



July 2012 Newsletter

Dear SCORAI,

Hopefully this newsletter finds everyone enjoying summer. We have a number of exciting updates from Rio, new job opportunities, recent publications, and a new listserv about our post-automobile future.

Enjoy!

Kate & Debbie & Maurie

## Global Research Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production, June 13-15, Rio de Janeiro

The results of the recent Rio+20 conference may have been disappointing, but there are a few positive aspects that should not be ignored. The institutional framework for global sustainable development has been strengthened, with more powers for the United Nations Environment Program; the ten-year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production has been adopted (albeit vaguely); and by 2014 we expect to have Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the challenges will be to ensure that sustainable consumption, or sufficiency goals, are incorporated into these SDGs. This may be possible if framed as "resource efficiency and sufficiency."

I personally did not expect a lot from the "official" conference, but saw it as an opportunity for many people and organizations to meet, exchange ideas, and develop new plans and energy. In that sense the conference was successful. This achievement was, of course, greatly enhanced by the People's Summit which was held in the "real old" center of Rio (as opposed to the humongous airport-like conference center that was quite inappropriately called "Rio Centro" in order to confuse everybody).

As many readers of this newsletter already know, SCORAI played an important role (together with other organizations like the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Sustainable Europe Research Institute (SERI), Integrated Strategies Forum (ISF), OneEarth, Green Liberty, Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL), Consumers International, and the Tellus Institute) to forge the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production (GRF-SCP). GRF-SCP organized a major inaugural workshop in Rio, just before the "official" conference, from June 13-15, at the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing (ESPM) in the center of old Rio (details on the event are available [here](#)). GRF-SCP also organized a [workshop](#) on June 11th during the International Council for Scientific Union's Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, participated in the "Rio Dialogues on Sustainable Consumption (with the Brazilian Minister of the Environment) on June 12th ; and convened a side event at the "official" Rio+20 conference on June 19th.

The workshop at the ICSU Forum gave GRF-SCP visibility in the science community and access to its major new research initiative [Future Earth](#). It will be a challenge for us to participate in this major new international research program and CPE would be grateful for SCORAI's help and

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major new international research program and GRF would be grateful for SCORAI's help and support on this front.

The GRF-SCP workshop was seen as a great success by its participants and sponsors: both in terms of participation (80-90 international participants); local organization (very smooth thanks to ESPM); fun (the cultural evening with performances by participants was great); and content (about 35 papers delivered, four keynotes; and plenty of good discussions and breakout sessions).

The keynotes were given by Chee Yoke Ling (Third World Centre) on "A Southern Perspective," Jacqueline McGlade (European Environmental Agency) on "Planet Re-think," a joint presentation by Tim Jackson and Peter Victor on "Ecological macroeconomics," and Adrian Smith of Science and Technology Policy Research Unit (Sussex University) on "Grassroots Innovations." The other papers were briefly presented in accordance with the "SCORAI Model" with ample time for discussion. They were grouped under the headings: long-term visions and trends; green innovation; green economy or degrowth?; lifestyles; culture; policy; education; and mapping knowledge, practice, and leadership.

The overarching problem statement for the workshop was framed in the following terms: Environmental, social, and economic unsustainable situations are driven by our consumption habits and our production structures. Neither government policies nor activism has thus far any meaningful remedies. Consumerist culture and structures have spread quickly around the world, with disastrous effects for the environment and our resource base. The rich consume much more than the poor (but are not much happier). For the poor and the middle class, jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and self-realization should be emphasized, rather than increased consumption.

The outcomes of the workshop can be summarized as (and please forgive me for not being exhaustive):

- It is inappropriate to blame individual consumers for unsustainable practices as they are part of a complex system.
- Consumers can be influenced by more than rational arguments and data (persuasion and peer pressure).
- Technology can assist a process of transition, but other mechanisms will be necessary (cultural and value change; economic instruments, choice editing).
- The supply side and governments have important roles to play.
- Interaction between researchers and practitioners is sometimes difficult, but needs to be improved.
- Developing countries and Eastern Europe are rapidly catching up with respect to consumption, but it is not clear if and how they will find an alternative path.
- Addressing unsustainable consumption in the global South is complex because of parallel persisting poverty and sometimes the existence of a "bling culture" of conspicuous consumption and status-motivated demonstration effects.
- It is important to distinguish between green consumerism and sustainable consumption as well as between weak and strong sustainable consumption
- Consumption is an overtly political activity and it should be analyzed through the lens of political-economy perspectives.
- Education is key, for all ages, but especially for the young.
- Advertisements should be tamed and greened.
- Concepts underlying the solidarity economy, grassroots innovations, and ethical consumption need to be further developed.
- Macro-economic modeling does not give conclusive evidence that degrowth is desirable or possible.
- Leadership is key.
- Mapping the movement and conceptualizing interactions between researchers and practitioners need to be further developed.

As you can see, the outcomes of this workshop reflect as much the wish to conceptually integrate various perspectives and disciplines, but also (activist) wishes to bring about systemic change. In this sense it was a successful blend of academia and activism. We are still working on a more balanced evaluation; as well as an official workshop report; a report on the facilitation; and on a special academic journal issue with many of the papers.

Finally, at the UN Rio+20 Side Event the objectives of GRF-SCP were presented as:

- To bring together SPC researchers and practitioners from around the world.
- To discuss SPC research papers, achievements, and research gaps.
- To evaluate SPC policies and civil society actions, achievements, and policy and action gaps.
- To create a global community of SPC researchers and practitioners.
- To transcend disciplinary and regional boundaries.
- To address complex systemic questions

We hope to be able to provide (perhaps in time for the next issue of this newsletter!) a more detailed plan for the future. We are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration between GRF and SCORAI.

--Submitted by Philip Vergragt

### **SCORAI Launches a European Sister Organization**

We are pleased to announce the launch of the SCORAI Europe network. Our 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. SCORAI Europe will work closely with 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.

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 fulfillment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. Network participants are seeking to advance and disseminate knowledge, forge connections, and contribute to policy dialogues and practices involving these interrelated issues. To learn more about SCORAI, please visit: <http://www.scorai.org>, where you will find a dedicated web page for SCORAI Europe activities.

In Bregenz, Austria and on May 1, 2012, SCORAI hosted its first Trans-Atlantic workshop around the theme, "Sustainable Consumption During Times of Crisis". Following this successful event that brought together researchers from North America and Eastern/Western Europe, a session dedicated to SCORAI took place within the larger European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production conference (May 2-4). In that session, it was unanimously agreed that creating a

SCORAI Europe would help strengthen the sustainable consumption community in Europe, both in terms of research and practice. Upcoming activities of SCORAI Europe in 2012-2013 will include: sharing conference proceedings from Bregenz workshop on the SCORAI web site; participating in the 2013 ERSCP conference in Istanbul early June 2013; and potentially another workshop in Europe in spring 2013.

To become a member of SCORAI Europe (no membership fee involved, for the time being), please join the SCORAI EUR listserv <http://scorai-eu.opendna.com>. Members will receive information on upcoming activities and be invited to share information relevant to sustainable consumption research and action in the European context, with other members. For more information on SCORAI Europe, please contact: [scoraieurope@gmail.com](mailto:scoraieurope@gmail.com).

**Supporting members of SCORAI Europe:**

- Julia Backhaus, Maastricht University
- Nilgün Ciliz, Boğaziçi University
- Neil Coles, UNEP/Wuppertal Institute/CSCP
- Frances Fahy, Consensus Project Manager, National University of Ireland
- Doris Fuchs, University of Münster
- Sylvia Lorek, Sustainable Europe Research Institute
- André Martinuzzi, WU Vienna
- Oksana Mont, International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics, Lund University
- Jaco Quist, TU Delft
- Inge Røpke, DTU Management Engineering
- Lucia A. Reisch, Copenhagen Business School
- Marlyne Sahakian, The University of Lausanne
- Willi Sieber, The Austrian Institute of Ecology
- Gerd Scholl, Institute for Ecological Economy Research
- Ulf Schrader, TU Berlin
- Martin Schweighofer, The Austrian Institute of Ecology
- John Thøgersen, Aarhus University
- Arnold Tukker, TNO

## **Post-Automobile Futures**

Dr. Maurie Cohen is launching an online discussion forum devoted to "post-automobile futures" and would welcome hearing from anyone who might have an interest in participating in such an initiative. As currently conceived, the forum would be devoted to exchanges related to emergent points of weakness in the current personal car regime (e.g., lack of interest in automobiles among younger drivers, spread of urban bicycle-oriented lifestyles, role of increasing inequality in declining access to automobility). Contributions are anticipated from the socio-technical transitions and sustainable consumption research communities, but hopefully the forum will not be limited just to these groups. The intention at present is for the forum to be simply a "reply all" discussion list, but depending on uptake of this idea over time it may move toward a more formalized communication platform.

A related possibility is for this forum to serve as a preliminary discussion space for individuals with an interest in participating in a session (or two) on the theme of post-automobile futures at the SCORAI conference scheduled to take place at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in June 2013. A direct email response to Dr. Maurie Cohen ([mcohen@adm.njit.edu](mailto:mcohen@adm.njit.edu)) would be the most appropriate way to signal your intention in participating in this stream of activity.

## **SCORAI 2013 Conference**

SCORAI is organizing an international conference to be held on June 12-14, 2013, at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Scholars working in the field of sustainable consumption will convene to better understand the connections between material consumption and societal well-being and to chart transition pathways toward a more sustainable future. The aim is to formulate options for post-consumerist lifestyles, social institutions, and economic systems in wealthy countries of the global North. The 2013 Conference at Clark University will follow three previous SCORAI workshops held in North America at Clark (2009), Princeton (2011), and Vancouver (2012) and a Trans-Atlantic workshop in Austria (2012).

The formal call for abstracts will be issued on July 15. At that time we will invite proposals for sessions and individual papers based on theoretical and applied research focusing on the above issues. We especially welcome contributions from interdisciplinary research that addresses, but is not limited to, such topics as: subjective and social wellbeing, socio-technical transitions, evolution of

social practices in a technological society and their ecological impacts, local innovations in alternative systems of provisions and lifestyles (including grassroots initiatives), new economic and institutional models in the context of ecological limits, and the role and prospects for social movements toward a post-consumerist society (including the emergence of compelling future visions). We also welcome scholarly contributions that address sustainable consumption in the context of political power and institutional structures as well as the role of academic community in affecting a transition to a sustainable future.

### **Peoples' Sustainability Manifesto For Action Beyond RIO+20, June 2012**

The fourteen Peoples' Sustainability Treaties, evolved through a consultative process with hundreds of civil society organizations, converged at the Rio+20 to launch a Manifesto on the final day of the Rio summit. They have declared that another world is possible after Rio+20 and pledged their commitment to a transition toward increasingly sustainable futures on earth. The full text is available at <<http://sustainabilitytreaties.org/pst-manifesto>>

### **Professional and Educational Opportunities**

**University of Bern** has two jobs that may be of interest including:

- **Professorship in Social Sciences** (Domain: Sustainable Social Development)[http://jobs.zeit.de/jobs/bern\\_9\\_professorship\\_in\\_social\\_sciences\\_77277.html](http://jobs.zeit.de/jobs/bern_9_professorship_in_social_sciences_77277.html)
- **Assistant Professor (tenure track) in Ecosystem Services, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development** [Here](#)

**The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies in Japan** is looking to to host an additional researcher working on sustainable consumption. Potential candidates include a recent PhD graduate or someone currently working at an Associate Professor level. The duration could be as short as a few weeks or up to one year. Funding for this is from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Click here more information: [http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/fy2013/appli\\_long\\_2013.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/fy2013/appli_long_2013.html). To apply please contact Lewis Akenji, Senior Policy Consultant, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Institute for Global Environmental

Strategies, Japan at [akenji@iges.or.jp](mailto:akenji@iges.or.jp)

**Economists at the Global Development And Environment Institute** (GDAE - at Tufts University, MA) are seeking a collaborator for revision of our micro and macro textbooks as well as creating a one-semester micro-macro text. The individual hired will work closely at GDAE with Neva Goodwin, Jonathan Harris and Brian Roach. The position will entail research, writing and editing, as well as activities to comply with the publisher's requirements for formatting, creating materials for students and teachers. The position will start in September 2012 (or sooner, if available), to continue for one year with the possibility of longer term continuation. Applicants should submit a resume, a writing sample, and two references to [Neva.Goodwin@tufts.edu](mailto:Neva.Goodwin@tufts.edu) or Neva Goodwin at GDAE, 44 Teele Ave, Tufts University Medford, MA 02155. For more information, please see GDAE's openings <<http://www.asc.tufts.edu/gdae/resources/index.html>>.

**Eindhoven University of Technology** has a vacancy for Lecturer (Docent) in System Innovation and Sustainability Transitions. More information is available [here](#).

**Eindhoven University of Technology** will also begin its new undergraduate major on 'Sustainable Innovation.' It is formally part of the bachelor of 'Innovation Sciences', which has repeatedly received top-ratings. Course topics include perspectives on sustainability, economics of innovation, technology in society, industrial ecology and various (engineering) courses on sustainable energy and sustainable living. More information can be found [here](#), including how to enroll:

is hiring faculty either at the tenure-track assistant professor level or tenured associate professor level. The appointment is in an innovative interdisciplinary academic program in sustainability. To review and apply to this position, please visit <http://www.academicjobsonline.org> and search for the Global Institute of Sustainability.

### **New Publications & Reports by SCORAI'ers**

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Burger JR, Allen CD, Brown JH, Burnside WR, Davidson AD, et al. (2012) The Macroecology of Sustainability. PLoS Biol 10(6): e1001345. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1001345

Mace GM (2012) The Limits to Sustainability Science: Ecological Constraints or Endless Innovation? PLoS Biol 10(6): e1001343. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1001343

Matthews JH, Boltz F (2012) The Shifting Boundaries of Sustainability Science: Are We Doomed Yet? PLoS Biol 10(6): e1001344. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1001344

The Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society published a special issue (February 2012; 32 (1)) on commoditization as a mechanism driving societies to overdevelop the economy of market goods and services and the relations of economic exchange; and underdevelop the economy of care and connection and the relations of community and ecosystems. If interested see <<http://bst.sagepub.com/content/32/1.toc>>

### **New SCORAI Affiliates**

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Recent additions to the list of SCORAI affiliates has brought the total number of SCORAI'ers to 417.

Midori Aoyagi  
Balint Balazs  
Magnus Bengtsson  
Cecilia Bergstad  
Nancy Bocken  
Miriam Börjesson Rivera  
Vincent Carragher  
Mitali Dasgupta  
Daniel Fischer  
Kuishuang Feng  
Susanne Freidberg  
Michael Hecht  
Anna Carlsson Hyslop  
Constanze Frank-Oster  
Mukesh Lakum  
Alberto Larotonda  
Tasiyagnunpa Livermont  
Carmit Lubanov  
Nicola Momenté  
Caroline Noblet  
Monique Ouimette  
Laurina Peace  
Eva Maria Räßple  
Carla Raelo  
Almut Reichel  
Alexander Rist  
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Nicola Stalevski  
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## Upcoming Conferences & Workshops

The World Congress on Global Well-Being will be held July 16-21, 2012 in Melbourne, Australia.

Summer School on Theories in Environmental and Economic Psychology (STEEP) will be held from 2-6 July 2012 in Aarhus, Denmark and will provide PhD students the opportunity to collaborate with senior scholars and other PhD students in the same area.

XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology, July 29-August 4, 2012, Lisbon, Portugal. Session 43-Consuming the Rural: Food, Nature, and Space. Apply [online](#).

International Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. Montclair State University Montclair, New Jersey August 1-2, 2012

Jesse, August 12, 2012.

**The International Conference on Culture, Politics, and Climate Change.** September 13-15, 2012 in Boulder, Colorado USA.

**3rd International Conference on Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity.** September 19-23, 2012 in Venice, Italy.

"**Beyond the Culture of Nature: Rethinking Canadian and Environmental Studies**" will be held September 29-30, 2012 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Please send queries and proposals to Matthew Evenden, Chair of Canadian Studies, UBC: CNS-conference2012@geog.ubc.ca.

**Sustainable Innovation 2012 Resource Efficiency, Innovation and Lifestyles** will be hold their 17th International Conference 29th-30th October 2012 at Alanus University in Bonn Germany.

**Boundaries of Consumption: Critical Perspectives on Race, Class, Gender, Citizenship and Space in Changing Markets.** The conference will be held in San Francisco, CA from November 14-18.

**Workshop: Responsible Supply Chains and Networks: Challenges for Governance and Sustainability.** The conference will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, 22-24 November 2012.

**Conference on Innovators and Concepts of Innovation 2012**  
November 22-23 2012, Friedrichshafen, Germany.

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