

“Everyday life as a service”

Thomas Edward Sutcliffe,

PhD candidate in Science & Technology Studies (STS) at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture, Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU), Norway.

The current goal of the project (it may later change or be modified) is to focus on the household, where I critically examine key elements of the so-called performance economy. Here, reuse, repairs, sharing of services, refurbishments and leasing are central aspects to the performance economy, and to the transition towards a more sustainable future. In this regard, the research will be looking at these elements of the performance economy to advance sustainable practices in everyday life. But also try to link the everyday life perspective to the bigger picture (e.g. climate, resource scarcity and political visions).

Theoretically, the project will most likely use *domestication theories* such as Silverstone & Hirsch (1992) and Sørensen (2005). Arising from STS, domestication theories describe how particular technologies, or artefacts, become integrated into people's lives and routines. Furthermore, it is through domestication theory possible to research and uncover symbolic meanings people ascribe technologies (Haddon, 2011). Domestication theory is within a circular/performance economy context useful to understand people's activities and interaction with technologies, services and goods through everyday life, and in turn better understand potentials and challenges towards creating a circular economy and a sustainable future. Silverstone (2006) emphasize that domestication theory is useful in the context of the 'moral economy in households', a special space where technologies are mediated and adapted in the home. Additionally, (social) *practice theory* (e.g. Røpke 2009, Reckwitz 2002, Shove et al. 2012) is of relevance to the project as it tries to explain why people do what they do, by saying that behaviours are driven by values, beliefs, lifestyles, and tastes that express personal choice. Røpke (2009) in Jørgensen & Jensen (2012) states that performing certain practices daily does not necessarily make people aware that they indeed are consuming resources. As I am early in the projects phase, there may of course be other theoretical frameworks that are suitable to studying and analysing circular economic aspects of everyday life. However, these theories will likely be STS-theories because of their long-standing

tradition of studying the relationship between the social and technology, and networks and socio-technical systems, and because I am affiliated to the background of STS.

Methodologically, the project will mainly be qualitative in nature, but will be accompanied by quantitative assessments of economic and environmental performance of “everyday life as a service”. The project will use the city of Trondheim as a living laboratory for experiments in living a life which would be the “new normal” in a performance economy. Herein, I will explore meanings, skills, and practical consequences of owning as few and as durable items as possible while consuming as many services and sharing as much as possible.

The project also addresses the research area of “Transition towards smart sustainable cities and built environment” through experimentation with innovative solutions fitting to smart cities. Secondly, it also addresses “Sustainable production and consumption systems” by researching alternative modes of coupling production and consumption. Both of these research areas are key areas for the NTNU Sustainability program (<https://www.ntnu.edu/sustainability>). The project is funded by NTNU Sustainability.

Lastly, this project is connected to the Department of Architecture and Technology, the Department of Design, and the Research Centre on Zero Emission Neighbourhoods in Smart Cities, all at NTNU in Trondheim for collaboration.

References

- Haddon, L. (2011). Domestication analysis, objects of study, and the centrality of technologies in everyday life. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36(2): 311–323.
- Jørgensen, M. S., & Jensen, C. L. (2012). The shaping of environmental impacts from Danish production and consumption of clothing. *Ecological Economics*, 83, 164-173.
- Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2): 243–263.
- Røpke, I. (2009). Theories of practice — new inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption. *Ecological Economics* 68, 2490–2497.

Shove E, Pantzar M and Watson M. (2012). *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. London: SAGE.

Silverstone, R and Hirsch, E. (1992). *Consuming Technologies Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*. London: Routledge.

Silverstone, R. (2006). Domesticating domestication: Reflections on the life of a concept. In: Berker T (eds) *Domestication of Media and Technology*. Berkshire: Open University Press, 229–248.

Sørensen, K. H. (2005). Domestication: the enactment of technology. In *Domestication of Media and Technology*, 40-61.