

Research Project

A conceptual framework for sustainable consumption – bridging perspectives in a boundary concept (Frame4SC)

Third-party funded project

Project title A conceptual framework for sustainable consumption – bridging perspectives in a boundary concept (Frame4SC)

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Project start 01.03.2023

Probable end 28.02.2026

Status Active

The project Frame4SC is situated at the intersection of sustainable consumption and inter- and trans-disciplinarity. It will provide a conceptual framework bridging a human action perspective and a natural environment perspective and relating two levels of how sustainable consumption is conceptualized in the discourse, the level of object theories (e.g., ecosystem services, life cycle assessment, circular economy, need-based approach, resource regimes, universal basic services) and the level of meta-theories (e.g., doughnut economics, environmental space, consumption corridors). It does not replace but relate existing theoretical approaches, that is, its epistemic approach is pluralistic, and its methodical rationale is systematic and phenomenological.

The results will contribute to the interdisciplinary scientific progress in the field of sustainable consumption by facilitating the broad accessibility of concepts that are so far scattered among different scientific communities. In particular, it will make knowledge and differentiations related to human action accessible to research that is rooted in a natural environment perspective, and knowledge and differentiations related to the natural environment to research that is rooted in a human action perspective. Frame4SC counters the scattering of knowledge by providing an integrated perspective that acknowledges the heterogeneity of knowledge. Its results will support researchers in adopting a sound interdisciplinary approach to sustainable consumption and practitioners in grounding policies on a comprehensive understanding of sustainable consumption.

Frame4SC combines methods of systematization drawn from the humanities (analysis of concepts) and of collaborative knowledge integration drawn from the field of inter- and trans-disciplinarity (simulation workshops, transdisciplinary conference). Expert interviews amplify the perspectives represented in the team. By combining these methods, interdisciplinary scientific legitimacy (credibility) and practical legitimacy (salience) will be ensured.

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Keywords boundary concepts, sustainable consumption, environmental impacts, human action, human needs, quality of life, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity

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