

Subsistence and Sustainability: Developing Insights on Sustainable Consumption, Education, and Practice in Subsistence Marketplaces

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The desire to better understand subsistence marketplaces to positively impact subsistence consumers has long been a topic of interest for TCR, given the scope and scale of subsistence contexts. Prior work in this area by the TCR community have led to contributions to both research and practice. In recent times this work has explored questions regarding how sustainable practices are developed within subsistence marketplaces. This work has also furthered the understanding of how key factors (including environmental changes, new technologies, and the increasing presence of modern, corporate business interests) create unique tensions within subsistence marketplaces, as these factors often render traditional norms, knowledge, and practices ineffective. This stream of research also highlights how the use of collaborative efforts, such as the symbiotic academic-social enterprise (SASE), connect research and practice in the development of marketplace literacy, which has the potential to make transformative impact in subsistence communities. This track will build on this prior research to continue

Ultimately, the specific goals of this track will be decided by the eventual participants' interests and preferences. However, the broad mission of the track will be to use a collaborative approach to: 1) combine insights from ongoing primary research in subsistence marketplaces to develop deeper theoretical understanding, and 2) incorporate the realities of life for consumers, entrepreneurs, and organizations living and operating in subsistence into that understanding to impact real-life practice.

Underlying the work in this track is the reality of life in subsistence. While poverty alleviation efforts have been relatively successful from a macro scale, there remain many millions, if not billions of people that live in difficult situations where the ability to satisfy everyday needs (such as adequate food, clean water, education, and infrastructure) may be limited. Adding to this difficulty are the issues that come in modern times. These may include issues such as: 1) environmental change that disproportionately impact individuals in subsistence that more often rely on the natural environment for their vocations, 2) opportunistic ventures by for-profit interests ranging from exploitative middlemen to multi-national corporations, and 3) migration for reasons that range from lack of employment for individuals in given location to large-scale migrations of communities that come from political conflicts, war, and/or factors like long-term droughts. These issues combine to make for complex situations where progress can be quickly undone, and systemic vulnerabilities always must be considered.

Track Goal and Post-Conference Plan: This 2025 TCR Conference track consists of scholars and practitioners who have an interest in combining basic research in subsistence marketplaces and practice to: 1) develop deeper theoretical insights into consumer behavior, and 2) design programs and systems that will help subsistence consumers and entrepreneurs make sustainable decisions. The track chairs will ensure some level of data collection during the time leading up to the 2025 TCR Conference, and are open to (and actively encouraging) combining efforts with track members' ongoing research capabilities. Regarding the post-conference activities, the general plan will be to develop a manuscript, covering the collaborative efforts of the track leading up to TCR 2025, the time spent in-person at TCR 2025, and potentially some final data collection post-conference. And finally, at a minimum, this track will have a goal of submitting a manuscript to a potential special issue associated with the conference. The hope is that this track will contribute to the ongoing work in the area of subsistence marketplaces by members of the TCR community.

TRACK CO-CHAIR BIOS:

Roland Gau:

Roland Gau is an assistant professor of marketing for the Institute of Business and Management, National YangMing ChiaoTung University in Taipei, Taiwan. Prior to this, Roland completed his PhD at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and has also taught at Tulane University and the University of Texas at El Paso. He studies consumer behavior, and has a particular interest in consumer decision making within the context of subsistence. Roland has served within the TCR community as a former member of the Advisory Committee, a member of the Digital Outreach subcommittee, and a Track Co-Chair for the TCR Dialogical Conference.

Yupin Patarapongsant:

Yupin Patarapongsant currently serves as an assistant professor of marketing at SASIN School of Management, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Yupin specializes in marketing strategy, particularly in pricing and branding. With a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she completed her dissertation under the guidance of Professor Kent B Monroe, her interdisciplinary education includes two MSc degrees in Finance and Accountancy from the same institution. Besides her tenure in Thailand, she has taught courses at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and served as a visiting scholar at prestigious institutions like Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, and ESSEC School of Business, Asia-Pacific Campus. Yupin's teaching philosophy emphasizes interactive, activity-based learning, often incorporating real-world projects with companies and community engagement. Her consultancy work extends to healthcare and social marketing. During COVID-19, she undertook significant projects in poverty alleviation, earning recognition from the Prime Minister of Thailand. Additionally, she collaborates with multidisciplinary research teams in fields such as Environmental Sciences and Medicine, reflecting her commitment to addressing contemporary societal challenges.