

Sustainability in Higher Education 2020
"Slow alignment" quadrant

**Sustainability in the workplace and the
theory of planned behaviour:
Norms and identity predict environmentally
friendly intentions**

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Why slow alignment?

- For sustainability interventions to be effective, they must be adopted and enacted by people.
- Social psychology offers a useful perspective.



See the single piece of litter at the bottom there?

Doesn't the rest of the scene look clean and tidy?

People are following social norms against littering (and in favour of physical distancing).

e.g. Cialdini et al. (1990)

Behavioural interventions

- manipulating antecedents
- manipulating consequences



for reviews, see Dwyer et al. (1993); Hornik et al. (1995); Schultz et al. (1995)

Social identity and social norms



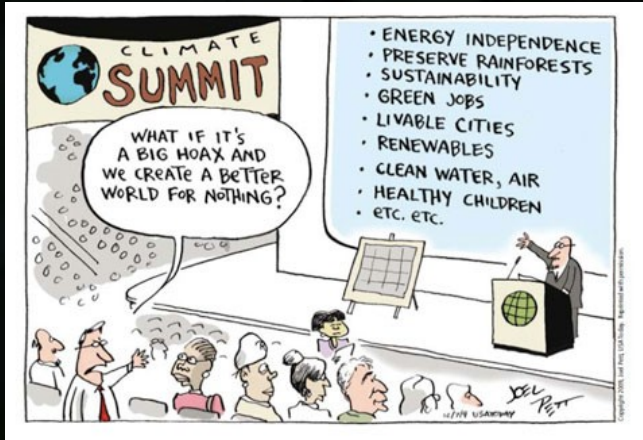
group membership

social identity

norm adoption

see Tajfel & Turner (1979); Oakes et al. (1998)

Moral disengagement



cartoon by Joel Pett

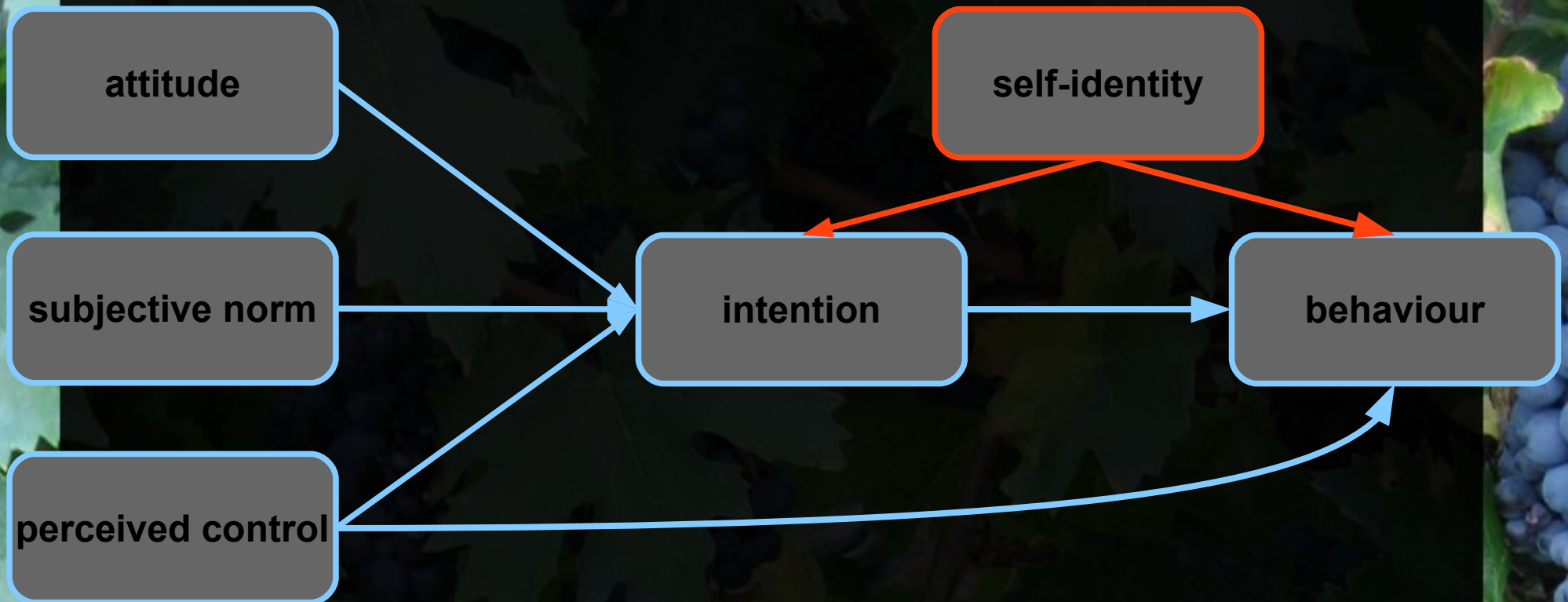
What I love is the hypocrisy of all this global warming cr*p! [...] Then we poor old Brits have to lead the way! Hang on yet again! We produce less the 1% of global CO2 emissions!

- Bandura (1990, 2007): justification by other norms, exonerative comparison, denial of responsibility, etc.
- Woods et al. (2018): examples about global warming in online news comments



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Predicting behaviour



theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

possible addition (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992)

The TPB in sustainability research

- household waste recycling (Nigbur et al., 2010; Terry et al., 1999)
- college paper recycling (Cheung et al., 1999)
- transport choice to travel to university (Bamberg et al., 2003)
- student behaviours, including double-sided printing, energy conservation (de Leeuw et al., 2015)



Green Impact at CCCU



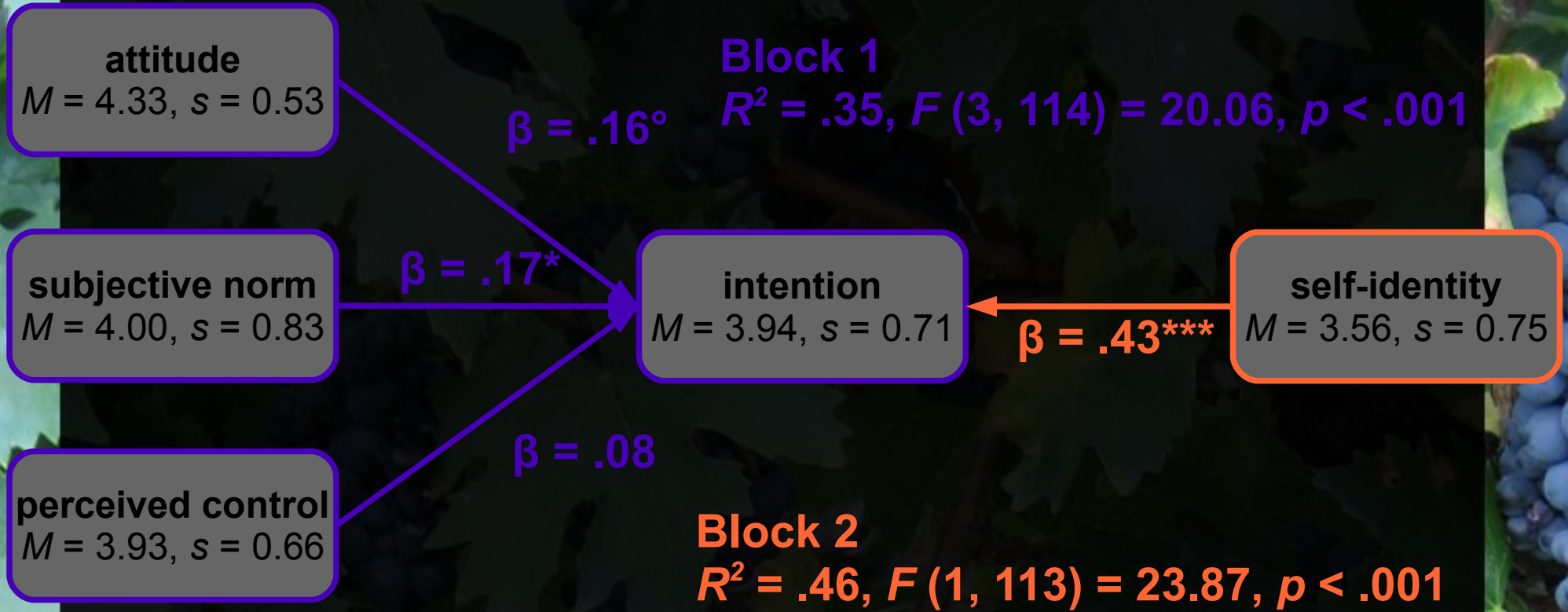
- Green Impact scheme
 - promotion of various sustainability behaviours across campus (recycling, energy saving, ...)
 - “environmental champions” for each team (see Hopper & Nielsen, 1991)
 - questionnaire on predictors of sustainable action (followed up after conclusion of the scheme, but not used for data analysis because of poor response)

Method

- online survey of 118 university staff
- **attitude** (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .45!$)
 - "I don't really think it's necessary to switch off currently unused appliances."
- **subjective norm** (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$)
 - "People important to me would agree that water should be conserved."
- **perceived control** (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .52!$)
 - "Recycling paper and other materials is entirely under my own control."
- **self-identity** (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$)
 - "I consider myself an energy-saver."
- **intention** (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$)
 - "I intend to use more environmentally responsible forms of transport as much as possible."

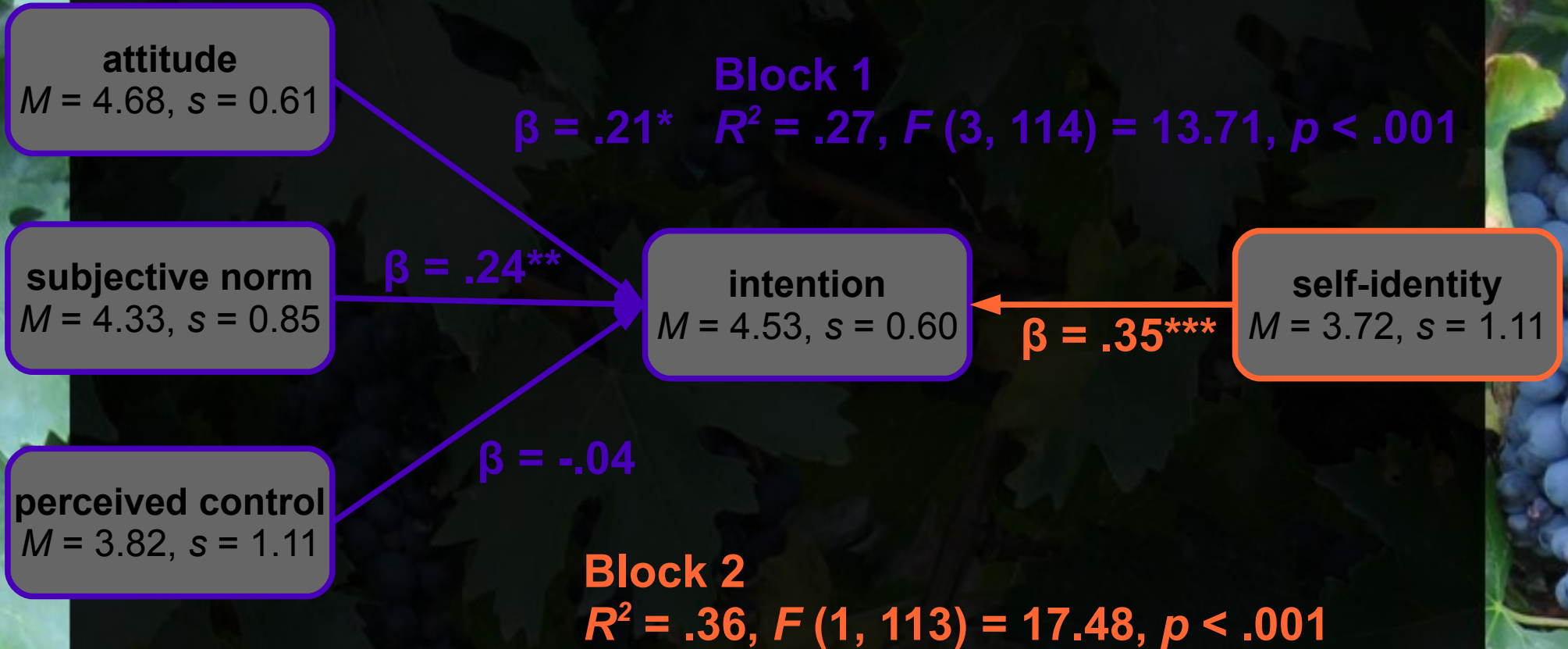


Results: Overall

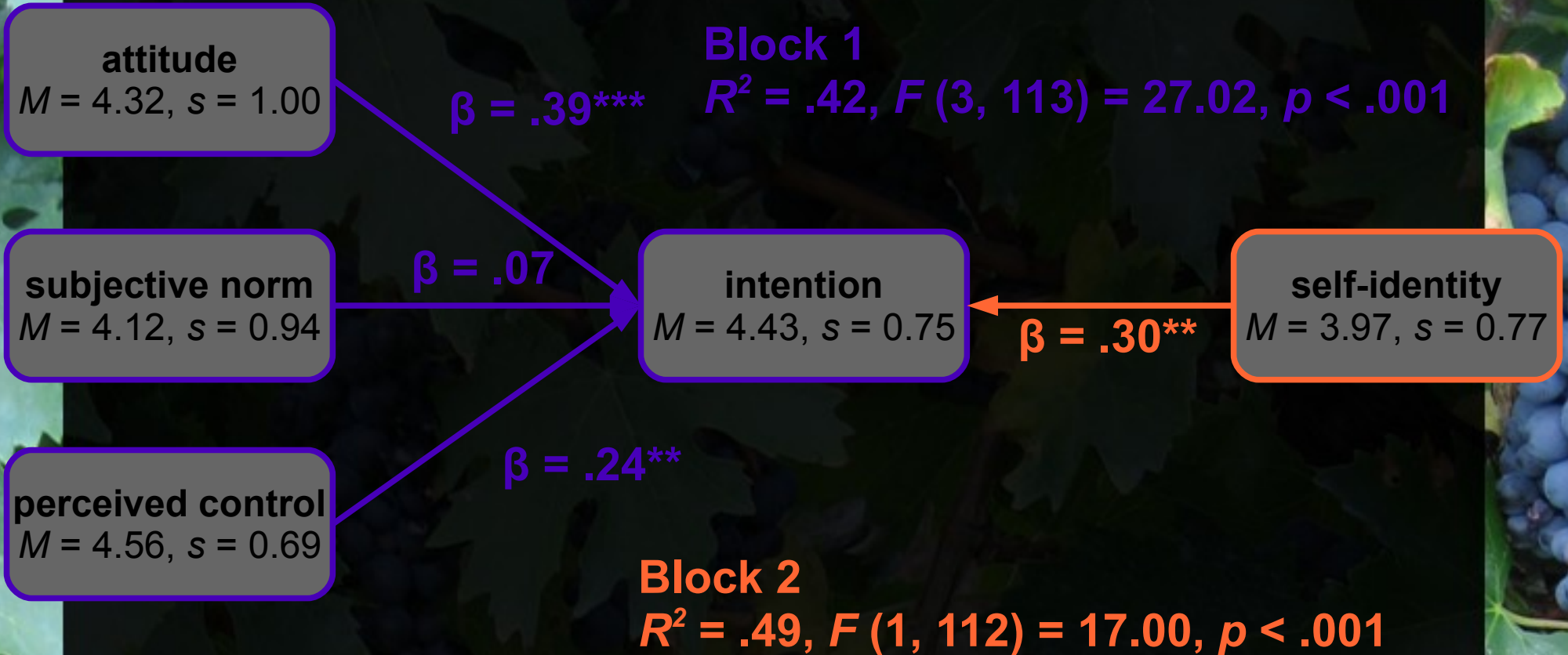


This covers recycling, energy saving, water saving, transport.

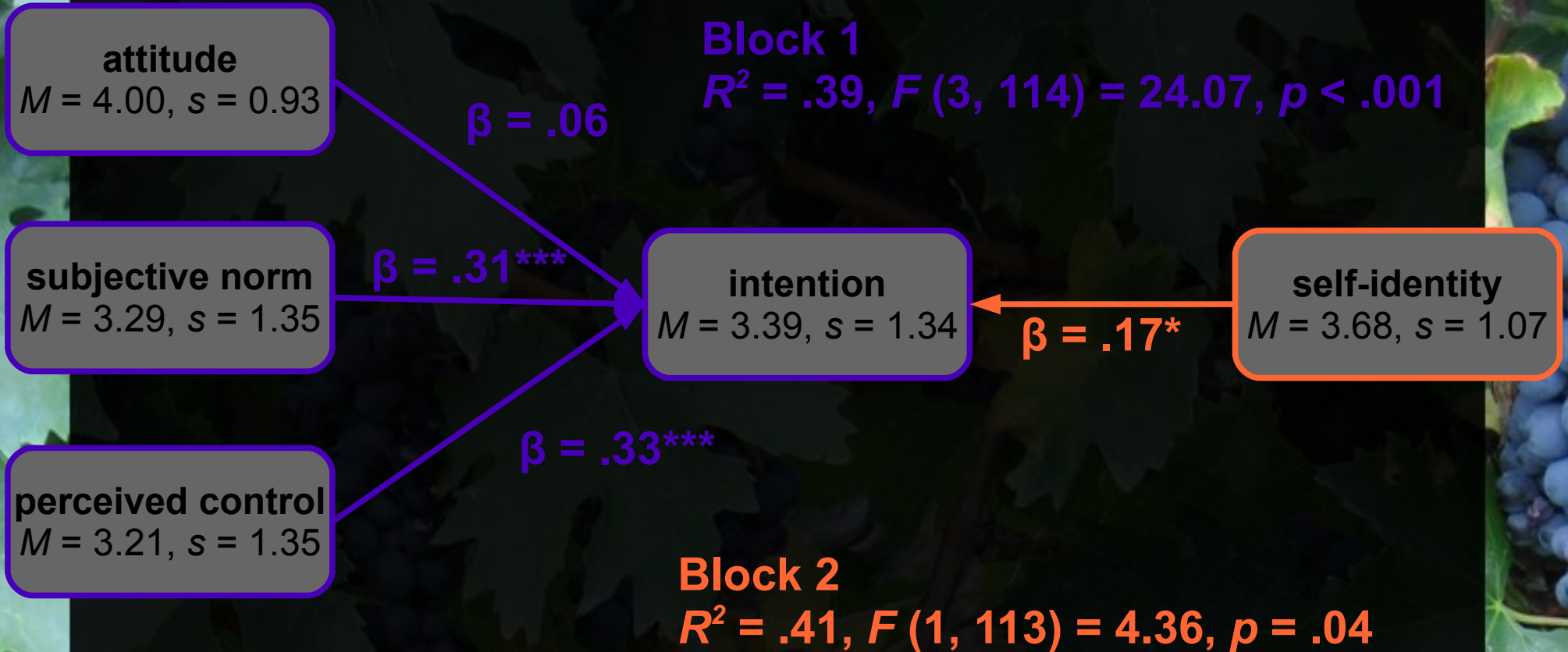
Results: Recycling



Results: Energy saving



Results: Transport



Conclusions

- support for TPB + (very consistently) self-identity in predicting diverse sustainability intentions among university staff
 - different predictors for different behaviours (see Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010)
 - potential issues due to single-item measures
- teaching sustainability: not just transmitting knowledge, but also promoting sustainable norms and self-identities

