

Understanding and addressing motivations and barriers of sustainable clothing consumption

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Objective(s)

This project focuses on communication interventions and policy instruments that could encourage consumer behavior change to limit the consumption and production of clothing, and thus establish dematerialization. We seek to deepen our understanding of motivations and barriers, develop a more elaborate communication intervention, and examine the support for and acceptance of different policy instruments.

Method

Phase 1: Focus groups

To gain qualitative insights into consumer motivations (needs) and barriers for sustainable clothing behaviors, and their acceptance of different financial, policy and communication instruments, we conducted a series of focus groups.

In four different focus groups we have collected data about the different ways participants acquire (i.e. buy, swap), use (i.e. washing, mending) and dispose (i.e. sell, recycle) clothes. We discussed what motivations are to behave in such a way.

After all different behaviors and motivations were mapped, we zoomed in on whether or not these actions are, and can be, seen as sustainable for the participants.

Lastly, we presented different financial (i.e. Co2 tax), policy (i.e. governmental campaign) and communication (i.e. traffic light label) instruments to stimulate more sustainable clothing behaviors. These presented instruments target acquisition, use and disposal. We discussed the acceptance of these instruments with the participants.

Results

Readiness

Research in progress

Four focus groups were held on November 28 and 29 at I&O in Amsterdam. The groups included 7-8 participants and representing diverse groups (varying in age, gender, background and environmental involvement).

Data will soon be transcribed, analyzed, and reporting

Next steps

Further research and implications for real-life interventions

The focus group findings will be reported in an academic article and presented at conferences.

In addition, based on the insights from the focus groups, we will develop a set of interventions that were deemed acceptable and address specific motivations and barriers relevant to specific groups. We will conduct a longitudinal experiment with 2 waves, to gain insights into the immediate and long-term effects of these different interventions on sustainable clothing consumption attitudes, intentions and actual behavior.

The interventions that will be developed and tested in this project can serve as a source of inspiration for real-life campaigns. Furthermore, our findings could benefit policymakers in finding the right financial incentives that are accepted by consumers.