

Dear Reader,

The deadline for submitting abstracts to the 10th Biannual Environmental Psychology Conference, and thereby also to the symposia on Sustainability & Consumption organized by the Virtual Community, has just expired. The number of submissions we have received looks promising for an interesting track, in addition to the many other interesting symposia one can expect at this conference. Hence, we hope to see many of you at this year's annual event in September in Magdeburg.

In the series of research groups presenting their research on sustainability and consumption issues, we have now come to the Environmental Psychology division at University Magdeburg, headed by professor Ellen Matthies. We are extremely happy to present their exiting and extensive research program in this newsletter.

We are also extremely happy that our Virtual Community now has a list-server, which offers a convenient and well-known platform for member dialog and discussion. You've all received an invitation to join the list-server, and if you have lost the invitation e-mail, there is a link in this newsletter that you can use to sign up. We hope and expect that the list-server will be a valuable facilitator of knowledge and other exchanges in our community!

Kind regards,

John

NEWS

Join the VC list server!

We would like to invite you to join the Virtual Community (VC) on Sustainability and Consumption's new list server.

The VC list server has the purpose of facilitating communication and knowledge sharing between members, as well as encouraging further project collaboration.

You can sign up on the VC list server at the following link - <http://maillist.au.dk/mailman/listinfo/vc.list>.

If you have any questions or feedback, please don't hesitate to contact us at vc.bss@au.dk.

The Global SCP Clearinghouse

The Global SCP Clearinghouse convened by UNEP as the Secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), was pre-launched on the 20th February during UNEP's GC/GMEF in Nairobi.

The Global SCP Clearinghouse is meant to serve as the one-stop hub bringing together the SCP community worldwide, as well as to offer a harmonized information and knowledge platform that will lead to more innovation and cooperation towards SCP implementation.

[Read more](#)

SC RESEARCH AT UNIVERSITY MAGDEBURG

Our department

Environmental Psychology Division at the University Magdeburg

The division was founded in December 2011 with Ellen Matthies as chair. The main research field of the division is man-environment-interactions with a focus on environmentally relevant behaviours and decisions and theory driven development and evaluation of intervention measures to promote sustainable consumption, see <http://www.ipsy.ovgu.de/ipsy/en/Environmental+Psychology.html>

Our projects

Changing sustainability relevant routines in organizations – CHANGE

Ellen Matthies together with Ingo Kastner

The tertiary sector and public administration is one of the main domains of energy consumption in Germany. Here, large amounts of energy can be saved by changing everyday user behavior at the workplace. A standardized web-based counseling tool was developed allowing organizations to plan and implement energy saving interventions autonomously. The tool was based on the assessment of high-impact consumption behaviors and field tests of the intervention program. The tool is optimized for the use at universities yet but can also be transferred to other organizations. The project was funded within the Social-Ecological Research Program of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Incentives to promote investments in regenerative energy – an integrative approach

Ingo Kastner together with Ellen Matthies

The project focuses on investment decisions in the field of energy efficiency. High-impact (and mostly cost-intensive) decisions regarding energy efficient technology will be analyzed first (e.g. investments in renewable energy systems). Based on a field study and decision experiments relevant factors for the design of incentives are to be identified (e.g. funding structure, information, communication channels). The goal of these investigations is to give recommendations for the design of policy measures. As part of the Helmholtz-Alliance ENERGY-TRANS, the project is funded by the Helmholtz Association and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Identification and Mobilization of Target Groups to Foster Efficient Use of Electricity in Private Households

Malte Nachreiner together with Ellen Matthies

In order to increase the efficient use of electricity in private households, it is crucial to provide individuals with extensive information about appropriate types of behavior and on how to implement these. This could be achieved in a cost-effective way via an internet portal. Here, information should be presented according to a person's (or group's) specific characteristics. From a psychological point of view, for an implementation and stabilization of behavior patterns to become more probable, it is also important to take into consideration the stage of change a person currently is in with regard to the target behavior.

The aim of the project is to identify multiple groups of people which differ significantly in regard to particular relevant electricity consumption behaviors (e.g. due to differences in equipment and / or specific usage thereof). Within this work, special consideration is given to psychological stage models of behavior change. The subsequent preparation of group specific behavioral recommendations is then guided by the principle of utilizing each group's electricity saving potential as much as possible. The project is implemented in cooperation with the utility company DEW21 (<http://www.dew21.de/>). As part of the Helmholtz-Alliance ENERGY-TRANS, the project is funded by the Helmholtz Association and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Effects of motive based and action phase specific interventions for electricity saving in households

Julia Steinhilber together with Ellen Matthies

Tailoring interventions is one of the main challenges when focusing on the promotion of energy saving behavior. Above and beyond technical and socio-demographic factors used to identify different target groups, psychological factors play a major role when it comes to tailoring effective interventions. Based on findings of the previous project 'Identification and Mobilization of Target Groups to Foster Efficient Use of Electricity in Private Households', this doctoral project analyzes and optimizes measures promoting electricity saving behavior in households, based on motives for saving energy as well as action phases for specific behaviors. Electricity saving behavior is operationalized as electricity usage behavior, investments in and abolishment of household appliances. Effects of tailored interventions are measured by self-reported electricity saving behavior, the progression of action phases and the consumption of electricity. The project is implemented in cooperation with the utility company DEW21 (<http://www.dew21.de/>). As part of the Helmholtz-Alliance ENERGY-TRANS, the project is funded by the Helmholtz Association and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Energy use in private households with children and adolescents

Hannah Wallis together with Ellen Matthies

Private households cause with about 20% a relevant amount of CO2 emission. Especially households with children and adolescents consume a high amount of energy, in particular electricity. At the same time households are domains where a reduction of energy consumption can be achieved successfully by changing certain behavior patterns. Psychological research about human perception, motivation and behavior plays a key role in the investigation of everyday consumption behaviors. Therefore, environmental psychology leads back to a long tradition and provides useful approaches for investigations in the energy sector. One aim of the study analyses whether the higher energy use of households with children and adolescence refers to characteristics of age related behaviors or can be explained by framework conditions of daily family life. Recommendations for interventions are developed. As part of the Helmholtz-Alliance ENERGY-TRANS, the project is funded by the Helmholtz Association and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Rebound versus spillover in the field of energy consumption

N.N., Thomas Friedrichsmeier together with Ellen Matthies

Based on the assumption that the rebound effect in energy policy may be overplayed (Gillingham et al. 2013) the project looks into different kinds of everyday energy consumption decisions from the psychological perspective. The study investigates under what conditions energy consumptions decisions may lead to more vs. less consumption in other domains of direct or indirect energy use. As part of the Helmholtz-Alliance ENERGY-TRANS, the project is funded by the Helmholtz Association and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Everyday understanding of energy & energy services in the context of sustainable implementation of micro-energy systems in structural weak regions of the global South

Kathrin Friederici together with Ellen Matthies

Recently, the UN General Assembly has declared the years 2014-2024 to be the 'Decade of Sustainable Energy for All', calling for the urgent need to improve access to reliable, affordable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services. A focus is set on the one-fifth of the world population so far without access to electricity, particularly in rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In many scenarios for a sustainable future energy supply, decentralized solutions play a crucial role – like the implementation of micro-energy systems (e.g. solar home systems).

For this reason, the PhD project analyzes the everyday understanding of energy and energy services in the context of sustainable implementation of micro-energy systems in structurally weak areas of the global South. It examines content and structure of social representations of energy and related concepts that might influence the perception and acceptance of micro-energy systems. The knowledge of specific meanings inherent in traditional energy sources and new technologies is assumed to be a precondition to tie in with the vocabulary of concepts and symbols of the potential users for a successful assessment of needs and sustainable implementation strategies. As part of the interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program Microenergy Systems at the Center for Technology and Society / Technical University of Berlin the project is funded by the Hans-Böckler-Foundation.

Reduction of traffic noise: Problem awareness, norms, and predictors of behavior change among motorists

Lisa Lauper together with Ellen Matthies (PhD advisor) and Stephanie Moser, Maja Fischer, and Ruth Kaufmann-Hayoz (project team at the Interdisciplinary Center for General Ecology, University of Bern)

More than 15% of the Swiss population suffers from road traffic noise exceeding the threshold limits. Exposure to traffic noise may cause serious health problems, such as sleep disturbance or high blood pressure. In addition to technical improvements and government policies, motivating individuals to switch to noise-reducing behavior (e.g. eco-driving and using low-noise tires) has the potential for noise reduction. Therefore, the aim of this project is to investigate the process of change from noise-producing behavior to noise-reducing behavior, with a focus on problem awareness, norms, and predictors of behavior change. Data came from 890 Swiss car drivers, 110 tire buyers, and 110 motorcyclists who participated in a two-wave longitudinal online survey. The project is funded by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment.

CALLS

Call for Papers for the Journal of Matthes Policy Special Issue - Behavioural Economics, Environmental Policy and the Consumer

The present Call focuses on the increasingly discussed possibility of applying behavioural economics to "nudge" consumer choice and behaviour in the domain of environmental protection.

Papers have to be submitted before October 1st 2013 and according to the submission and author guidelines available on the [journal's website](#).

Call for post-doc position within The Chair for Corporate Sustainability of the TUM School of Management at the Technische Universität München

Please send your written application enclosing all relevant documents as pdf-files until the 22nd of April 20013 to Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz via the following e-mail address: jeanette.kralisch@tum.de.

[Read more](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Cohen, M. J., Brown, H.S. and Vergragt, P.J. Innovations in sustainable Consumption - New Economics, Socio-technical Transitions and Social Practices (2013). Edward Elgar Publishing

Marian, L. & Thøgersen, J. (2013) Direct and Mediated Impacts of Product and Process Characteristics on Consumers' Choice of Organic vs. Conventional Chicken, Food Quality and Preference(0). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2013.03.001>

Ohta, H., Fujii, S., Nishimura, Y., & Kozuka, M. (2013). Analysis of the Acceptance of Carsharing and Eco-Cars in Japan. International Journal of Sustainable Transportation, 7(6), 449-467. doi: 10.1080/15568318.2012.688092

EVENTS

21 - 22 March	The 2nd RESPONDER Multinational Knowledge Brokerage Event on sustainable mobility
25 - 26 April	26th PhD Workshop on International Climate Policy Studies in economics, politics & social sciences
24 - 25 May	4th Transformative Consumer Research conference
4 June	SCORAI Europe workshop prior to 2013 ERSCP-EMSU: Bridging Across Communities and Cultures Towards Sustainable Consumption
4 - 7 June	ERSCP-EMSU 2013 Conference
6 - 7 June	FUTURES FOR FOOD
10 - 12 June	4th Annual Climate, Mind, and Behavior (CMB) Symposium
12 - 14 June	The Future of Consumerism and Well-being in a World of Ecological Constraints
18 - 21 June	10th International conference (ESEE 2013) on Ecological Economics and Institutional Dynamics
19 - 21 June	4th IST Conference
1- 3 July	19th annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference (ISDR19)
27 July - 18 August	GESA 2013: the third Global Environments Summer Academy on Socio-ecological Interactions in a Dynamic World
22 - 25 September	10th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology

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Board of the VC:

- > **John Thøgersen** Aarhus University (chair of the board)
- > **Anders Biel** University of Gothenburg
- > **Mario Teisl** University of Maine
- > **Linda Steg** University of Groningen
- > **Lucia Reisch** Copenhagen Business School
- > **Ulf Schrader** Technical University of Berlin
- > **Paul Stern** NAS, Washington DC
- > **Tim Jackson** University of Surrey
- > **Bas Verplanken** University of Bath
- > **Ellen Matthies** Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg
- > **Satoshi Fujii** Kyoto University

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