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We're experiencing high demand

Consumer Adaptation and Resilience in the Context of Climate Change

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We're experiencing high demand



Consumer Behavior and Climate Change

- The increase in per capita consumption levels is a root cause of rapid environmental decline and climate change.
- The cultural norms and materialistic lifestyle of citizens in Western industrial societies are misaligned with limited supply of (rare) environmental resources and negative externalities involved with the production of goods and services.
- Individual overconsumption generates social, economic, and psychological problems to individual consumers and their families, and has planetary consequences.



Consumer Adaptation and Resilience

- How do consumers cope with changing consumption conditions (price, product availability/shortages, product quality) brought on by climate change?
- Generally, consumers seem to want to preserve their lifestyles, and will do so until the attendant costs become prohibitive.
- Consumer resilience in the context of climate change requires ability to “bounce forward” to a better, more adaptive state that enhances quality of life in changed circumstances.



Photo credit: <https://www.britannica.com/story/can-you-really-be-scared-to-death>

- Vast potential mental health consequences associated with the realization that there may be an end to life as we know it and that lifestyles will likely (have to) change.
- Climate change anxiety is a growing health concern among the broader, and in particular the younger, population.

- Many consumers may not yet recognize how their individual consumption contributes to the problem of environmental degradation and climate change.
- Need for consumer education and engagement by improving environmental and climate literacy, or by presenting environmental information to affect consumer choice (e.g., labelling).



Photo credit: <http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/0517/c90000-9216965.html>

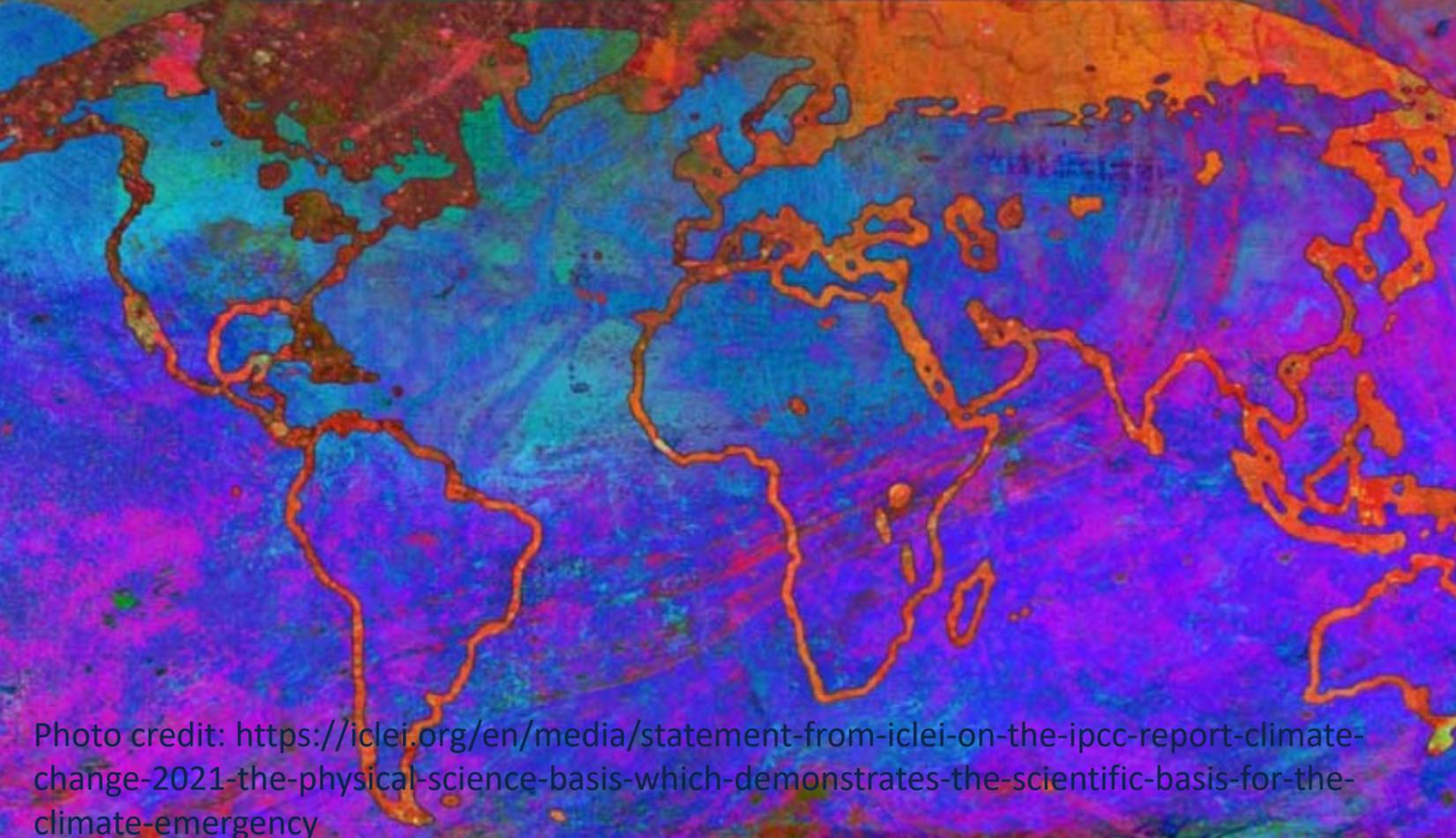


Photo credit: <https://iclei.org/en/media/statement-from-iclei-on-the-ipcc-report-climate-change-2021-the-physical-science-basis-which-demonstrates-the-scientific-basis-for-the-climate-emergency>

From a physical science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO₂ emissions, reaching at least net zero CO₂ emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions. (IPCC, 2021, p. SPM-36)

From a behavioral science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires getting people to quit buying stuff.

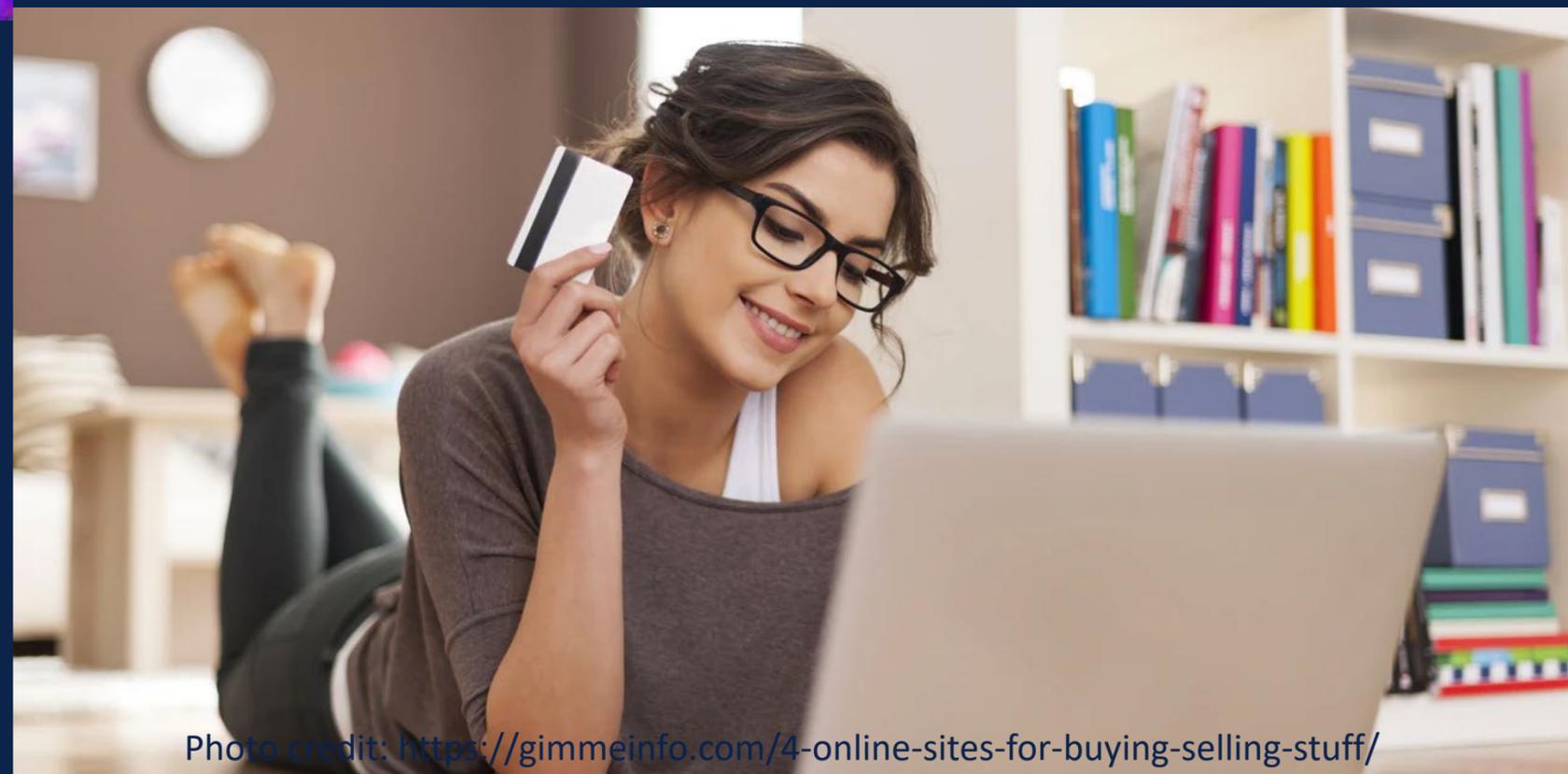


Photo credit: <https://gimmeinfo.com/4-online-sites-for-buying-selling-stuff/>

Helm Research Agenda

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- Focus on consumers' role in decreasing strain on environmental resources and carbon footprint.
- Investigate negative mental health effects induced by climate change threat (climate anxiety) and the realization that consumer lifestyles will have to change.
- Develop educational approaches for preparing consumers (students) for a future characterized by widespread climate change effects.
- Establish and improve consumer resilience.



Photo credit: <https://skynursery.com/2020/12/11/wintering-hummingbirds-puget-sound-area/>