



Issue 1
December 2017

Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the ESA RN5 newsletter. We have reached a mark of 109 official paying members and over 200 members on our listserv, a nice time to start sharing news through this format. We plan to communicate recent publications, upcoming events and other news that is relevant to our community.

About ESA RN5

The research network addresses consumption in its social, cultural, symbolic, economic, political and material dimensions. It welcomes theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to the study of

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consumption in a large range of areas: sustainability, political consumption, fashion, food and eating, tourism, culture, bodies, technology etc. In doing so, it intersects with other sociological fields, such as economic sociology, sociology of health, the family, gender, age and generations, the study of space and cities, or social stratification. Thereby the research network contributes to societal debates on contested and challenged aspects of consumption and assists in advancing associated policy measures and societal developments.

Recent & Upcoming events

Call for abstracts: Consumption and consumerism: Conceptual and empirical sociological challenges.

Please join us for the ESA RN5 Midterm Conference, preceded by a PhD workshop.

Copenhagen, Denmark > 29 August to 1 September, 2018

Consumption is omnipresent in society to such a degree that it is increasingly difficult to imagine social relations, communities and institutions that are not saturated by consumer relations. Consumption is entangled in the most ordinary and intimate social contexts, activities and relations, yet, simultaneously, consumption is more often than not enacted as part of globally stretching chains of markets and media-representations.

'Consumerism' has often been used to categorise and sociologically critique this dominant societal arrangement, which combines mass-production and mass-consumption with the implied ideological discourse of the freedom of individual consumer choice. However, the term consumerism is also being used to conceptualise alternative forms of consumption, which attempt to use consumption processes to transform production practices, provisioning, appropriation and waste – such as political, ethical, sustainable and circular forms of consumerism.

Contemporary sociological accounts of consumption cover both analyses of the more ordinary, routine, mundane aspects of consumption, as well as the more explicitly reflected upon, normative, societal aspects of it. Yet, these two bodies of consumption analysis tend to remain separate in terms of focus and perspective. Bringing the two types of consumption analysis together to a larger degree in conceptual, methodological and empirical dialogues holds potential for conceptual sophistication, empirical inspiration and societal contribution.

Thus, this mid-term conference encourages participants to reflect upon the relations, overlaps, ambivalences and paradoxes between mundane and deliberate forms of consumption. How do patterns of consumption become socially and materially reproduced and changed? Which social dynamics are involved in the normalisation and normative legitimisation of different kinds of consumption activities? In which ways are consumer and citizen positions related, and with which consequences? What are the implications for power relations in society from institutionalised consumption arrangements? How to account for questions of scale, and what are the methodological implications?

Please submit your 250 word abstracts and workshop proposals to by February 15th 2018 on the conference website:

<http://www.conferencemanager.dk/Sociology-of-Consumption-2018>

Call for abstracts: 4th Energy & Society Conference: Energy transitions in a divided world

Midterm conference of the European Sociological Association RN12 - Environment and Society

University of Exeter, UK > 3rd – 5th September 2018

The fourth Energy & Society Conference will take place in Exeter, UK, from 3rd to 5th September 2018. We aim to bring together researchers interested in the social dimensions of energy, to exchange insightful ideas and create opportunities for collaboration. We invite contributions from sociology, other social sciences and interdisciplinary networks.

This time the conference theme is Energy transitions in a divided world. The theme reflects recent developments around the world that have been linked to a decline in social and spatial cohesion and cooperation: the onward march of individualism, privatisation and deregulation associated with neoliberal principles, and the rise of nationalism within and beyond Europe. The Brexit vote in the UK and the Trump presidency in the US are just two manifestations of these processes. But what are the impacts of these wider social transformations for future energy systems?

Please submit your abstracts and workshop proposals to: energysociety2018@exeter.ac.uk, by January 15th 2018.

Website: <http://geography.exeter.ac.uk/energyandsociety/>

Past workshops: Consumption and Practices Workshop in Gothenburg, Sweden

Centre for Consumer Research, Gothenburg University > 25 November, 2018

A new network on consumption practices met for the first time in Gothenburg, Sweden. Consisting of young researchers, the network met to discuss various current and future projects group members are working on, as well as potential for collaboration. Its aim was to “map consumption research informed by Practice Theory and explore future collaboration potential, as well as to create a forum for scholarly communication in the Nordic region”. The participants presented their current research to each other, and we discovered many common interests. Theoretical discussions were also plentiful, we asked “what is a practice”, “the elements of a practice”, “how and when specific performances of a practice become its own entity”, “the spatial aspect of practices”, “practices, power and the question of access”, “practices that link consumption, production and markets”, “methodological implications of practice theory, including using quantitative research methods, experiments and visual data”, “ethanization of practices”, “aesthetization and artification of practices”, “convention and practices”, “reconfigurations, disruptions and practices”, and “the question of agency and choice within practice theory”.

The workshop was a great start in becoming familiar with each other’s work, and we plan to continue collaborating, discussing theories and sharing

articles online until our next meeting planned to coincide with ESA consumption midterm seminar, in Copenhagen next year.

All early career researchers are welcome to join, please find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/149809469108015>

Recent Publications and Call for Papers

Articles and Book Chapters

Aro, R. (2017) "A bigger living room required a bigger TV" – doing and negotiating necessity in well-to-do households. *Journal of Consumer Culture*. (Online first, 1 December, 2017)
doi:10.1177/1469540517745706

Corvo, P. and R. Maticena (2017), *Slow Food in Slow Tourism*, in *Slow Tourism, Food and Cities, Pace and the Search for the "Good life"*. M. Clancy. Routledge, Abingdon, pp 95-109.

Burningham, K. & Venn, S (2017) 'Understanding and practicing sustainable consumption in early motherhood' *Journal of Consumer Ethics* 1(2) p82-91
https://journal.ethicalconsumer.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/JCE_2017_2_82_91_Burningham_Venn.pdf

Burningham, K. & Venn, S. (2017) 'Are lifecourse transitions opportunities for moving to more sustainable consumption?' *Journal of Consumer Culture*: DOI: 10.1177/1469540517729010

Sahakian, M. (2017). *Constructing normality through material and social lock-in: the dynamics of energy consumption among Geneva's more affluent households*. *Demanding energy: space, time and change*. A. Hui, R. Day and G. Walker. Palgrave Macmillan, pp 51-71

Yates, L. (In press). "Sharing, households and sustainable consumption." *Journal of Consumer Culture*.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1469540516668229>

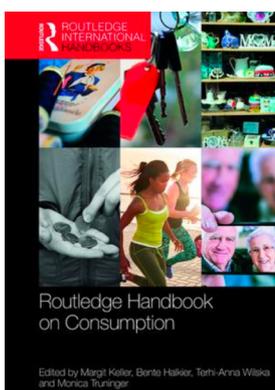
Edited Books

Edited by members of the RN5 community:

Keller, M., et al., Eds. (2017). *The Routledge Handbook on Consumption*. Routledge international handbooks. Oxon, New York, Routledge.

Call for papers

Review of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Studies (RAFE) is a scientific peer-reviewed journal encouraging new perspectives for research and analysis in economics and sociology on all the components of food systems, including food consumption. The Review welcomes theoretical and empirical research, including special



issues. The editorial board includes RN5 member Severine Gojard as associate editor. RAFE recently published:

Franck Cochoy “Making people buy and eat differently”: lessons from the modernisation of small independent grocery stores in the early twentieth century

(<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41130-017-0046-5>)

Lotte Holm: review of Alan Warde's Practice of eating

(<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41130-016-0031-4>) et several other book reviews

RAFE is indexed in, among others, Journal of Economic Literature, Sociological abstracts, REPEC. RAFE is published by Springer: <http://www.springer.com/economics/agricultural+economics/journal/41130>

All manuscripts must be submitted electronically through:

<https://www.editorialmanager.com/rafe/default.aspx>.

Sustainable consumption studies

New course on theories

Stefan Wahlen at Wageningen University is launching a new course, “Theorizing consumers and consumption, where students and Phd candidates are asked to trace the roots theories engaged with in their M.Sc. thesis or Ph.D. project, towards a conceptual family tree. More information can be found here:

<https://www.wur.nl/en/activity/Theorizing-Consumers-and-Consumption-a-Canon-of-Classics-6-ECTS.htm>

Sustainable consumption teaching resources

The University of Geneva has been developing **teaching resources** related to sustainable consumption. If you would like your course to be including in a review of courses that touch on (non)sustainable consumption from the perspective of households, consumers or citizens, please email: Marlyne.Sahakian@unige.ch.

More information can be found on the SCORAI pages:

<http://scorai.org/teaching/>

Happy holidays and see you in 2018

On behalf of the RN5 Board Members:

Terhi-Anna Wilska, Coordinator, Finland, University of Jyväskylä
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<https://www.europeansociology.org/research-networks/rn05-sociology-consumption>