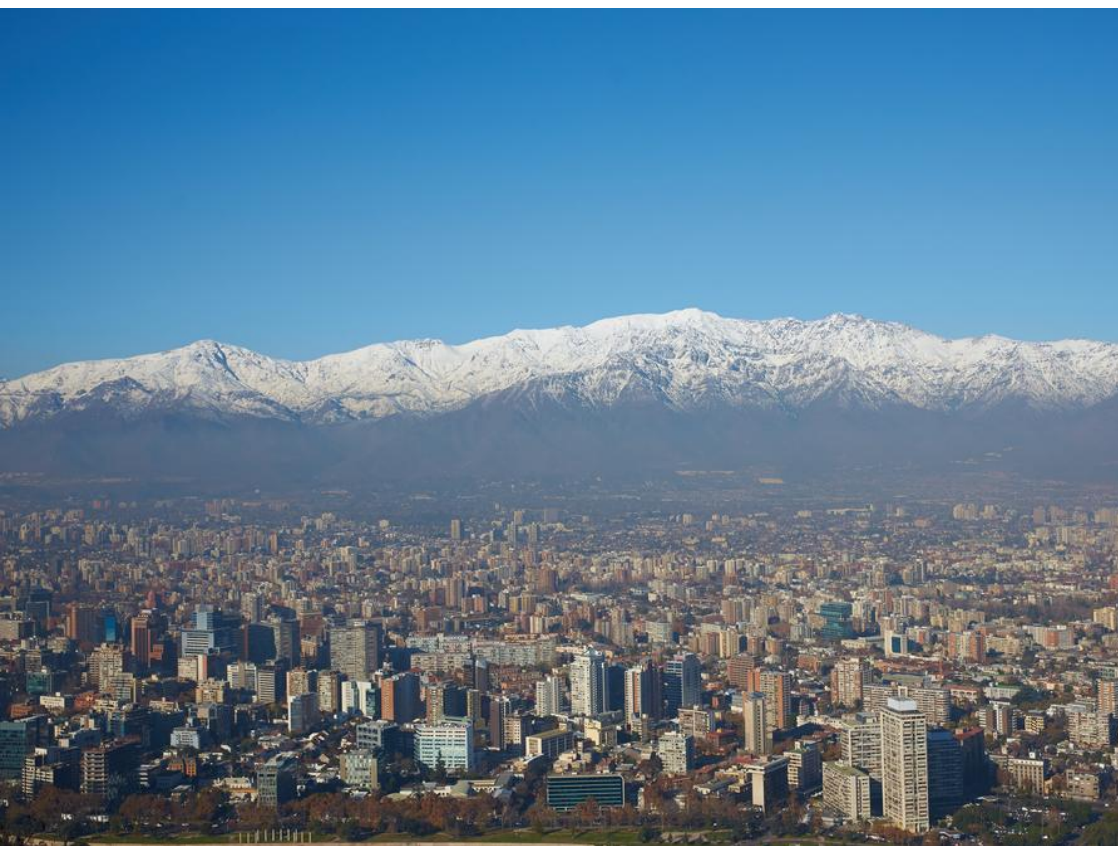




Organizing Sufficiency in the Global South: Justice, Effectiveness and Instrumentation

2 & 3 October 2025

SciencesPo

LABORATORY FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY
EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES

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The Roundtable Conference

Sufficiency approaches to just and equitable environmental and climate policies have gained significant traction in both public and scholarly debates in recent years. These approaches focus on avoiding and reducing the demand for energy, materials and other natural resources while delivering wellbeing for all within planetary boundaries. The concept of “sufficiency corridors” captures this dual imperative: establishing a lower threshold of resource consumption necessary for human flourishing, alongside an upper threshold defined by planetary boundaries, with the aim of fostering equity across countries and generations.

In OECD countries, a number of sufficiency-oriented policies have been developed and implemented. Examples include fare-free public transport schemes, emission-differentiated road traffic taxes, levies on high-carbon luxury goods, and the integration of sufficiency into France’s 2015 Energy Transition Law. Yet, research and policy debates on sufficiency remain disproportionately focused on the Global North.

Emerging economies, however, are crucial sites of sufficiency-related innovation. These contexts face the dual challenge of curbing excessive consumption among expanding middle classes while ensuring the provision of essential services that meet the lower threshold of sufficiency corridors. Although not always explicitly framed as “sufficiency,” relevant measures are already in place.

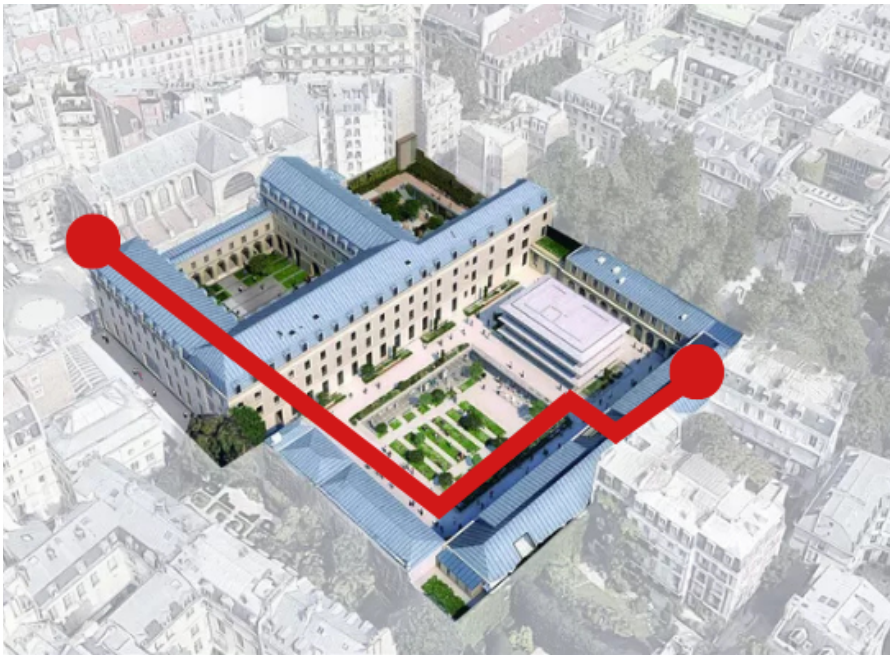
This roundtable offers a forum for advancing scholarly and practical engagement with sufficiency across diverse contexts. It convenes an international panel of researchers and practitioners to critically examine sufficiency policies, drawing on comparative insights and fostering cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Practical information

October 2 & 3

Entrance via 1 place Saint Thomas d'Aquin, 75007

Salle K008 (ground floor)



Agenda

Day 1, Thursday, October 2

- 12:00 | Arrival & Buffet Lunch
- 13:00 | Opening Remarks:
Charlotte Halpern
- 13:15 | Keynote Speech:
Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier
- 14:00 | Spotlight Presentation:
Yamina Saheb
- 15:00 | Coffee Break
- 15:15 | Paper Session 1
- 16:45 | Coffee Break
- 17:00 | Paper Session 2
- 18:00 | Conversation: community-engaged research
Manisha Anantharaman, Mallory Zhan
- Evening | Social dinner

Day 2, Friday, October 3

- 09:15 | Morning Coffee
- 09:45 | Invited Talk:
Aimée Aguilar Jaber
- 10:45 | Coffee Break
- 11:00 | Panel Discussion: Eco-social policies
Luísa Fondello, Éloi Laurent, Matteo Mandelli
Moderator: Max Cocard
- 12:30 | Lunch
- 14:00 | Paper Session 3
- 15:00 | Summary of the Conference and Next Steps
- 16:00 | End of the Conference

Speakers

Keynote | October 2, 13:15-14:00

The Political Economy of Abundance: Colonial Legacies and Northern–Southern Perspectives



Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier

Director of the Center for the Sociology of Organizations (CSO) at Sciences Po, director of research at French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), member of the High Council for the Climate

In the face of an ecological crisis, consumers are urged to embrace frugality and sufficiency. Yet affluent lifestyles in both North and South must be situated within the power relations of a political economy that has long institutionalized abundance, deeply rooted in colonial expansion. This talk offers perspectives on sufficient futures through an introduction of a new research agenda exploring affluent consumption as a legitimised and institutionalised global norm.

Spotlight presentation | October 2, 14:00-15:00

Sufficiency - From a Concept to Collective Movement with the World Sufficiency Lab



Yamina Saheb

Researcher & Lecturer at Sciences Po, founder of the World Sufficiency Lab, IPCC lead Author

The World Sufficiency Lab (WSL) was founded on a simple yet transformative idea: sustainability is not just about doing things more efficiently, nor solely about consumption and production, it's about rethinking what is enough. This talk will begin by introducing the theoretical foundations of the sufficiency concept. It will then present the WSL's mission and activities as a think-to-do tank that offers a global platform for connecting people and ideas, linking researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society.

Invited talk | October 3, 9:45-11:00

Achieving Decent Living Standards in A Strongly Carbon-constrained World



Aimée Aguilar Jaber

Programmes Director at Hot or Cool Institute

This talk presents key new findings from the highly-anticipated report in Hot or Cool's 1.5-Degree Lifestyles series. The study introduces a methodology for calculating a fair consumption space and outlines the transformations required at every level of society to remain within this space. Drawing on experience in urban contexts, the talk offers insights of particular relevance for cities in the Global South.

Panel Discussion | October 3, 11:00-12:30

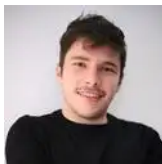
Eco-social Policies for Sufficiency Transitions



Éloi Laurent

Professor of Economics

at Sciences Po, Senior Economist at the French Economic Observatory (OFCE)



Matteo Mandelli

Postdoctoral Researcher, LIEPP and the Centre for European Studies and Comparative Politics (CEE), co-founder and board member of the Sustainable Welfare and Eco-social Policy Network



Luísa Fondello

Senior international cooperation officer at Caritas Europa

This panel, bringing together academics and practitioners, discusses eco-social policies from a sufficiency approach. In a dialogue between Global North and Global South, the speakers address the political conflicts and coalitions for eco-social transformations, the potential global convergence of the sufficiency state, as well as the practical experiences of Caritas organizations in implementing concrete, local-level initiatives that follow a sufficiency logic.

Hosts



Mallory Zhan

Postdoctoral Researcher at Center for the Sociology of Organizations (CSO) - Sciences Po



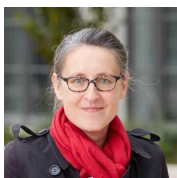
Manisha Anantharaman

Assistant Professor at Center for the Sociology of Organizations (CSO) - Sciences Po



Yamina Saheb

Researcher & Lecturer - Sciences Po, founder of World Sufficiency Lab, IPCC lead Author



Charlotte Halpern

Co-director of the Environmental Policies Research Group at LIEPP, researcher at Center for European Studies and Comparative Politics (CEE) - Sciences Po

Paper Session 1

Sumak Kawsay as a philosophical concept for hybrid organizing for sufficiency

Riina Bhatia et al.

Organizing for sufficiency as a response to socio-ecological challenges in the Global South has yet been little explored. In this study, we examine sufficiency in the context of Sumak Kawsay (SK). SK is a philosophical concept rooted in the indigenous Andean worldviews. It emphasizes harmony, collective well-being, and ecological balance. SK is often referred to as an example from the pluriverse – an idea of many coexisting worlds, realities, and knowledge systems that also present alternative ways of life to that of capitalism and modernization. This contribution has two goals. First, the paper discusses how Sumak Kawsay informs organizing for sufficiency. Second, we discuss the possibilities and challenges for supporting and up taking ideas of grassroots sufficiency organizing in policy. The study is based on a qualitative case study in northern Ecuador with an indigenous and peasant organization, UNORCAC, and series of interviews with local communities, ministry level civil servants, civil society organizations, universities as well as local authorities conducted in Ecuador in 2023-2024.

Discussant: Saranya Acharya

Planned Resilience, Unplanned Sufficiency: The Case of Climate Action in Mumbai

Sharayu Shejale

India, a rapidly growing economy and the most populous country in the world, faces growing risks with rising temperatures and climate change. Dense urban areas, in particular, face increasing infrastructural pressures with energy, water, and waste governance struggling to account for climate change. Mumbai, a densely populated coastal city, faces a host of climate risks such as increasing heat stress, flood risk, changing weather patterns and coastal vulnerabilities. This, combined with unbridled urbanisation and resource consumption, presents a timely case of a Global South megacity facing compounding effects of climate change. While

policies responding to these risks have been the prerogative of separate municipal departments (such as disaster management, water and sewage, waste management, etc.), in recent years, there has been a push to have a holistic, integrated strategy to confront the urban effects of climate change. In my paper, I examine one such effort - Mumbai's Climate Action Plan (MCAP), published in 2022 by the city's municipal corporation. The MCAP has several recommendations across six different action tracks covering energy, mobility, waste, water, greening, and pollution. While these recommendations are classified under mitigation or adaptation measures, they also contain several 'sufficiency' measures - though they are not institutionally understood as such.

I find that sufficiency remains an incidental outcome of policy measures, which are focused on finding solutions for resource access, climate resilience and wellbeing in the face of climate risk. Instead, 'resilience' emerges as a key driver framing policy recommendations in the MCAP. Reduction in consumption, both in terms of aspirational demand by a rising middle and upper class, and in terms of supply by commercial businesses and industry, is not targeted. Furthermore, governance and implementation remain top-down, technocratic and individualised. A disaster and climate risk management approach remains the mainstream over long-term mitigation and climate planning involving significant change to social, political and economic transformation. As such, Mumbai has a long road ahead towards a comprehensive, effective and inclusive climate action.

Discussant: Fernando Cymbaluk Couri

Towards Ramadan Zero Food Wastage: Using Climate Sufficiency Strategy for Transitioning to Responsible Consumption in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, and United Kingdom

Aliyu Salisu Barau et al.

Food wastage is one of the avenues to deploy the concept of climate sufficiency with respect to fostering responsible and equitable consumption that support pro-climate practices. This paper examines the nature of food wastage during the Muslim fasting period – Ramadan in selected Muslim countries and communities in Egypt,

Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Available figures from literature and results of surveys imply high levels of food wastage in all the countries and communities of interest. In spite of the socioeconomic and geographical differences, Ramadan period is presented as a period where inequalities between, within and across countries manifest clearly and the direct and indirect effect of food wastage is uncontested. Encouragingly, the problem is understood by some stakeholders who support campaigns for reducing food wastage but in general much needs to be done considering the dynamics of the problem across the Muslim world.

Discussant: Canny Chen Liu

Paper Session 2

Sufficiency in the context of (over)abundance: a reflection on the contradictory Chinese policies and practices of sustainable consumption

Canny Chen Liu

In March 2024, the State Council of China launched an action plan for recycling to promote large-scale equipment upgrades and trade-in of consumer goods as part of its efforts to boost domestic demand and support economic growth. The central government of China issued 300 billion Chinese Yuan (approx. 40 billion Euros) as special government bond funds in 2024 to support this programme. These funds were used to subsidise consumers who replaced their old appliances, vehicles, and equipment with the so-called 'new energy-efficient alternatives'. From the government's view, this policy is not only a strategic initiative to stimulate domestic demand in the post-pandemic era, but also an effective way to accelerate the abandonment of high-pollution products aligned with carbon neutrality goals and circular economy principles.

In practice, Chinese consumers are familiar with trading, exchanging or sending old or useless items to recycling centres. Such practices are ostensibly bound up with the performances of thrift and housekeeping (making space for future acquisition), and, in fact, associated with gendered and class-rooted self-surveillance whereby appropriate commodities can be discarded, traded, or shared. With

the rise of digital platforms, recycling practices have gone digital in the recent decade. Before the national trade-in funds were issued, many Chinese people could get rebates through second-hand platforms and online recycling services. Although these digital communities and the nationwide trade-in policy both encourage recycling and reusing, they seldom mention the third R – reducing – in the disposal practices. In other words, recycling and/or reusing are built upon consuming more things. Moreover, digital platforms and policymakers emphasise replacing older possessions with greener products or through a greener way without mentioning the establishment of a standardised, effective and sustainable recycling system.

Setting against this backdrop, this paper draws on the analysis of mixed-method fieldwork concerning the digitalisation of consumption in China between 2021 and 2024 to reflect on the national trade-in policy in China. It focuses on the contradictory connotations of 'recycling' produced by policies and consuming practices in the context of promoting consumption in the post-pandemic era. The key aim of this paper is to evaluate the effects of recycling policies through consumption practices while seeking a more feasible policy intervention for sustainable consumption from an everyday perspective.

Discussant: Felix Barbour

Imperialist constraints increase the energy requirements of human need satisfaction

Felix Barbour

According to dependency theory, the capitalist world-economy functions as a single unsustainable system that perpetuates social deprivation and ecological breakdown. As a result, the development options available to global South countries are actively limited by the North: rather than using their productive capacities to pursue local development objectives, peripheries are subordinated to the needs of the imperial core ('dependence'). Here, I argue that the imperial arrangement prevents peripheral countries from meeting human needs within planetary boundaries. In other words, unsustainable development pathways are enforced from the outside. These reasons include, but are not limited to, (1) unequal trade relations

drain Southern countries of productive capacity that could instead be used to meet the needs of their residents; and (2) factors such as high debt burdens and economic sanctions limit countries' development options, reducing socio-ecological performance. In the following sections I outline these arguments in more detail and support them with statistical tests. I conclude by connecting my findings to the ecological case for delinking, in which peripheral nations reduce dependence on the core in order to secure wellbeing within planetary boundaries.

Discussant: Sharayu Shejale

Paper Session 3

Tourism Sufficiency in India: An Evaluation of National and State-Level Tourism Policies and Practices

Saranya Acharya et al.

India, with its diverse landscapes, communities, and rich natural and cultural heritage, is a widely frequented destination by tourists, both domestic and beyond. The well-being of places, people, and other beings in and around areas frequented for tourism is inextricably linked to the functioning of the sector given the negative impacts of rampant tourism, ranging from climatic and ecological breakdown to socio-economic disparities. In this direction, this paper unpacks sufficiency in the context of tourism policies in India, building on previously conducted research and analysis (undertaken to support the development of a currently unpublished Responsible Tourism Guidebook) on tourism policies that both support unsustainable tourism practices, in addition to those working towards ensuring responsible tourism within the country.

The paper firstly defines sufficiency in the context of tourism. Secondly, it briefly highlights policies that facilitate creating enabling conditions for travel, accommodation, and, recreational/experiential activity-based sufficiency in places of tourism, the policies span national-level tourism policies such as the 'National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism' and 'National Strategy for Eco-tourism' in addition to sub-national policies within select Indian states eg. Kerala's 'Responsible Tourism Mission (2017)' which follows a 'triple-bottom-line' approach to minimize economic, social and

environmental impacts in places of tourism. Further, based on information available in the public domain and interviews with local stakeholders, insights are provided on the implementation of policies in select states evaluating them from a just-transition perspective such as the 'Ladakh Mountaineering Policy (2024)' which aims at promoting mountaineering activities in the Union Territory of Ladakh while ensuring the preservation of the region's natural beauty and ecological balance through sustainable practices and promoting inclusive community development. The paper also highlights the diverse instruments and modes of governance supporting responsible tourism including financial incentives, penalties, fees, etc., eg. The 'Green Fee' for people touring Ladakh that encapsulates an environmental fee, Red Cross Fund and wildlife fee, nudges tourists to be accountable to the land, its people and other beings offering their services to tourism. Lastly, the paper will delve into a few growth-centric policies and decisions that facilitate unsustainable tourism potentially negating the impact of responsible tourism policies that can enable sufficiency, e.g. in the year 2019, the government unlocked access to 137 mountain peaks for foreign visitors seeking Mountaineering Visas (MX) for mountaineering and trekking, to boost tourism. The implementation of such provisions when left unchecked without imposing caps on the number of tourists who can visit a place at a particular time based on its carrying capacity, compromises the well-being of the landscape and the people and other beings local to that place, contradictory to the intention of policies such as the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism.

Discussant: Aliyu Salisu Barau

From Vulnerability to Sufficiency: Local State and Civil Society Actors in the Making of Eco-Urban Agriculture Policies in São Paulo

Fernando Cymbaluk Couri

In São Paulo, the largest metropolis in Latin America, there are more than 2,600 sites of urban and peri-urban agricultural activity. Over 800 small family farming units are located in rural zones or on land beneath power lines at the city's periphery— areas often marked by high levels of social vulnerability and concentrated poverty. The agroecological transition of these units and the expansion of

sustainable food production in the city have the potential to supply millions of people annually with locally grown fruits and vegetables, generate thousands of jobs, and enhance well-being. This process also contributes to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, aligning closely with the principle of sufficiency. This paper explores the trajectory of creating and implementing policies aimed at fostering this eco-urban farming scenario. I show that the policies that emerged over the past two decades developed slowly and incrementally, marked by interruptions and discontinuities. Along this journey, mid and street-level municipal bureaucrats – based in newly established state facilities and managing innovative policy instruments – played a key role in identifying and engaging individuals and families who have historically cultivated crops in the municipality. Over time, these state-led initiatives sparked the involvement of various civil society actors, including CSOs, farmers, and enterprises, which proved central to the continuity and institutionalization of these efforts. The paper draws on the concepts of state capacities, multilevel governance, and policy co-creation to highlight the importance of autonomous yet territorially embedded local state actors in advancing sufficiency-oriented policies in a major city of the Global South.

Discussant: Riina Bhatia

