørensen

Jonas Wolterstorff

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