

## Partner offer (competences/expertise)

Areas of interest

Most of the pertinent psychological research still focusses on attributes of individuals and how these determine energy-related action (e.g., perceptions of personal self-efficacy, personal costs and gains). This broadly neglects the decisive role human collectives play in relation to global environmental problems (GEP). Although collectives are of course made up of individuals, social psychological research shows that people think and act differently depending on whether they think of themselves as individual persons ("I") or as collectives ("We"). That is, people define themselves not only in terms of their idiosyncratic characteristics but in everyday life most of the time various group memberships (mothers, colleagues, supporters of sports team X, Citizens of town Y, environmentalists, etc.) determine how people think of themselves. To understand the distinctive role of collective thinking as both possible determinant and consequence of GEP, and to gauge how behavior and system change efforts should address the collective level of the human mind, an extensive research program on social identity and global environmental change is needed. By targeting this, the expected results will not only provide a novel scientific perspective on and avenues for intervention. They may also contribute to answering the pressing question whether and how the human (social) brain, which has evolved in the context of smaller communities of 150 people maximum, can be used for solving GEP (e.g., energy conservation) as complex environmental crises which can neither be directly perceived nor tackled with by single individuals or small communities. With its position as bridging the psychology of the individual and the psychology and sociology of collectives, social identity research is ideally suited to provide distinct and basic answers. Research may take different perspectives on how social identity is related to GEP and energy issues. First, it may investigate how social identity processes affect energy-saving action of individual actors, including social influence processes, perceptions of collective efficacy and the effects of threat (e.g., societal crisis) on collective responses to GEP. Second, research may look at the social psychological consequences of GEP, such as inclinations towards intergroup conflict and intolerance but also collective action intentions.

### Expertise

For 15 years I am investigating social psychological processes in global environmental crises. This research has always been informed by disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary approaches. Specifically, I have been working together with sociologists, geo-, and natural scientists in a three-years case study on the consequences of climate change for German coastal regions (e.g., Hartmuth, Deising, Fritsche & Linneweber, 2002; Linneweber, Hartmuth & Fritsche, 2003). In a current three-years transdisciplinary research project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy my team and me are investigating how social identity processes affect the acceptance and use of electric mobility solutions in collaboration with groups of engineering and economic scientists and together with a local energy supplier. In addition, we are currently collaborating with a local private company (EnergieCity Leipzig) on establishing a permanent exhibition hall in the city of Leipzig on social and technological foundations of the "energy revolution" ("Energy Event Center") allowing for interacting with consumers, private businesses from the energy sector and decision-makers and involving them in our research.

### Topics

**LCE-31-2016-2017.:**

**Social Sciences and Humanities Support for the Energy Union**

## Contact

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