

Seminar 2-3 November 2023

Aarhus University's Campus Emdrup, Tuborgvej 164, Copenhagen.

The nexus between media, learning and practice change in processes of green transition

Presentations

Ana Horta: Car use in Portugal: from media constructions to social practices

- **Abstract:** Based on data from content analyses of Portuguese television, this presentation discusses the connections between meanings portrayed regarding the use of cars and social practices.
- **Bio:** Ana Horta is a researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (Portugal). She holds a PhD in Sociology and her current research interests include social practices and sociocultural aspects related to household energy consumption, energy poverty, media discourses on energy and climate change, and relations between humans and animals. She is one of the coordinators of the Environment and Society Section of the Portuguese Sociological Association.

Andrea Catellani: Mediating climate transition: socio-semiotic notes on a video project on libraries of things. Strategies, meanings, and reception.

- **Abstract:** This paper presents the initial results of an ongoing video production project, part of a wider research project (JPI climate funded) on the interdisciplinary analysis of barriers to behaviour in favour of climate change mitigation (2020), <https://change4climate.eu/>). The video aims to inform and raise awareness of 'libraries of things' or 'libraries of tools', which promote the sharing and pooling of objects and tools, with beneficial effects on the climate. The article presents the process of producing a video on 'libraries of things', a semiotic analysis of its content and some notes on its reception by different groups of students of different ages. The aim is to observe together and compare three different worlds: 1) the production processes and 'behind the scenes'; 2) the hypothetical 'internal' (immanent) meaning of the video, as semiotics attempts to articulate it; 3) the meaning as it appears in the discourses of the actual receivers (other than the analyst himself). This paper aims to improve the dialogue between multimodal discourse semiotics and reception studies concerning pro-climate and pro-environment communication.
- **Bio:** Andrea Catellani is professor of communication at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain, Belgium). He co-leads the Study and Research Group "Communication, Environment, Science and Society" of the French Society of Information and Communication Sciences (SFSIC). He has published various scientific articles and books, notably on environmental and climate communication and rhetoric, discourses on the

societal responsibility of organizations, the semiotic approach to organizations, ethics in communication and the relationship between religion and digital communication.

Bente Halkier: Can normalization work as a policy measure in climate policies on consumption changes?

- **Abstract:** The social scientific research on policy tools and change suggestions in relation to the climate and environmental footprint of consumption has been dominated by perspectives that focus on how individual behaviour change works. This article takes a starting-point in critiques of the individual behaviour change perspective for holding unrealistic assumptions about how changes can come about in everyday life and with which effects. Instead, it is suggested to see normalization of less resource intensive consumption patterns as a potential policy tool, which takes into account both the micro-social embeddedness and the structural conditions of consumption in everyday life. Normalization means processes that tend to lead to increased experiences with and increased taken-for-grantedness of particular consumption patterns across different social contexts. Normalization has not been used as a category of policy tools in research on climate policies. Thus, the article unfolds the category of normalization and argues how normalization can contribute to the policy tool by specifying how processes of change take place socially and involve different institutional levels. Furthermore, examples of signs of normalization of eating plant-rich food from a Danish study are shown.
- **Bio:** Bente Halkier is professor Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen. Bente's research covers the fields of everyday life, consumption, sociology of knowledge, media sociology and cultural sociology. She has published articles and books on focus group methodology, food consumption, and interactions between media and everyday life practices. She is currently part of the research project Food, Mobility and Housing in the Sustainable Transition of Everyday Life. Bente Halkier is also a member of the Danish Council on Climate Change.

Harald Heinrichs: Sensory and artful sustainability science & communication

- **Abstract:** Over the past decade, the role of arts for sustainable development has gained attention in social sciences in the context of cultural sustainability. Therein the aesthetic and imaginative power of artistic creativity for reflecting and intervening into (un)sustainability has been explored. Next to this understanding of sustainability and arts approaches of arts-based research for sustainable development and sensory sustainability science have emerged. These perspectives are about employing artistic practices and strategies as well as methods of sensory ethnography in scientific inquiries in order to generate aesthetic-sensory insights into sustainability challenges and co-creating options for action. In the presentation, I will give an overview of conceptual and methodological foundations and showcase some practical examples of employing this approach in teaching and research. The presentation concludes with a reflection on

potentials and challenges of sensory and artful sustainability science in processes of green transition.

- **Bio:** Prof. Dr. Harald Heinrichs, sociologist, Leuphana University Lüneburg, works in research, teaching and transfer in the field of sustainability, politics and society. One focal area is artful and sensory sustainability science. Recent publications on this topic are: Heinrichs, H. (2021): Aesthetic Expertise for Sustainable Development: Envisioning Artful Scientific Policy Advice. In: *World 2021*, 2(1), 92-104; Heinrichs, H. (2019): Strengthening Sensory Sustainability Science – Theoretical and Methodological Considerations. In: *Sustainability* 2019, 11(3), 769; Heinrichs, H. (2018): Sustainability Science with Ozzy Osbourne, Julia Roberts and Ai Weiwei: The Potential of Arts-Based Research for Sustainable Development. In: *GAIA – Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society*, Volume 27, Nr. 1, 2018, pp 132-137.

Julie Doyle: Collaborative climate communications - Transforming young adults' climate learning through a participatory communications retreat

- **Abstract:** Addressing a gap in sustainability education and climate communications research, this presentation explores the role of climate communications within transformational climate learning processes. It does so through evaluation of an experimental climate communications retreat that brought 20 young adults (21-29 years old) from across Europe together in Austria to co-create climate communications as a constitutive dimension of climate change. Structured around the transformational principles of collaborative learning, interdisciplinarity, multidimensionality, reflexivity and action-oriented, the retreat placed specific focus upon the creative co-production, between peers, of climate communications as a form of meaning-making and action. The aim was to increase young people's socio-cultural understandings of climate change and to increase self and group efficacy. We found the factors that shaped young peoples' transformational learning were collective identity, peer-to-peer learning, emotional sharing, reflexive spaces, inspiring learning environment, interdisciplinary learning, multidimensional experiences, and collaborative project-based communications. Discussing these findings, the presentation will also reflect upon the challenges of time/space specific learning experiences and consider how climate communications research(ers) can contribute to education for social change.
- **Bio:** Julie Doyle is a Professor of Media and Communication in the School of Art and Media at the University of Brighton UK. Julie's research explores the role of (visual) media and popular culture in shaping societal responses to climate change. Julie also works collaboratively with artists and cultural educators on co-created climate communications projects which explore how creative communication can facilitate (youth) climate engagement through transformational learning experiences.

Jutta Haider & Malte Rödl: Environmental issues in a digital society: (un-)seeing through algorithms

- **Abstract:** In today's digital society, algorithmic systems are increasingly embedded in people's everyday lives, shaping how they understand and create meaning from environmental issues, crises, and proposed solutions. Algorithms, however, perpetuate biases, such as those of developers, training data or broader societal discourse, and yet they appear neutral and go mostly unnoticed. This has profound implications for norms, practices, and also for media and information literacy, particularly in relation to environmental concerns. This presentation will focus on how commercial algorithmic platforms such as social media, search engines, recommendation systems and new AI tools shape environmental issues in society and contribute to how environmental issues acquire meaning in people's everyday lives. We draw on selected examples from ongoing projects to introduce, discuss, and hopefully develop concepts that help to analyse and understand both productive and necessary as well as problematic outcomes. Specifically, we explore the implication of commercial algorithms in silences, ignorances, and other ways of unknowing environmental concerns in a datafied society.
- **Bio, Jutta Haider** is Professor in Information Studies at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University of Borås. Jutta's recent research revolves around media and information literacies, most prominently concerning the role of search engines in everyday information practices.
- **Bio, Malte Rödl** is researcher in Environmental Communication at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Besides educating future change makers, Malte is interested in the role of technology in societal transformations and is currently investigating the role of algorithms in meaning-making on environmental issues and concerns.

Katrien van Poeck: Investigating transitions in the making – The challenge of linking empirical observations here and now to long-term and open-ended processes of fundamental societal change.

- **Abstract:** This paper addresses a methodological challenge for research on sustainability transitions (ST) that are still 'in the making': how to connect observations in practices 'here and now' to the potential emergence of profound, long-term transitions. ST researchers characterise 'transitions' as fundamental changes in societal systems where existing structures, cultures, and practices are broken down and new ones become dominant (Grin et al. 2010). STs are complex processes that imply uncertainty and open-endedness. There are several possible 'transition pathways' (Geels & Schot 2007) and multiple promising innovations and initiatives in varied domains, which makes it impossible to predict which of these will prevail (Köhler et al. 2019). This creates a major methodological challenge to study ongoing transition processes, as it is obviously not feasible to start a longitudinal investigation of contemporary observable practices which might (or not) result in a profound systemic transition decades from now.
- **Bio:** Katrien Van Poeck is associate professor at Ghent University's department of Political Sciences. As a research professor focusing on the role of teaching and learning in the pursuit of building a more sustainable world, she coordinates the Centre for

Sustainable Development's research line on sustainability education. She leads research projects and international scientific networks on experiential learning in the context of sustainability transitions, sustainability in higher education, climate education and challenge-based teaching on real-world sustainability problems. As Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded LESTRA project, she recently established a new research team focused on learning in view of sustainability transitions. She is also part-time affiliated to Uppsala University (Sweden).

Lars Kjerulf Petersen: Prompting pro-environmental practice changes – media content, mates and other meanings

- **Abstract:** With reference to an ongoing project on transition to climate friendly vacation practices (as well as to previous projects), I will outline some ways in which we can and indeed must understand media *content* – the desires, imaginaries and ethics they convey – as an integral part of the lifeworld and its many different practices. In continuation of these reflections, I will furthermore offer some suggestions as to how we can understand and conceptualise various forms of impetus for (pro-environmental) practice change, including but not limited to media borne types of impetus. What is it that can set practice changes in motion, reshuffle the constituent elements of any given practice and even sustain them over time?
- **Bio:** Lars Kjerulf Petersen works as senior scientist in environmental sociology at Aarhus University (in Roskilde). He has conducted research on a variety of issues including household waste handling, the role of caretakers, household energy prosumption, vacation practices, processes of pro-environmental practice change, media's role in green transition, urban green structure, and siting conflicts. Recent publications on the issue of the presentation include "Media's role in pro-environmental practice change – proposing an ANT perspective", *Environmental Sociology*, 6 (1): 43-53.

Magnus Boström: How can we learn to consume less in a society that encourages us to consume more?

- **Abstract:** Boström will give a presentation on some key insights from his new book *The Social Life of Unsustainable Mass Consumption*. Drawing on a variety of theories and research, the book focuses on several social drivers behind unsustainable mass consumption. The book addresses the importance of recognizing such drivers if we are to guide society onto a more sustainable trajectory. It contextualizes drivers within the larger institutional and infrastructural forces underlying mass consumption. What are the possibilities of a collective detox from consumerism? The presentation will also discuss the topic by insights gained from empirical studies of people who attempt to change lifestyles and cut down on consumption. In doing this, the presentation will draw on the concept of transformative learning.
- **Bio:** Magnus Boström is Professor of Sociology at Örebro University, doing research in environmental sociology, sociology of consumption, political sociology, and organization

studies. Recent projects include research on environmental representation and representatives; challenges connected to climate conscious consumption and other types of political consumerism; conceptual development in the study of environment-society relations, and conditions for transformative learning for sustainable development. Boström is currently doing research on social mechanism behind unsustainable mass and excess consumption as well as voluntary and involuntary (due to Covid-19) drivers towards transformed lifestyles and reduced consumption.

Marianne Achiam: Integrating Sustainability in Higher Education

- **Abstract:** The global problems we face call for universities to prioritise sustainability in courses and study programmes. In this talk, I describe how we integrated sustainability into a master-level course in science communication through three iterations. By retrospectively analysing our actions and reflections, I demonstrate how and why we progressed from education about sustainability to education for sustainability, and finally education as sustainability. I conclude by discussing our findings, and offering my ideas of implications for higher education in general.
- **Bio:** Marianne Achiam is an associate professor at the Department of Science Education, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, where she leads the research group on science communication. Her research and teaching focus on using interdisciplinary methods to create effective science communication for sustainability. She has published research in international, peer-reviewed journals in the fields of museology, science education and science communication, and has authored several chapters for peer-reviewed anthologies published by Springer and Routledge.

Toke Haunstrup Bach Christensen: Learning to live on one planet: How can sufficiency practices be developed within existing socio-technical systems?

- **Abstract:** The outset of this presentation is the urgent need to develop and adopt everyday practices that entail significant reductions in resource consumption. Today's practices and consumption levels are to a high extent shaped by the existing socio-technical structures or, with the concept of Kemmis, the practice architectures. These structures or architectures have historically been developed on basis of the availability of cheap and abundant fossil fuels. While acknowledging that thorough changes in everyday practices and consumption require thorough changes in these structures or architectures, it is also evident that such deep socio-technical changes will not happen fast. Therefore, to a wide extent the development and adoption of less resource-intensive everyday practices must take place within existing socio-technical structures. In this presentation, I will speculate about the dynamics behind possible learning processes guided towards the adoption of new, sufficiency-based everyday practices within existing fossil fuel-based infrastructures. The modern dwelling is an example of such a structure, and my discussion will take departure in a study of learning within do-it-yourself refurbishment activities in homes. Drawing on the findings from this study, I will open a

discussion on what role learning can play in the transition towards everyday practices in accordance with a one-planet-living.

- **Bio:** Toke Haunstrup Christensen is a senior researcher at Aalborg University. His research focuses on everyday practices and sustainability, especially in relation to energy consumption in homes, smart energy transitions and mobilities.

Tullia Jack: “How individuals make sense of their climate impacts in the capitalocene: Mixed methods insights from using carbon footprint calculators”

- **Abstract:** Many people want to play their part to tackle climate change, but often do not know where to start. Carbon Footprint (CF) Calculators pose potential for helping individuals situate themselves in climate impacting systems of which they are apart. However little is currently known about whether and how individuals who complete CF calculators understand their CF in the context of climate change. This presentation reports from a large empirical study and recounts how people make sense of their CFs and locate themselves in the capitalocene, drawing on theories of social practices, environmental ethics, valuation, and knowledge-use ethics.
- **Bio:** Tullia Jack is a Marie Skadodowska-Curie International Fellow at Aalborg University in Copenhagen researching the consumption impact of living alone. She is also working as an Associate Senior Lecturer at Service Studies at Lund University in Helsingborg, investigating why cleanliness expectations are increasing despite our raising awareness of the imperative to save water and energy. Tullia’s research interests are in sustainability, consumption, everyday life, routines, cleanliness and water.

Victoria Wibeck: Communication perspectives on sustainability transformations: examples from research in the climate-biodiversity nexus

- **Abstract:** As the world grapples with the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and various other sustainability challenges, the need for transformative change is increasingly emphasized by e.g., the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The concept of societal transformations towards sustainability refers to fundamental and enduring systemic changes, that span political, economic, technological, social and cultural sectors and engages a wide spectrum of actors. This presentation will discuss how perspectives from communication studies can inform research on and for such transformations. Based on previous and ongoing research into sense-making of sustainability transformations, the presentation will specifically discuss the role of communication research in: 1) examining whether and how visualization-supported tools and activities could contribute to challenging established ways of thinking and encouraging perspective shifts; 2) addressing issues of justice, local knowledge, and inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups in transformation processes. The presentation will introduce examples from an ongoing research project on societal transformations and the use of new digital technologies in the climate-

biodiversity nexus, as well as draw on examples from a recent cross-country project analysing sense-making of sustainability transformations in various settings, including media texts, policy documents, and lay people's focus groups.

- **Bio:** Victoria Wibeck is Professor of Environmental Change and at the Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research at Linköping University, Sweden. She has a PhD in communication studies. Victoria's research focuses on environmental and climate change communication, sense-making of societal transformations towards sustainability, and development of qualitative methods for cross-country sense-making analysis. She is co-author of the monograph *Sustainability Transformations: Agents and Drivers across Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). Victoria is also currently a member of the Swedish Climate Policy Council.