Sustainable Consumption
The Implications of Changing Infrastructures of Provision
Edited by Dale Southerton, University of Bristol, UK, Heather Chappells, University of Lancaster, UK and Bas Van Vliet, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Sustainable Consumption is unique, not just in its inter-disciplinary and substantive subject matter (changing networks of utility consumption and production), but because it examines empirically the key theoretical debates underpinning the social sciences at the beginning of the 21st century. This book shifts the focus of sustainable consumption away from the individual consumer and their lifestyles, and examines how existing systems of provision constrain how people consume and how sustainability is conceived in popular and policy-related discourses.

‘This collection of writings is an important contribution to the debates surrounding sustainable consumption, and how it may be facilitated . . . Particularly important is the consideration of how consumption is provided, especially where social and technical infrastructures are required in that provision . . . The book, therefore, makes an important contribution in enabling us to redefine the nature of sustainable consumption that we may actually begin to deliver it.’
– Leigh Holland, Organization & Environment

‘It has long been apparent that we need a new set of ideas for thinking about processes of consumption and their relationship to sustainability. This book collects research by some of the leading exponents of an alternative view that sees consumption as an outcome of a complex interaction of daily practices, suites of technologies and systems of provision. It is profoundly challenging for research and policy on sustainable consumption. Highly recommended:
– Frans Berkhout, Vrije University, The Netherlands

‘This impressive collection of authors and articles rescues the study of consumption from the rubble of decades of individual-centred theorising. Taken together, these articles rightly make a powerful argument for viewing consumption as a social activity, and through the analysis of specific cases, draw attention to the social contexts that matter most. Possibly the most important contribution is the analysis of the mostly forgotten but all important role of heavy infrastructures in shaping consumption choices, particularly in the domains of energy and transport. This book is a must for students and policymakers concerned with social change, especially those with an interest in moving towards environmental sustainability.’
– Harold Wilhite, University of Oslo, Norway

‘This book offers an interesting contribution to debates on sustainable consumption, arguing for an approach that recognises how choices and needs are “socially produced” and mediated through infrastructures or systems of provision, rather than understood in terms of individual, market-based notions of “green consumerism”. This is a polished piece of work and deserves to be read carefully.’
– Michael Redclift, King’s College, University of London, UK