

Short project description: **Everyday life in circular futures**

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My research is within the project titled "Everyday life in circular futures" which is connected to the work done by other PhD candidates and researchers in the department of Design at The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), dealing mainly with the subjects of sustainability and circular economy. I started working on this research on November 12th, 2018, therefore I am still in the early stages, namely in preparation of a formal definition of the research methods and work plan.

The subject of this research is socio-technical imaginaries of circular-economy and the expectations generated about the future, as a departing point for the transitions required in everyday life. Considering that design can leverage the transition to a more sustainable future by bringing in to discussion the perspectives of social practices (routines, thoughts, feelings, emotions and arrangements of objects) embedded in the Everyday Life of people (human agents). With an emphasize on consumption patterns: what, why and how these patterns will be modified within the circular-economy.

Important thematic areas for this research, but not limited to, are:

1. Circular economy: as a paradigm for production and material circulation (consumption) in a sustainable and restorative way, in opposition to the current linear paradigm (extract, manufacture, throw).
2. Everyday life: as the set of actions and patterns, routinized (or not) that define the life of people and societal groups.
3. Consumption: as part of practices and their formation trajectories (history), which include modes of appropriation and disposal of material objects.
4. Socio-technical imaginaries of the future: as expectations from stakeholders about what can/ought to be. The stake holders include public sector and private sector organizations and initiatives as well as civil society efforts.
5. Transitions: as the actions and strategies aimed at moving from current situations to desired ones (from what is to what should be). This theme is of special importance for research in the field of design, as it presupposes that design can drive changes by setting the conditions to happen, and it requires for designers to understand what is to be pre-conditioned (expected outcome), as well as being a way for the establishment of alternative futures considering the present.

The intersection of these thematic areas will help in defining ways to integrate, discuss and experiment about the circular-economy –and sustainability in general- in ways that are closer to the realities of people (in their interests and daily activities).

For the scope of this research, qualitative methods will be used to retrieve data on the specific imaginaries about the future from regular people, which can be contrasted with the expectations generated by businesses and public policy makers. And this will also require:

- Recognition of the actors pursuing the circular-economy as a way of doing (maybe of being). Those already active in public sector, private sector, and even in civil society groups and the efforts being put into action (policy making, investment initiatives, organizational groups, etcetera). With a special focus on the expectations about aspects such as: industry (manufacture and profit), job markets (services), human development, participation of different societal groups, environmental sustainability, among others.
- Identification of current expectations about what society will be when the circular-economy becomes the main paradigm, from the point of view of people belonging to the civil society (organized or un-organized), and how they think it might affect their everyday life. The circular-economy as a paradigm is not only a technical paradigm for the circulation of materials, it will also have impacts on how people feel in front of the world, it might even imply new aesthetics, ways of being and assuming oneself.
- Production of a framework for designers to work with regular people on strategies to make their expectations part of the discussions for the implementation of the circular-economy. Including the social and economic entanglements of consumption.

As part of this research, I'm considering that the implications of the circular-economy can also be outside mainstreamed business initiatives, and for that it will be important to focus attention on initiatives being enacted by organized civil society groups and by social entrepreneurs. Including two important questions:

- Who is being integrated normatively into the circular-economy? As participant actors.
- Can the circular-economy also help in reducing inequalities? As it could be taken as a framework that also restores human links, changing aspects such as competence.