

Consumption and Sustainability

Supervisors: Prof Edmund Thompson and Dr Debra Desrochers

Consumption and sustainability interactions constitute an important field with myriad unanswered and unposed questions - some very profoundly fundamental. What do consumption and sustainability really mean to different populations? Are current normative and empirical conceptions of each construct adequately clear and analytically tractable? How can they be made more nuanced to provide subtler theoretical insights? Is their measurement robust to rigorous empirical examination and hypotheses testing?

Consumption obviously has both positive and negative effects on sustainability. Likewise, the imperatives of sustainability are increasingly affecting many forms of consumption. However, despite a growing literature on the interrelationships between consumption and sustainability, fine-grained theorization and empirical analysis is constrained by sometimes overly broad, often vague, overlapping, imprecise, conflicting and even inaccurate conceptions, definitions and measurements of each construct. In consequence, despite growing insights into consumption/sustainability interactions, nuanced theorization and empirical analyses in the field have been retarded. Systematic scholarly research is needed to develop, validate and deploy – both theoretically and empirically – conceptualizations and measurements of consumption and sustainability that are adequate to the task of illuminating how these key constructs are interrelated.

If you would like to develop a PhD project to shed light on any aspect of the conceptualization of, and interrelationships between, consumption and sustainability, then do please get in touch. If your interest is strong and you have an appropriate blend of qualifications, aptitudes and motivations, you will join a supervisory team lead by Professor Edmund Thompson and Dr Debra Desrochers to develop a specific avenue of research relating to a facet of consumption and sustainability that both interests you and that the team finds both compelling and worthwhile. Your PhD training, supervision and research will be directed to ensure that an original contribution to knowledge is made through the production of professional scholarly papers.

In the first instance, please send the lead supervisor the following:

1. An original, non-generic proposal of the kind of research you would like to pursue in terms of topic areas relating to the above, drawing as necessary on extant literature.
2. An explicit indication of the theoretical and empirical approaches you think might be appropriate (and that you'd personally like to deploy), drawing on extant literature.
3. A statement of the kinds of scholarly training, practical research and ethical issues you think you'd need to consider in order to succeed in completing your PhD effectively.
4. An explanation of (i) why you want to pursue a PhD in the first place; (ii) why you are interested in the particular topic area you propose researching; and (iii) what career you plan to develop, and how, after completion.
5. A full CV.