



Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series

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SCORAI Europe Workshop Abstracts
Consumption corridors: exploring concepts and implications

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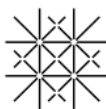




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Introduction

Theme

Increasingly, researchers are making the links between planetary boundaries, ethical notions of justice, and a consideration for human wellbeing - what Gough has termed “sustainable wellbeing” (2017). This could imply pursuing the notion of “consumption corridors” that is, the language of Di Giulio and Fuchs (2014), a minimum and maximum consumption standard, which would allow individuals to live a satisfactory life without impeding others from doing the same - across the globe and for future generations. The “consumption corridors” concept relates to different inter-disciplinary research streams underway, bridging environmental studies and energy studies, with philosophy, sociology and political science, to name but a few. The goal of the consumption corridor research community is to bring together considerations of environmental limits and planetary boundaries with considerations of justice and equity. Three central themes will be addressed in this nascent field, which we explored through this international workshop:

- 1) Advancing conceptual corridors through conceptual developments
- 2) Methods for studying corridors in practice, operationalizing the concepts
- 3) Translation and acceptance of corridors concept

Consumption corridors terminology

Taken from the paper Di Giulio/Defila presented at the SCORAI conference June 2018 (*for internal use only, please do not cite*).

The purpose of this document is not to impose a specific language on participants, but to explain some of the terminology that informed the notion of consumption corridors, and thus to support common language across disciplines and theories and ease communication. The content of this document has been taken from the paper "How the concept of 'consumption corridors' is received in Switzerland" by Antonietta Di Giulio and Rico Defila (University of Basel, Switzerland), presented at the SCORAI-Conference in Copenhagen, June 2018. All references have been removed.

"Consumption corridors" (CC)

"Consumption corridors" are corridors of sustainable consumption. Corridors of sustainable consumption would be defined by minimum consumption standards, allowing every individual to satisfy his/her needs and thus to live a life he/she values, and maximum consumption standards guaranteeing access to sufficient resources for others to live a life they value, both in the present and the future, by preventing individual consumption from adversely impacting the ability of current/future generations to achieve a good life. The space between these minimum and maximum standards is what is referred to as corridors of sustainable consumption.

The concept of "consumption corridors" (CC) proceeds from the assumption that natural as well as social resources are most certainly becoming scarce in terms of quantity (at least some of them) and that their quality is increasingly compromised; in other words, we are living in a world of limits. That being said, CC does not adopt a narrative of renunciation, and it does not want to impose or to promote specific lifestyles. CC acknowledges that the main goal of sustainable development is to achieve human well-

being (a good life in terms of quality, not in terms of morals) for present and future generations (social justice), as has been pointed out by different authors.

CC suggests to consider not only the goal of sustainability, the (possible) finiteness of resources, and the interlocking of resources and human well-being, but also the very nature of (individual) consumption.

Consumption

Individual consumption is the consumption of individuals and households. It is defined "as the utilisation of goods (i. e., products, services, or infrastructures) by individuals, encompassing individuals' acts of selecting, acquiring, using or consuming and disposing of or forwarding consumer goods". These acts are characterised along three dimensions: "(1) Degree of consciousness: an action may be performed in a non-reflected way as a matter of routine or it may be well thought out and consciously reflected upon. (2): Degree of pre-structuring: the consumer behaviour is pre-formed to a higher or lower degree by material and social structures and individual living conditions, that is, an individual may have a high or low degree of freedom to perform specific consumer acts. (3) Significance: an action may have a symbolic social or emotional significance in addition to its functional benefit, thus being essential or non-essential for what an individual considers a good life." Individual consumption, and thus all acts of (individual) consumption, are embedded in social, cultural and material contexts. Different layers of social interaction and structures influence the degree of consciousness, the significance, and the degree of pre-structuring of consumer actions.

A broad approach to consumption points out, firstly, that consumption cannot be reduced to buying (and accumulating) stuff, and secondly, that acts of consumption are not an end in themselves, but serve other purposes, such as the purpose of satisfying individual wants and thus to live a good life as defined by an individual. With a view to the latter it draws attention to the fact that some of the wants individuals have might be essential while others might not be (to address this distinction we use the terms desires (not essential) and needs (essential)). Thirdly, it calls to mind that it would be abridging and thus wrong to link consumption directly to natural or social resources, because consumption is not about the use of resources, although no-one would deny that resources are used, but about the utilisation of products, services, and infrastructures. This in turn points to the distinction of wants (needs and desires) on the one hand and the means to satisfy wants, so-called satisfiers, on the other hand, and it allows to further distinguish satisfiers and resources. And, fourthly, it acknowledges that acts of consumption have an individual, a social (or, depending on the adopted theory: structural), and a material dimension both in terms of how they are constructed and valued and of how they are predetermined.

Sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption (of individuals) has to serve two goals, a good life for an individual consumer (the way she/he defines it) and a good life for other individual consumers (the way they define it) and it has to take the complexity of consumption into account. Consequently, sustainable consumption asks for an approach in which the individual is the point of reference but not the sole responsible. In other words: Good life must neither be defined as the flourishing of a society, nor must it be defined as the well-being of a majority or of as many people as possible (or any other utilitarian approach). Rather, good life has to be defined as the flourishing of each and every individual. This however does not entail that individuals are entirely and solely responsible for both their

own good life and the good life of others. Rather, this responsibility has to be assigned to and shared by all societal actors. Although sustainable consumption focuses on an individual's consumption, achieving sustainability in individual consumption is not primarily an issue of an individual's morals, but of shared values, structural arrangements and of how societies organise their living together and their systems of provision within one society and across societies. Finally, universal human needs should be the point of departure to define sustainable consumption, but measures to achieve sustainable consumption must not question needs or try to impose needs. Rather, they must allow for individual freedom and address satisfiers (and/or resources linked to satisfiers) related to a set of human needs that is agreed upon to be essential within and across societies. Such needs have to be conceived as universal human needs.

Needs serving as a point of reference to define consumption corridors

We re-define the goal of sustainability, to ensure a good life both for present and future generations, as follows: To ensure the opportunity both for present and future generations of satisfying human needs. Corridors of consumption in turn is suggested as one of the means to achieve this goal (with a view to individual consumption).

Needs are legitimate human wants (constructs of wanting) and must not be contested. Individuals and states have an obligation to provide external (social, cultural, economic, environmental, etc.) conditions under which people can – now and in the future – satisfy their needs, and/or to prevent conditions making it impossible to satisfy their needs. For this purpose, a list of (universal) needs must be provided, a list that substantiates the goal of sustainability and serves as a point of reference to define corridors of consumption. Providing such a list of needs does not imply that each and every human being does feel the same needs (or substantiates these needs in the same way), but it does imply all human beings are entitled to satisfy those of their wants that belong to needs on this list. Humans have quite different conceptions on how their needs should be satisfied, on how a life they value looks like exactly, and they are entitled to live accordingly as long as they do not compromise the possibility of others to satisfy their needs.

Corridors of consumption demarcate the space of sustainable consumption, that is, of consumption allowing an individual to live a life he/she values without impairing the possibility of a good life for other individuals. The point of departure to define such corridors should be universal needs, and maxima and minima of consumption should refer to satisfiers (and/or resources) that are essential with a view to satisfying these universal needs.

Expected output

Beyond this abstract collection a proposal has been submitted to the *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy journal*, edited by Maurie J. Cohen, with an initial and favorable response.

Keynotes

Necessities and luxuries: how to combine redistribution with sustainable consumption



Necessities and luxuries:

how to combine redistribution with sustainable consumption

Ian Gough

Visiting professor, LSE

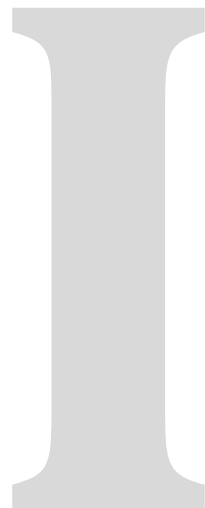
Green growth, or raising eco-efficiency, will not suffice to curb dangerous climate change for two reasons: it cannot succeed alone in reducing the cumulative stock of greenhouse gases fast enough, and it pays little or no attention to issues of fairness and justice, either between countries or within countries. Beyond this we need a second meta-strategy: *fair sustainable consumption* (and beyond this a third stage: *fair degrowth*). To provide robust theoretical support for this strategy, we will need to challenge key tenets of welfare economics and value theory. I argue the only alternative is a theory of universal human needs. This specifies a small set of basic and intermediate needs that apply to all peoples including future peoples. Consumer preferences can be challenged in the language of needs. But unlike needs, need *satisfiers* – the goods, services, activities and relationships that meet needs in particular contexts – are contested and far from universal. To deliberate and agree on these in a democratic society will require new forms of deliberative citizen forums calling upon expert advice. In this way ‘necessities’ can be distinguished from ‘luxuries’ and a fair ‘consumption corridor’ envisaged between minimum and maximum consumption levels. Some supporting evidence for this is given from current research on a ‘riches line’ in the UK. This must be set in the context of growing inequality in income, wealth and consumption-based emissions between and within countries; a phenomenon some have labeled the *Plutocene*. This environment intensifies certain dilemmas between the goals of justice/equity and sustainability: to overcome these dilemmas the paper concludes by outlining a suite of *eco-social policies* to shift rich countries towards more sustainable consumption practices.

Sufficiency, degrowth and sustainable consumption

Doris A. Fuchs

University of Münster, Germany

In a comment to the keynote Doris Fuchs focused on the context, in which the sustainability transformation envisaged by Ian Gough (with which she fundamentally agrees) will have to take place: a "dysfunctional democracy". She pointed out cases in which broad agreement on policy issues among voters exists that do not make it onto the political agenda, the asymmetry in financial resources and lobbying contacts poured into efforts to influence political agendas and policy decisions between corporate actors and civil society, and the overall increase in instrumental, structural and discursive power by business actors. Against that background, she traced the rise in economic and political legitimacy of large economic entities up to the current situation in which the politically powerful actors are those that benefit the most from mass consumption based on externalisation and exploitation. Highlighting the stability of the system in terms of its wavering of the financial crisis with simultaneously increasing capital concentration and ongoing idolization of markets, Doris Fuchs argued that the sustainability transformation needs to be accompanied by a fundamental change in the politico-economic system. She pointed out, however, that there never was a better time for that than now. Fridays for the future, the successes of green parties in elections and debates about a green new deal, and a general attention to climate change, biodiversity loss and other dimensions of the ecological crises show cracks in the system. Thus, it now is the time to talk about both, limits to consumption and limits to money in politics, as well as to build momentum in pursuit of both the vision of ecological justice and the vision of democratic equity.



**ADVANCING
CONSUMPTION
CORRIDORS
THROUGH
CONCEPTUAL
DEVELOPMENTS**

Building the bridge between protected needs and consumption corridors

Antonietta Di Giulio and Rico Defila

University of Basel

We suggest to operationalise the notion of good life for the context of sustainability by nine "protected needs", that is, by nine needs that (a) deserve special protection within and across societies because they are crucial to human well-being, and that are at the same time (b) needs for which a special protection is possible, because they are needs for which a governmental/community responsibility can reasonably be assigned. If sustainable consumption policies shall be informed by a needs approach both within and across nations, such needs need to be both, universal and context sensitive. For this reason, our proposal covers both, nine universal needs and for each need a starting point for its cultural and historical adaptation. In the paper we will briefly present the notion of protected needs and we will briefly explain what can be gained by this approach in comparison to other existing needs and capability approaches. Against this background and with a view to the advancement and implementation of the concept of consumption corridors, it is necessary to firmly link this concept and the notion of protected needs. We will explore this line of thought into two directions: The results of a survey in Switzerland (N=1059) show that accepting the nine protected needs and being willing of considering consumption corridors (or at least not rejecting the very idea of consumption corridors) are linked. It is thus possible to link the notion of protected needs to the concept of consumption corridors. This is though not enough with a view to implement consumption corridors, because it does not rule out the risk of inappropriately neglecting the complexity of either consumption or needs satisfaction or even of both. In order to build a firm bridge that takes the complexity of both consumption and need satisfaction into account, it is necessary to find a concept that is comprehensive enough and allows to integrate the notions of satisfiers and of resources. We will conclude the paper by a tentative list of criteria such a concept should meet, and we hope it will be possible to discuss the pros and cons of options such as energy services, ecosystem services, universal basic services.

Universal Basic Services:

A route to more equitable and sustainable consumption

Anna Coote

New Economics Foundation

Alongside rethinking private consumption, we need to rethink public consumption as a route towards sustainable consumption corridors. This paper proposes and develops the idea of Universal Basic Services (rather than Universal Basic Income): a range of free public services that enable every individual to live a larger life by ensuring access to certain levels of security, opportunity and participation. Public health and education are obvious examples in Europe. Central to the case for UBS is that the idea should be substantially developed in practice - both by improving the quality and reach of existing services such as healthcare and education, and by extending the concept to new areas where essential services are not currently available to all, such as care, transport, information and housing. Universal services constitute a virtual or 'social' wage by providing necessities that would otherwise have to be paid for out of income. They potentially affect consumption in three ways: firstly, by establishing collective responsibility for essential consumption; secondly, by ensuring that resources are pooled to meet shared needs; and thirdly by achieving economies of scale and reducing moral hazards associated with market-based transactions. This approach raises questions about what is 'essential' for meeting needs, about how far displacing direct expenditure encourages unnecessary private consumption, about who is included in the term 'everyone', and about what levels of provision are sufficient.

This paper is in four main parts. First it sets out the rationale for UBS: what is distinctive about this approach to public policy and why is it more desirable than universal basic income? The second part considers four arguments for public provision of some consumption items, in terms of equity, efficiency, solidarity and sustainability. The third part explores the different ways in which services may be designed, delivered and secured, in order to maximise equitable and sustainable consumption. This is followed by a brief section outlining the potential for extending UBS into new areas such as care, transport, information and housing. The case for UBS is emerging in the UK but the idea would benefit from discussion on a wider European scale in this conference.

Consumption corridors: a radical tool for systemic change

Elke Pirgmaier

University of Leeds

Sustainable consumption corridors are radical, because the proposed perspective of 'enough' clashes with the 'bigger, better, faster, stronger' mentality of capitalist ways of living, working and interacting. Capitalism is a social system based on the production of profits. Systemic profits can be achieved because there are no minimum consumption standards for large parts of the world population, and no maximum standards at all. The implementation of sustainable consumption corridors consonant with planetary boundaries, as envisaged to satisfy the ambition of environmental and social justice, would imply to squeeze profits on two fronts: bottom-up by minimum standards that enable a good life for all and top-down by maximum standards that remain within planetary boundaries. Through this lens, it is not difficult to see the slanting playing fields of resistance. Radical changes have to be fought for and we must not be naïve that sensible consumption corridors – sensible from a social justice and planetary health perspective – would be implemented easily by 'smart' decision-makers. What can be done? Research spaces can be used to initiate and support social struggles, by translating a coherent programme of consumption corridors to specific and local settings; providing clear, concise, and compelling evidence and information about the desirability of consumption corridors; connecting the dots between technical-economic-moral-ideological realities to counter punctual knowledge and piecemeal approaches; and daring to confront opposition, including a more critical stance towards the role of the State. This contribution places the concept of consumption corridors in the context of a capitalist economy with a view to identifying mechanisms that facilitate their implementation.

III

**WHEN EMPIRICAL
INSIGHTS INFORM
CONCEPTUAL
DEVELOPMENTS**

Needs-based workshops and the concept of sustainable consumption corridors

Mònica Guillen Royo

University of Oslo

Recent studies suggest that overconsumption and environmental destruction are not a consequence of pursuing need satisfaction but of fulfilling people's wants or aspirations. Organising societies around the satisfaction of needs, although potentially unpopular among the rich, seem to be the only way forward if environmental catastrophe is to be averted. The concept of sustainable consumption corridors links with this perspective and suggests minimum and maximum consumption standards that allow people now and in the future to experience need fulfilment. Following Max-Neef's Human Scale development (HSD) approach to needs and satisfiers, the notion of defining minimum and maximum limits to consumption could be considered as a synergic satisfier, a particular mean by which to realise more than one need in a given society. Whilst needs might be universal and only change with human evolution, satisfiers change with history and vary across cultures. Thus, an explicit discussion on maximum and minimum consumption standards might be considered a priority in some contexts and by some societal groups whereas in other contexts, other (potentially interlinked) satisfiers might be perceived as more urgent or efficient in meeting needs. The question remains, how and when do consumption corridors emerge as synergic satisfiers and what other satisfiers are they connected to? The presentation will address this question in the following way. First, I will introduce the HSD's approach to human needs distinguishing between the concepts of consumer goods (empowering satisfiers to meet needs), satisfiers (values, ways of organising, institutions, laws, actions, personal and societal environmental characteristics, etc.) and universal human needs (subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, freedom). Then, I will present the HSD methodology articulated around needs-based workshops and illustrate how in three different socio-economic, geographical and cultural contexts, Lofoten (Norway), Granada (Spain) and Acostambo (Peru), satisfiers resonating with the notion of minimum and/or maximum limits to consumption have been discussed. Emphasis will be put on the inter-linked satisfiers that following participants might support progressing towards optimal need actualisation and environmental sustainability. Drawing on the lessons learnt from past research on synergic satisfiers, I will discuss potential ways of adapting the HSD methodology to improve its focus on the concept of sustainable consumption corridors and thus contribute to their development in practice.

The energy minimum standard of Belgian households: a deliberative study

Grégoire Wallenborn

University of Geneva, Université Libre de Bruxelles

The paper presents the results of a research on the basic needs of household energy in Belgium. To answer the question of minimum energy requirements, I sought to develop a model that avoids the double pitfall of using a priori averages and a preconceived idea of the "needs" of households. I first established all the practices that lead to energy consumption in housing and without which it is not possible to live properly in our society. The research began with an ethnographic survey: home interviews with people in fuel poverty helped to draw up a list of appliances to be taken into account and to make a series of observations on their uses (including the frequency and timing of the day). I then organized focus groups to deliberately try to reach consensus on the minimum energy requirements that result from certain practices. Notably, we have reached an agreement that 30 m² by person plus 15 m² by added person is a minimum standard for living areas in Belgium today. We have also classified uses into three categories: vital, useful and superfluous. From multiple discussions I drew a "reference model", based on two parameters that depend on the particular situations of households and over which they often have little control: the insulation of housing and the energy vector of heating (generally gas, oil or electricity). A "calculator" has also been designed that allows us to establish the total energy consumption and maximum demanded power of a household by setting a series of other parameters. I conclude in showing that the "social floor" in Belgium household energy consumption might be higher than the "ecological ceiling", depending on how we define the latest. I discuss how carbon footprint can be reduced through better home insulation and renewable sources of energy.

Estimating and implementing “sustainable consumption corridors” in practice

Françoise Bartiaux

*National Fund for Scientific Research (Belgium) and Université
Catholique de Louvain*

Di Giulio and Fuchs (2014) have proposed the concept of “sustainable consumption corridors”, as well as some objections thereto and their responses. This contribution intends to continue this discussion by trying to frame it within a social practice theory approach, with a focus on the practices dealing with the estimations of the lower and upper limits of sustainable consumption.

De Giulio and Fuchs base their concept of “sustainable consumption corridors” on the notion of “individual objective needs”, a notion that I will discuss both theoretically and empirically. Issues of power and of legitimacy are at stake to pretend to define with “objectivity” lower and upper limits of consumption. To illustrate empirically the misleading notion of “individual need”, I show the range of energy consumption levels across social groups using different proxies and taking Belgium and different surveys as an example. The following proxies are used and discussed: the yearly electricity consumption per income quartile (SEREC survey, 2004), an estimation of the ecological footprint (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996) per profession (WWF-Belgium, 2006), and a new index of capability deployment (based on Nussbaum, 2000) according to households’ access to affordable warmth (Generation and gender Programme, 2009). The discussion includes some epistemological and ethical aspects of these three proxies, as well as measurement issues. (All estimations presented are from previous quantitative studies I was associated with.) Finally, a few policy instruments (thought of, or really tested) to implement such “corridors” are briefly presented to illustrate the pitfalls for estimating and implementing these “sustainable consumption corridors”.

III

METHODS FOR STUDYING CORRIDORS IN PRACTICE

How do people practice green public spaces as a consumption corridor?

Initial conceptual reflections linking satisfiers to needs through practices

Manisha Anantharaman and Marlyne Sahakian***

** St Mary's College, , visiting professor at the University of Geneva*

***University of Geneva*

The significance of green public spaces towards “sustainability” is well-documented in relation to social inclusiveness, human health and biodiversity protection, yet how green public spaces enable the achievement of what Ian Gough has termed “sustainable wellbeing” (2017) is less understood. The GRESPA (Green public spaces in the cities of South and Southeast Asia) project, with empirical research currently underway in four cities (Chennai, Metro Manila, Shanghai, and Singapore), hypothesizes that green public spaces are synergistic satisfiers that contribute to meeting multiple protected human needs, towards human well-being. In this paper, we lay out the conceptual framework relating the notion of protected needs and satisfiers to social practice theory and green public spaces. This conceptualization advances a view that social practices are spatialized and performed; spatialized, in that practices are made possible or impossible by the material arrangements and emplaced norms and regulations, co-constructed by a range of stakeholders; performed, in that we study the activities and doings in the park, rather than solely people’s representations. Through triangulation, we demonstrate how we plan to study protected needs methodologically, in relation to descriptions of park practices, reflections on a list of protected needs (Di Giulio and Defila 2018), and visual representations of park spaces and practices. We end the paper with some initial insights from fieldwork, notably what is made visible and rendered invisible in practicing park spaces (e.g., what is allowed or not, for different people, in different spaces, and varying times of day). We conclude with some discussions on green public spaces as consumption corridors, and how parks relate to other forms of un-sustainable consumption, in the context of cities where air-conditioned microclimates are increasingly normalized.

Decoupling energy and human needs:

synthetic analysis and guidance for action

Julia Steinberger, Will Lamb**, Lina Brand-Correa*, Giulio Mattioli****

** University of Leeds, ** MCC-Berlin, *** TU Dortmund*

This provides a synthetic analysis aimed at understanding the energy requirements of human need satisfaction, in such a way as to guide decoupling of the two. In this way, we are able to devise guidance for action and policy, which should inform climate mitigation strategies (Lamb & Steinberger 2017) as well as the provision of universal basic services involving energy (Coote & Gough, personal communication). This paper informs the lower boundary of sustainable consumption corridors (SCC, DiGulio & Fuchs 2014) and links it to estimating diverse levels of resource use depending on our synthetic analysis, as well as to welfare or eco-social policy guidance.

Our analytic starting point is the geographically, historically, culturally and technologically flexible concept of human need satisfiers (Doyal & Gough 1991, Max-Neef 1991). Satisfiers constitute the myriad ways basic human needs can be satisfied, based on diverse social and physical arrangements. Satisfiers are not only diverse, they are dynamic. In this paper, we are interested in mapping drivers of change in satisfiers over time. We develop a quadrant based mapping, with the energy service trend on one axis, and the satisfier achievement on the other. We consider the trajectories of common energy service / need satisfaction pairs within this synthetic framework, based on existing literature and data. From this evidence, we can provide categories of guidance for reversing or accelerating trends which would tend to decouple need satisfaction from energy use. We discuss these in the context of climate mitigation, universal basic services and eco-social policy agendas.

Understanding need satisfier escalation

Lina Brand-Correa, Julia Steinberger*, Giulio Mattioli**, Will Lamb****

** University of Leeds, ** TU Dortmund, *** MCC-Berlin*

Contemporary consumption patterns, embedded in profit-maximising economic systems, are driving us to a serious socio-environmental crisis. A better understanding of what drives these consumption patterns can be derived from the concept of need satisfiers put forward by Max-Neef (1991) and Doyal & Gough (1991), the insights from social practice theory and the analysis of broader socio-technical provisioning systems. We propose to analyse a specific bundle of satisfiers (e.g. the employment system, the meanings and competences around working, mobility and cars) related to the satisfaction of a specific need (e.g. creation, protection or economic security) in a systematic way. To undertake this analysis, we build on Mattioli's (2016) understanding of different levels of satisfiers (see Figure below), by eclectically drawing on insights from the systems of provision approach, social practice theory, and perspectives on infrastructure lock-in. In this view, the satisfaction of a given need depends on a tiered structure of system-wide provisioning processes (1st order satisfier), the propagation of meanings and competences embedded in social practices (2nd order), and the consumption of specific products or services are (3rd or 4th order). Our central claim is that widespread 3rd and 4th order satisfiers are escalating in their energy/material intensity, surpassing environmental limits (or going beyond a maximum level for a specific consumption corridor for achieving human wellbeing now and in the future).

In order to tackle the escalation phenomenon of certain consumption patterns, we use Meadows' (1999, 2008) systems thinking to assess the efficiency of different "places" (leverage points) to intervene in a bundle of satisfiers: the higher order satisfier you intervene the better, but the harder it is to change things. 4th order satisfiers are like "constants", thus intervening in them is not very effective (e.g. improving the engine efficiency of a diesel car). 3rd order satisfiers are like "parameters" or "buffer sizes", they allow further improvements, but are not very effective either (e.g. car sharing). 2nd order satisfiers can be like "reinforcing feedback loops" or even "system rules", much more effective than the previous two, but a big challenge to understand how to change them (e.g. flexible working time, output oriented contracts, working from home). 1st order satisfiers are the "system structure" or "paradigm" out of which the system arises, and thus is the most effective place to intervene (e.g. reduced working week, universal basic income).

IV

TRANSLATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CORRIDORS CONCEPT

Governing Individual Freedoms within Biophysical Limits

How the Notion of “Green Liberal Freedom” Can Help to Reinvigorate Democratic Sustainability Politics

Carolin Bohn and Tobias Gumbert

University of Münster

Efforts towards more equitable and ecologically just societies in liberal democracies are caught between the conflicting priorities of protecting liberal freedom rights and safeguarding biophysical boundaries. By way of balancing these challenges, current policy approaches (behavior change, participatory tools etc.) try to protect societal actors from ‘too much’ regulation while trying to regulate the negative externalities of economic activity through incentives and voluntary action. At the core of this rationality, safeguarding individual freedoms and politically agreeing upon ecological limits are constructed as opposing forces. We argue that this dichotomy is fundamentally flawed and an important barrier to engage citizens in dialogue on the merits of socio-ecological limits.

The notion of freedom that is prevalent in this politics is that of ‘non-limitation’ and ‘option-freedom’: the more options consumers and citizens have and the less limits are imposed on them, the greater the overall level of freedom. Therefore, discussions of limits are often reduced to negative restrictions and undemocratic demands. We problematize this understanding of the relation of freedom and limits in two different ways. First, we show that in most liberal accounts, freedom and limits are mutually supportive of each other, and that the understanding of freedom as “the absence of limits” is in fact a particular understanding that has become dominant. Second, we argue that many of these policy approaches have the potential to exert individualizing and depoliticizing effects, casting doubt on the alleged win-win-situations these approaches promote. Against this backdrop, we develop the notion of ‘green liberal freedom’ that (a) posits limits as a core concern of liberal understandings of freedom that need to be an object of democratic deliberation, (b) rests on the recognition of the environment as ‘provider of basic needs’, and (c) argues for the political cultivation of ‘agency-freedom’ as the capability to reflect upon and judge conflicting values in light of individual and collective versions of the good life.

Social determinants of support for consumption corridors in Europe – the case of energy use

Martin Fritz

Bielefeld University, Germany

The concept of consumption corridors involves the notion of minimum standards which need to be met in order to enable a good life as well as identifying maximum standards which may not be exceeded. While providing minimum standards is a widely accepted idea reflected for example in the scheme of a social protection floor and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, keeping consumption behavior below some upper limits is necessary to reduce the material dependence of current societies and achieve ecological sustainability. It is, however, also a very controversial idea within the dominant liberal ideology that embraces individual freedom and consumer rights. Even from an (eco-) socialist perspective the call for limits of consumption is problematic as it seems that the responsibility for tackling environmental problems is placed on individuals instead of changing the patriarchal capitalist exploitation of nature and oppressed social groups. However, while the liberal view directly conflicts with maximum standards, the eco-socialist pursuit for system change is in principle compatible if not intrinsically linked to regulating individual consumption behavior.

This paper addresses the controversial debate about defining acceptable consumption corridors from an empirical and social-structural perspective. Analyzing data from the European Social Survey (ESS), the individual willingness to restrict one's own consumption behavior as well as perceived minimum levels of consumption are investigated for the case of energy use. Statistical modeling is used to explore the socio-structural determinants of such willingness and perceptions: The roles of income, education and political left-right-orientation are studied whereby the assumptions are tested that poorer people are mainly concerned about minimum levels of consumption whereas higher educated and left-oriented persons agree with maximum standards and politically right-oriented people not. Moreover, the effects of social welfare attitudes and basic human values are examined. The hypothesis here is that persons with pro-social attitudes and a universalistic mindset are more likely to accept maximum standards of consumption. The analyses are carried out for the more than twenty countries which are part of the ESS. This enables to identify national specifics and different cultural contexts for the acceptance and public opinions about consumption corridors.

Consumption corridors in fashion: Exploring existing pre-conditions for defining the upper limit through the lens of slow fashion movement

Katia Vladimirova

UNIGE / University Milan-Bicocca

This paper aims to investigate existing pre-conditions for applying the theoretical concept of 'consumption corridors' in fashion consumption. Fashion is a rather complex field of consumption, being a satisfier to multiple needs, as well as desires. In the past five to ten years, several growing movements (slow fashion, minimalist and zero waste movements being the most prominent ones) have been advocating for reducing consumption of fashion on various grounds. This paper explores how these movements frame and communicate the idea of upper consumption limits by looking at social media (Instagram). On social media, the influencers of these movements often hold similar views when it comes to fashion consumption, urging followers to reduce and mindfully select the garments they purchase considering the social and environmental impact of the fashion industry. One of the clearest examples of upper consumption limit (yet, not the only one) is the original concept of capsule wardrobe, which encourages people to own fewer better quality matching garments, in some interpretations even offering an exact maximum number of items per individual. This paper identifies the key normative claims related to the upper and lower limits of fashion consumption from the sustainable fashion community voiced on Instagram by conducting a content analysis of 15 most influential influencers' accounts (selected by the total number of followers). Instagram is the most prominent among various social media platforms when it comes to discussing fashion as it is the preferred social network of choice of the European millennial women. Findings may be useful in discussing the normative dimensions and the application of the consumption corridors framework in the context of fashion consumption in Europe.

Workshop agenda

Program – Day 1, Tuesday April 16, 2019

- 11:00-12:00 Welcome and introductions; lunch will be provided.
- 12:15-14:00 **Necessities and luxuries: how to combine redistribution with sustainable consumption**
Keynote conference by Prof. Ian Gough, discussed by Prof. Doris Fuchs.
- 14:00-14:30 Tea/coffee break
- 14:30-16:30 **PART I: ADVANCING CONSUMPTION CORRIDORS THROUGH CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENTS**
Building the bridge between protected needs and consumption corridors
Antonietta Di Giulio, Rico Defila, University of Basel
Universal Basic Services: A route to more equitable and sustainable consumption,
Anna Coote, New Economics Foundation
Consumption corridors: a radical tool for systemic change
Elke Pirgmaier, University of Leeds
Discussant: Jean-Michel Bonvin, University of Geneva
Moderator: Marlyne Sahakian
- 19:00 **Dinner at Café du Marché**

Program – Day 2, Wednesday April 17, 2019

- 10:00-12:00 **PART II: WHEN EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS INFORM CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENTS**
Needs-based workshops and the concept of sustainable consumption corridors
Mònica Guillen Royo, University of Oslo
The energy minimum standard of Belgian households: a deliberative study
Grégoire Wallenborn, UNIGE / ULB
Estimating and implementing “sustainable consumption corridors” in practice: A social practice approach
Françoise Bartiaux, Université Catholique de Louvain
Discussant: Antonietta Di Giulio
Moderator: Marlyne Sahakian
- 12:00 – 13:30 **Lunch**
- 13:30-15:30 **PART III: METHODS FOR STUDYING CORRIDORS IN PRACTICE, OPERATIONALIZING THE CONCEPTS**
How do people practice green public spaces as a consumption corridor? Initial conceptual reflections linking satisfiers to needs through practices
Manisha Anantharaman, St Mary's College and Marlyne Sahakian, University of Geneva

Decoupling energy and human needs: synthetic analysis and guidance for action

Julia Steinberger, University of Leeds, Will Lamb, MCC-Berlin, Lina Brand-Correa, University of Leeds, Giulio Mattioli, TU Dortmund.

Understanding need satisfier escalation

Lina Brand Correa, University of Leeds, Julia Steinberger, University of Leeds, Giulio Mattioli, TU Dortmund and Will Lamb, MCC-Berlin.

Discussant: Mònica Guillen Royo

Moderator: Katia Vladimirova

15:30-16:00 Coffee/tea break

16:00-18:00 PART IV: TRANSLATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CORRIDORS CONCEPT

Governing Individual Freedoms within Biophysical Limits – How the Notion of “Green Liberal Freedom” Can Help to Reinvigorate Democratic Sustainability Politics

Carolin Bohn and Tobias Gumbert, University of Münster

Social determinants of support for consumption corridors in Europe – the case of energy use

Martin Fritz, Bielefeld University, Germany

Exploring existing pre-conditions for defining the upper limit through the lens of slow fashion movement

Katia Vladimirova, UNIGE / University Milan-Bicocca

Discussant: Jasmine Lorenzini

Moderator: Manisha Anantharaman

18:00 Departure for walking through Bastion to Old Town.

19:00 **Dinner Les Armures**

Program – Day 3, Thursday April 18, 2019

9:00-11:00 PART V: ADDRESSING RESEARCH GAPS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Commenting the workshop with a view to future research, led by Doris Fuchs, University of Münster.

Commenting the workshop with a view to future research. What have we now learnt (new insights, fields of tension, contrasting positions, new questions etc.) and what are future research questions we should approach?

Commenting on the policy and practice implications, led by Leida Rijnhout, independent consultant.

Commenting the workshop with a view to bridging research with action, from concepts to practical implications for policies and initiatives at different scales. How does the CC concept translate into different non-academic fields and what further efforts are needed towards acceptance?

11:00 - 12:00 Early lunch available, for on location or packed for travel.

Workshop Participants

1. Anantharaman, Manisha / St Mary's College and visiting professor at UNIGE
2. Balsiger, Philip / University of Neuchâtel
3. Bartiaux, Françoise / UCLouvain
4. Bonvin, Jean-Michel / UNIGE
5. Brand-Correa, Lina / University of Leeds
6. Coote, Anna / New Economics Foundation
7. Courtin, Irène / PhD candidate; UNIGE
8. Di Giulio, Antonietta / University of Basel
9. Fritz, Martin / Bielefeld University, Germany
10. Fuchs, Doris / University of Münster
11. Godin, Laurence / UNIGE
12. Gough, Ian / London School of Economics
13. Guillen Royo, Monica / University of Oslo
14. Hirt, Léon ; PhD candidate UNIGE
15. Lorenzini, Jasmine / UNIGE
16. Mattioli, Giulio / TU Dortmund
17. Pirgmaier, Elke / University of Leeds
18. Rijnhout, Leida / Independent consultant
19. Sahakian, Marlyne / UNIGE
20. Steinberger, Julia / University of Leeds and visiting professor at UNIGE
21. Vladimorova, Katia / UNIGE and University Milan-Bicocca
22. Wallenborn, Grégoire / UNIGE and Université Libre de Bruxelles
23. Zhan, Mallory / PhD candidate; UNIGE

Unable to attend:

Gumbert, Tobias, University of Münster

Lorek, Sylvia, SERI Germany e.V.

Wilhite, Harold, University of Oslo

We were happy to provide childcare services for some portion of the conference

Picture of selected workshop participants



About SCORAI Europe

Founded in North America and inspired by the European SCORE! Network (2005-2008), SCORAI is an international network of professionals working to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfilment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. SCORAI Europe was founded in the context of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production conference in Bregenz 2012. In that session, participants unanimously agreed that creating a SCORAI Europe network would help strengthen the sustainable consumption community in Europe, both in terms of research and practice. Shortly afterwards, SCORAI Europe was launched. Its goal is to support a community that contributes forward-thinking, innovative research in the area of sustainable consumption, while also bridging academic research with mainstream thinking and policy-making. Since then SCORAI Europe closely works with the Society of the European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP) and our sister SCORAI organization in North America, as well as other research networks that are focused on the challenges of addressing the society-environment nexus from a consumption perspective like the Degrowth community.

Since its inception, SCORAI Europe has organised and run a number of workshops and conferences with the aim of bringing together practitioners and researchers to enhance understanding and find innovative approaches toward sustainable consumption. For more information please click on the links below.

<u>Budapest (2016)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption and Social Justice in a Constrained World</i></u>
<u>Vienna (2015)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption Transition Series Issue 5</i></u>
<u>Leipzig (2014)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 4</i></u>
<u>London (2014)</u>	<u><i>Workshop Report</i></u>
<u>Rotterdam (2013)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 3</i></u>
<u>Istanbul (2013)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 2</i></u>
<u>Muenster (2013)</u>	<u><i>Workshop Results</i></u>
<u>Bregenz (2012)</u>	<u><i>Sustainable Consumption Transitions Series Issue 1</i></u>

To learn more about SCORAI, please visit: <http://www.scorai.org>, where you will find a dedicated web page for SCORAI Europe activities.

To become a member of SCORAI Europe, please join the SCORAI EUR listserv: <http://scorai-eu.opendna.com>.

For more information on SCORAI Europe, please contact: scoraieurope@gmail.com.

SCORAI Europe supporting community

Steering Committee

Julia Backhaus, Maastricht University
Janis Brizga, NGO Green Liberty & University of Latvia
Frances Fahy, NUI Galway
Charlotte Louise Jensen, Aalborg University, Denmark
Audley Genus, Kingston University
Sylvia Lorek, Sustainable Europe Research Institute
Henrike Rau, University of Munich
Marlyne Sahakian, University of Lausanne
Edina Vadovics, GreenDependent Institute

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Neil Coles, UNEP/Wuppertal Institute/CSCP
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Doris Fuchs, University of Münster
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Gerd Scholl, Institute for Ecological Economy Research
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Martin Schweighofer, Austrian Institute of Ecology
John Thøgersen, Aarhus University
Arnold Tukker, TNO

*Only those not in the steering committee