

Dear Reader,

The holidays are rapidly approaching and everyone is busy getting ready. I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone happy holidays! This has been a challenging, but also exiting and rewarding year for our community. I want to thank everyone who have been actively engaged in consolidating the VC, as well as everyone contributing to the success of our major events: the STEEP summer school in Aarhus and the annual event in Wrocław. I also want to thank Judith de Groot, Bournemouth University, who in November gave the second virtual seminar for the community. Those of you who missed it can view the webcast [here](#).

In the November edition of the newsletter, the Marketing & Sustainability group at Aarhus University presented its research on sustainability and consumption issues. I am extremely happy to announce that this month, the Environmental Psychology group at the University of Groningen, headed by professor Linda Steg, presents its extensive research program in the newsletter. It's truly exiting and amazing! Best wishes for the holidays and the New Year.
John

PS: Notice also the call for papers for next year's annual event at the 10th Biannual Environmental Psychology Conference in Magdeburg in September.

NEWS

The Virtual Community on Sustainability and Consumption 2013 at the 10th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology in Magdeburg, Germany

The Virtual Community (VC) on Sustainability and Consumption invites the submission of contributions for symposia on sustainability and consumption at the 10th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, which will be held September 22-25 2013 in Magdeburg, Germany. The main theme for the conference is 'The role of the individual in the transformation of energy systems', which makes it particularly apt for anyone interested in the interface between sustainability and consumption. You can read more about the conference at: <http://www.envpsycn.ovgu.de/EnvPsyCon.html>.

By organizing a track of special sessions / symposia at the 10th Environmental Psychology Conference, we hope to strengthen and widen the VC's outreach and the collaboration of researchers in the field of sustainability and consumption. Hence, we encourage researchers currently working on sustainability-and-consumption issues, within all disciplines and cross-disciplinary, to present their research at this event, which will also host the VC's annual general assembly.

If you are interested in submitting a paper, please let us know as soon as possible and we will organize a number of themed symposia at the conference. Please feel free to forward this invitation to colleagues who may be interested in participating. In addition to sending them to us, abstracts should be submitted using the conferences management system at <http://www.envpsycn.ovgu.de/EnvPsyCon.html> where more information about the conference is available.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is March 15th, but the organizers need to know about plans for symposia before March 1. Please indicate in your submission that you would like your submission to be considered for the special symposia organized by the VC.

Kind regards,

Alice Grønhaug (alg@asb.dk) and John Thøgersen (jt@asb.dk)

New Study: "Rethinking Consumption" Finds Consumers Buying Less and Buying Better

On the eve of the holiday shopping season, a new study by BBMG, GlobeScan and SustainAbility finds that consumers are rethinking consumption with sustainability in mind. Developed by BBMG, GlobeScan and SustainAbility, The Regeneration Consumer Study is an in-depth online survey of consumer attitudes, motivations and behaviors relating to sustainable consumption among 6,224 respondents across six major international markets (Brazil, China, Germany, India, the United Kingdom and the United States) conducted in September and October 2012.

[Read more](#)

Sustainability is the Future of Consumption

According to research entitled 'Consumer Futures 2020' the future of consumption is going to be radically different from what we see today. This research presents four scenarios exploring possible patterns of consumption in 2020, all of which indicate that consumerism will become more sustainable.

[Read more](#)

Global Outlook on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Policies

The Global Outlook on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Policies, developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with the financial support of the European Commission, provides a non-exhaustive review of policies and initiatives that are promoting the shift towards SCP patterns. This report identifies examples of effective policies and initiatives being implemented worldwide

You can read more about the report and download it [here](#).

SC RESEARCH AT GRONINGEN UNIVERSITY

Factors influencing the adoption of electric vehicles

[dr. Marija Bockarijova](#), together with prof. [dr. Linda Steg](#)

This postdoc project focuses on economic and social aspects influencing in the adoption of electric vehicles, and is a collaboration between the Department of Spatial Economics of the VU University Amsterdam, and the Department of Psychology at the University of Groningen. Recently we conducted a large-scale questionnaire study in the Netherlands to elicit preferences and attitudes to electric vehicles among consumers at different stages of the adoption process. Among others, we test whether the Protection Motivation Theory is a suitable framework to explain adoption of electric vehicles. We pay particular attention to the environmental and energy security aspects behind the motives that determine electric vehicle acceptability.

Early Adoption of Electric Vehicles

[Ernst Noppers, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and dr. [Kees Keizer](#)

This multidisciplinary project studies the early adoption of Electric Vehicles. The emphasis is on psychological factors influencing early adoption of sustainable innovations (e.g. electric vehicles, solar panels). The consensus is that instrumental shortcomings of these sustainable innovations will inhibit adoption. However, we argue that the adoption of these products does not merely depend on its instrumental attributes. In addition, people may be motivated to adopt sustainable innovations because of their environmental benefits. Moreover, although often not recognized, sustainable innovations may have important symbolic functions as they can be used to signal positive characteristics to oneself and to others.

INTEWON - social feedback & energy conservation

[Danny Taufik, MSc.](#), together with [dr. Jan Willem Bolderdijk](#) and Linda Steg

INTEWON is a project aimed at motivating household members to live energy efficient, looking at individual differences and applying this in the development and implementation of information technology that can help promote energy conservation. The unique element of the project is the studying of the interaction between individual comfort experience (physiology), individual behavior (psychology) and technology. It is a joint collaboration between the University of Groningen, University of Maastricht and the University of Eindhoven. Danny Taufik, Jan Willem Bolderdijk and Linda Steg are the environmental psychologist involved in this project. Currently we explore the use of social feedback to promote more pro-environmental behavior. In this type of feedback people compare how pro-environmental their behavior is compared to a certain reference group. We propose that the extent to which acting pro-environmentally is important for maintaining a positive self-concept affects the way people deal with social feedback. More specifically, we currently study the extent to which the effectiveness of social feedback depends on (1) the personal involvement in environmental issues of the user of the feedback and (2) how pro-environmental the reference group that is used in the social feedback is expected to behave.

Smart grid: rendement voor iedereen!

[Marko Milovanović, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and [prof. dr. Russell Spears](#)

In this project, which takes place in the Dutch cities of Amersfoort and Utrecht, we aim to encourage households to make optimal use of locally generated solar power (by reducing their energy use or matching their energy demand to the available supply) and thus promote sustainable energy use. Project website: www.smartgrid.nl

In our research, we will consider the role that local communities can play in promoting sustainable energy use. In particular, we will study how group-level factors (such as communal norms and goals, social identities, the level of participation and involvement within the community) influence sustainable energy use compared to commonly used individual-level factors (such as personal norms, values and attitudes). We will also test the effects of different types of energy demand management strategies (including information provision, feedback, either implemented from a community or individual perspective) on sustainable energy use.

Values, goals, and environmental behaviour

[Goda Perlaviciute, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and [prof. dr. Siegwart Lindenber](#)

This research explores motivations that guide environment-relevant behaviour. We look at how biospheric values, situationally activated goals, and interaction between the two guide environment-related preferences, attitudes, and actions. We carry out studies in the domains of organic food consumption and transition towards sustainable energy sources.

Environmental self-identity

[Ellen van der Werff, MSc.](#), together with Kees Keizer and Linda Steg

Studies have shown that environmental self-identity is related to a range of pro-environmental actions. We study which factors influence environmental self-identity and how we can strengthen it to promote environmentally-friendly behaviour. We have found that the environmental self-identity is partly stable because it is influenced by values. It can be strengthened by reminding people of their past pro-environmental actions.

Environmental behaviour patterns

[Cobus van der Poel, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and [dr. Nina Hansen](#).

We aim to study the influence of current behaviour on future behaviour. Will a person consistently act pro-environmentally or will previous pro-environmental behaviour have a negative effect on future pro-environmental behaviour? We study these so called spill-over effects by focusing (1) on different types of spill-over effects, (2) the role of individual attributions in this process, (3) the impact of autonomy, and (4) the impact of values on attribution type. We propose that positive spill-over effects are more likely when people attribute initial pro-environmental choices to their own intrinsic motivations, while negative spill-over effects will be more likely when people attribute such initial choices to external factors (such as a favourable choice context). Furthermore, we hypothesise that internal attributions are more likely among those with strong biospheric values, and when initial pro-environmental choices were made freely. This insight is crucial for science and practitioners to understand the benefits (via positive spill-over) and limits (via negative spill-over) of promoting pro-environmental action via contextual changes.

Low Carbon at Work (LOCAW)

[Angela Ruepert, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and Kees Keizer

In the LOCAW project we provide an analysis of everyday practices in the workplace, as well as of the factors promoting or hindering the transition towards sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Seven research organizations participate in this project: University of Coruna (Spain), University of Umea (Sweden), West University of Timisoara (Romania), University of Surrey (UK), The James Hutton Institute (UK), University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy) and University of Groningen. Studies are carried out in seven large organizations in six different countries, in the public as well as the private sector and both heavy and light industry. More information on the project can be found on the website: www.locaw-ip7.com

Specifically, we investigate under which circumstances initial environmental behaviour will result in response generalization or moral licensing. Currently we study the effect of ego-depletion on environmental behavior. While prior studies have shown the consequences of ego-depletion on for example moral behavior, consumer behavior or risk behavior, no prior studies have explored the effect of ego-depletion on environmental behavior. We suggest that pro-environmental behavior might have a depleting effect, which can result in negative spillover effects. Furthermore, we suggest that people who have been ego-depleted will behave less environmentally friendly than people who have not been ego-depleted.

You need to do more than just believe: Understanding why people fail to translate pro-environmental beliefs into actual behavior.

Martijn Keizer, MSc., together with Linda Steg and [dr. Martijn van Zomeren](#)

This research focuses on understanding why individuals fail to translate normative considerations, such as feeling obliged to engage in environmental action, into actual behavior. In one line of studies, we examine how the costliness of engaging in pro-environmental behavior (in terms of money, time, pleasure, and/or status) influences whether people act upon their pro-environmental beliefs or not. Various studies have suggested that people will only act upon environmental beliefs if doing so is not personally costly, but this has never been tested directly. We tested to what extent personal costs influence the relationship between environmental beliefs and behavior in studies on transport mode choice, use of energy from sustainable sources, and acceptability of pro-environmental policy measures, and found that normative considerations are indeed more predictive when behavior costs are relatively low (but not too low). In a second line of studies, we examine whether focusing individuals' attention on norms and normative behavior can facilitate the translation of general environmental beliefs into actual pro-environmental behavior.

Creating Innovative Sustainability Pathways (CRISP)

[Leonie Venhoeven, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and Jan Willem Bolderdijk

The project seeks to identify potential pathways that will help the EU with the transition to a sustainable, low carbon Europe. The project is funded by FP7, the European Union Framework 7 research program, and is executed by an international team with partners from Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and UK. To be able to identify these potential pathways, we will first review current policies and practical case studies to figure out what the European position on sustainability is at the moment. We will then ask high school children to help us with developing and evaluating possible scenarios for the future. When our future goals are set, we will talk to experts and where we want to find ways in which we can bridge the gap between where we are today, and where we want to be in the future. A key feature of CRISP is the involvement and participation of school pupils, laypeople, companies, governments and experts in the field of sustainability. For more information visit: <http://109.123.120.45:8080/display/CRISPSITE/Welcome+to+CRISP/>

In this project, we also investigate whether and under what conditions sustainable behaviour promotes well-being. The first step is to investigate whether people who act in a pro-environmental way are happier than those who do not, and whether this difference is due to sustainable behaviour. If acting in a pro-environmental way indeed makes people happy, the second step will be to find out why this is the case: does it just feel good to do good, or are more selfless processes important too? Lastly, you can question whether these processes work the same for everybody, maybe people with strong environmental values feel different about their pro-environmental behaviour?

Music and Driving Performance

[Ayca Barfu Ünal, MSc.](#), together with Linda Steg and [dr. Kai Epstude](#)

This research focuses on the influence of music and other types of auditory distracters on driving performance: specifically the processes, such as arousal and mental effort, via which music affects performance. We also examine how music influences performance and behavior in different environments, and whether the complexity of environment leads to adopting different strategies in handling auditory distraction.

PUBLICATIONS

Betz, F.-M., & Schrader, U. (2012). Nachhaltigkeitsinnovationen durch Nutzerintegration? In G. Beck & C. Kropp (Eds.), Gesellschaft innovativ (pp. 205-216): VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

de Groot, J. I. M., Steg, L., Keizer, M., Farsang, A., & Watt, A. (2012). Environmental Values in Post-socialist Hungary: Is It Useful to Distinguish Egoistic, Altruistic and Biospheric Values? Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review, 48(3), 421-440.

EVENTS

17-18 January 2013	2nd RESPONDER Multinational Knowledge Brokerage Event: Green ICT for Sustainable Consumption? Exploring Emerging Policies and Open Research
5-8 February 2013	XIX International Conference of the Society for Human Ecology
25 - 26 April 2013	26th PhD Workshop on International Climate Policy Studies in economics, politics & social sciences
24 - 25 May 2013	4th Transformative Consumer Research conference
4 - 7 June 2013	ERSCP-EMSU 2013 Conference
6 - 7 June 2013	FUTURES FOR FOOD
12 - 14 June 2013	The Future of Consumerism and Well-being in a World of Ecological Constraints
18 - 21 June 2013	10th International conference (ESEE 2013) on Ecological Economics and Institutional Dynamics
19 - 21 June 2013	4th IST Conference
1 - 3 July 2013	19th annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference (ISDR19)
27th July - 18th August 2013	GESA 2013: the third Global Environments Summer Academy on Socio-ecological Interactions in a Dynamic World
22 - 25 September 2013	10th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology

[Read more](#)

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