



Understanding and addressing the motivations and barriers of sustainable clothing consumption

Team involved: Dr. Sophie Boerman, prof. dr. Rens Vliegthart, prof. dr. Sanne Kruijkemeier (COM); Paulien Harmsen, Dieuwertje de Wagenaar (BBP Biorefinery & Sustainable Value Chains); Dr. Geerten Hengeveld (Biometris); Prof. dr. Dave Huitema, dr. Robbert Biesbroek and prof. dr. Art Dewulf (PAP)

To which domain did you submit your proposal?

Textiles

What are you exploring? With what objective?

One important pathway to de-materialization entails a change in consumer behaviour.

This project provides concrete insights into

1. the **determinants** for dematerialization behaviours;
2. how **communication interventions** could address the relevant determinants to encourage *internal motivations* to change behaviour; and
3. the **potential financial incentives** that could drive *external motivations* to change behaviour.

Why is this interesting scientifically?

It is unclear which exact needs consumers fulfil in buying (new) clothing, and which of factors could be important drivers or barriers for dematerialization.

We seek to understand how 1) **knowledge** about sustainable textiles and behaviours, 2) **needs and motivations** to consume (less) clothing or choose (non-)sustainable options, and 3) the **barriers** that keep consumers from these dematerialization behaviours can drive internal motivations. In addition, we examine which **financial incentives** (e.g., subsidies making sustainable materials more financially attractive, and fines or taxes making fast fashion more expensive) are deemed acceptable to consumers.

How is this relevant to the materials transition?

To achieve de-materialization, consumers need to buy less clothing (especially fast-fashion), choose more sustainable (and thus likely more expensive) textiles, and reuse and recycle clothing more often. Therefore, instead of focusing on technological innovation and systematic changes to the industry, this project takes an innovative perspective by focusing on **communication interventions and policy instruments that could encourage consumer behaviour change to limit the consumption and production of clothing**, and thus establish dematerialization.

What are the key activities or steps?

- **Focus groups** to gain qualitative insights into the motivations (needs) and barriers for sustainable clothing behaviours, consumer knowledge of sustainable textiles and behaviours, and their acceptance of different financial policy instruments.
- **A large-scale survey** to verify the acceptance of policy instruments, and to examine the relative importance of motivations and barriers, and how knowledge, motivations, and barriers differ between people.
- **Development** of a set of interventions addressing specific motivations and barriers relevant to specific groups. With a longitudinal experiment we will test the immediate and long-term intervention effects on knowledge, intentions, attitudes, and behaviour (using agent-based modelling).

What are key deliverables?

- Academic deliverables: an academic article, at least one conference presentation at an international academic conference
- Practical deliverables: concrete interventions that could be used for a real-life campaign, and concrete policy recommendations about what consumers find acceptable financial incentives.

What issues would you like to get input from others?

- What are effective dematerialization behaviours?
- Internal motivations: which drivers or barriers for dematerialization behaviours do you foresee?
- External motivations: What policy instruments do you believe would be attractive / acceptable to consumers?

