

Call for Papers

Small Group Meeting “Collective responses to global environmental challenges: How do collective cognition and motivation shape appraisals and responses?”

25 June to 28 June 2023, Kloster Nimbschen (close to Leipzig, Germany)

Organizers: Immo Fritsche, Karen Hamann, Sabrina Köhler, and Torsten Masson (Leipzig University)

Fighting the global environmental crisis is a major challenge for all humanity. Large-scale environmental problems (e.g., climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification) have already begun to affect societies, and forecasts about their possible economic, social, and health impacts present an alarming picture. Not surprisingly, the call for changes in everyday behavior and for more sustainable solutions in all areas of life grows louder every day. Psychological research has focused largely on individual decision-making processes as a central determinant of ecologically and socially sustainable behavior. However, an individual alone can neither perceive nor solve global environmental crises, and psychology thus needs to address the collective dimension of environmental action. Specifically, it is of great interest to gain a better understanding of how collective (i.e., group) processes influence appraisals of sustainability issues (e.g., risk perception, attribution of responsibility and agency) as well as people's reactions to them (e.g., private conservation behavior, collective action, acceptance and support of ecological transformation and policy measures, emotion regulation, intergroup conflict).

Correspondingly, in social and environmental psychology there is growing interest in the collective dimension of environmental action and sustainable transformation of societies, illustrated by recent works on the effects of collective processes on appraisal of and responses to large-scale environmental crises (Bamberg, Rees & Seebauer, 2015; Ferguson & Schmitt, 2021; Fielding & Hornsey, 2016; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2016; Fritsche, Barth, Jugert, Masson & Reese, 2018; Barth, Masson, Fritsche, Fielding & Smith, 2021; Fritsche & Masson, 2021; Hamann, Holz & Reese, 2021). This workshop will explore the ways in which collective processes facilitate sustainable behavior, but also possible pitfalls of group action that impede more sustainable conduct (e.g., collective action against renewable energy infrastructure). Collective processes include, but are not limited to social identity processes, such as in-group identification, collective efficacy and agency, in-group norms and goals, motivations and (group-based) emotions originating from group processes. By covering the importance of collective processes for the task of tackling sustainability issues, the workshop pursues the goal to transcend earlier, person-centered models of pro-environmental action and cognition (e.g., Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Klöckner, 2013). It will also illuminate the impact that the human capacity to incorporate collectives in the self (i.e. social self) can have on the way people react to social-ecological problems (e.g., climate justice issues).

From a conceptual perspective, a collective (e.g., social identity) approach to sustainable behavior has to take potential interactions between the distinct collective processes into account. For example, high levels of in-group identification will probably catalyze the effects of pro-environmental norms (e.g., recycling or energy conservation) on actual behavior. Empirical work that explores the intricacies of such interactions between two or more collective processes in the context of sustainability issues would not only advance our understanding of the determinants of pro-environmental action. It could contribute to more general social psychological theorizing as well, such as theorizing about the inclusion of non-human actors or of temporarily distal generations in social identity processes.

From an applied perspective, the workshop will provide a platform to present research on interventions and applied approaches that utilize collective processes to foster sustainable behavior.

Insights from the field and recommendations informed by empirical research could become invaluable for policy makers and campaigners.

Invited keynotes will be given by Matthew Hornsey (University of Queensland), Lise Jans (University of Groningen), and Michael Schmitt (Simon-Fraser University).

The meeting will include about 40 junior and senior researchers. They will present their original research in single session format (about 30 minutes per talk). Junior researchers are welcome to participate together with their supervisor. The meeting will take place from 25 June to 28 June 2023 at Kloster Nimbschen, a picturesque conference site close to Leipzig, Germany. Leipzig is easily accessible by aircraft or high-speed train. Also, it is located right in the middle between the conference sites of the International Conference on Environmental Psychology (ICEP, Aarhus, Denmark, 20-23 June) and the General Meeting of the European Association of Social Psychology (EASP, Cracow, Poland, 30 June to 4 July). Participants will have to pay a moderate participation fee including board and lodging at Kloster Nimbschen (discounts for junior researchers and researchers from less affluent countries). Kloster Nimbschen is the place of a former medieval nunnery where Katharina von Bora fled from before becoming Martin Luther's wife. Also, Wilhelm Wundt, the founder of the Institute of Psychology at Leipzig University, lived in walking distance. The workshop is funded by EASP and the Saxon State Ministry for Science, Culture and Tourism (research network *Breathing Nature*).

Researchers from all parts of the world who are interested in participating are asked to submit an abstract of 250 words maximum to torsten.masson@uni-leipzig.de and karen.hamann@uni-leipzig.de until 31 January 2023. The abstract should include information about the research question, underlying theory, methods, results and discussion.