ESA RN05
Midterm Conference
Charles University Prague
27–29 Aug 2025

Book of abstracts

Faculty
of Humanities
Charles University

ESA
European
Sociological
Association

Wednesday 27 Aug

9:30–10:00 — **WELCOME ROOM 0.02**

	ROOM 1.12	ROOM 2.11	ROOM 2.42

10:00–11:30

Food 1: Making Food
CHAIR: STEFAN WAHLEN

Household food resilience: gender aspects of food consumption and prosumption
Marta Kolářová, Jan Vávra, Petr Daněk, Lucie Sovová, Petr Jehlička

Exploring household food practices in an uncharted economic climate: from 'business as usual' to 'quiet' sustainability transitions?
Jonathan Beacham

Plasticity of everyday food habits: Examples from Danish pensioners' food practices
Bente Halkier

Conflicting care: food consumption and intergenerational care among Danish empty nesters in a time of climate crisis
Katinka Amalie Schyberg

Media Consumption and Politics
CHAIR: MIKKO LAAMANEN

New forms of online information consumption. Articulating alternative and mainstream media.
Quentin Gilliotte, Marion Michel

Social media consumption patterns and political participation: evidence from Czech young adults
Ondřej Špaček, Marie Heřmanová

Cancel Culture, Social Media, and Polarization: Cultural Consumption as a Practice of Cultural Resistance and its Critical Issues
Piergiorgio Degli Esposti, Laura Tirabassi

The play-along method: An ethnographic-based approach to understanding virtual worlds
Kamilla Knutsen Steinnes, Clara Julia Reich, Henry Mainsah

Buying Consciously
CHAIR: MARY GREENE

Sustainable Clothing Consumption
Stephanie Zwetzbacher

Sustainable Fashion or Selective Consumption? Understanding Eco-Certified Clothing (non)Buyers in the Czech Republic
Eva Richter, Silvia Petty

Black and Plugged In: An examination of Black EV owners and their attitudes about sustainability, climate change, and environmental justice
Cassi Pittman Claytor

Beyond convenience: how consumer awareness influences sustainable e-commerce deliveries
Delphine Pernot, Ross Phillips

11:30–11:50 — **COFFEE BREAK**

11:50–13:20

Food 2: Eating Off-Menu
CHAIR: JONAS HOUSE, MIKE FODEN

From 'waste' to 'edible': exploring the revalorisation of surplus food at Sopköket
Jonas House

When is a meal not a meal? Taking animal products off the menu in meat-reducing households
Mike Foden

Systems of edibility and meat replacement in contemporary Asia
Arve Hansen, Jonas House, Johannes Volden, Ulrikke Wethal

Fermentation, microbiodiversity, and health: partnering with the ‚good' microbes
Maxence Blanchet

Clothing and Reuse
CHAIR: TULLIA JACK

Circular pasts, presents and futures: understanding the contextual dynamics of everyday circular practices
Mary Greene

Revaluing clothes: Retailing, alternative modes of valuation, and the enabling of circular consumption
Christian Fuentes, Devrim Aslan, Frida Eggert

Digital Platforms and the Valuing of Second-Hand Clothing: The case of Vinted
Frida Eggert

Mothers' motivations for purchasing secondhand children's clothing on peer-to-peer platforms
Minna Kallioharju, Terhi-Anna Wilska, Annamari Vänskä, Eero Rantala

Sustainability, Attitudes and Actions
CHAIR: FRANCESCA SETIFFI

Sustainability Without Sacrifice? On Middle-Class Justification Strategies regarding Sustainability
Robine Horckmans, Bram Spruyt

Green Attitudes Versus Action: Lessons Learnt From Four ECoC Cities
Katalin Formadi

Meat consumption and sufficiency – a practice theoretical study of a social movement supporting sustainable lifestyles
Katri Weckroth

13:20–14:00 — **COFFEE BREAK & SNACK**

14:00–15:30

Making Places
CHAIR: ALEXANDRA KVIAT

Imaginaries of Authenticity and Mediatization of Consumption Practices in Italian Hamlets
Enrico Mariani

Houses and cities as social mirrors. How lifestyles and consumer practices shape private and public spaces
Gian Paolo Lazzer, Francesca Setiffi

Commodification as remedy and problem: the everyday negotiation of territorial stigma in Scampia
Sara Iandolo

Cultural Consumption 1: Patterning Culture
CHAIR: RIIE HEIKKILÄ

Digital Divides: Visual Literacy and Status Signaling Through Travel Content on Social Media
Jana Kovářová, Zuzana Chytková

From Non-Participants to Culture Enthusiasts and everything in-between: A study of stability and change in Flemish participation profiles
Elke Van Dam, Jessy Siongers, John Lievens

Fragmentation, 'Middle-Classification' or Stability? Working-Class Culture in Finland, 1981–2017
Jarmo Kallunki, Semi Purhonen

Changing Consumption
CHAIR: SENJA LAAKSO

Can workplace lunches help normalize more plant-based eating?
Morten Wendler, Thomas Bøker Lund, Mette Weinreich Hansen

Phased routinisation of plant-based food consumption in Finland
Roosa Luukkanen, Sami Koponen, Mari Niva

The sociology of consumption and the experimental turn: Reflections from food research
Nicklas Neuman

Towards routinisation of more sustainable lifestyles: Successes and failures of the engagement in ‚low-tech' practices
Simon Vuille

transport to Charles University central building near Old Town Square

17:00–18:00 — **Keynote: Roberta Sassatelli** BLUE LECTURE HALL Celetná 20

18:00–19:00 — **WELCOME RECEPTION KAROLINUM** Ovocný trh 560/5

Faculty of Humanities Charles University

ESA European Sociological Association

Thursday 28 Aug

	ROOM 1.12	ROOM 2.11	ROOM 2.42
9:00–10:30	**Food 3: Food, Poverty and Status** CHAIR: STEFAN WAHLEN The materiality of food consumption among families with low socioeconomic status: results from photovoice study Ewa Kopczyńska Who can afford the effort? How Everyday Time Constraints Affect the Likelihood of Meat Reduction Alicia Dunker Sufficient? Negotiating everyday necessities and social relations on low-paid benefits Silje E. Skuland, Andreea I. Alecu Anything but hard discount: The social stratification of grocery shopping venues in Italy, 2014–2022 Filippo Oncini	**Cultural Consumption 2: Organizing Culture** CHAIR: MIKKO LAAMANEN Cultural capital and public libraries in the age of algorithms Riie Heikkilä Cultural consumption and creative placemaking in institutional context: the case of Cultuur&Campus Putselaan Janna Michael, Amanda Brandellero, Natasha Taylor Legitimising Islamic Art: An Analysis of Religious, Political, and Aesthetic Frameworks Deployed by Cultural Intermediaries in Turkey Irmak Karademir, Ozgur Yaren Cultural consumption, media and generations between fragmented imaginaries and mediatization of memories in the Italian context Silvia Leonzi, Giovanni Ciofalo, Lorenzo Ugolini	**Self-Help Housing (Re)Constructions** CHAIR: TEREZIE LOKŠOVÁ Hidden and revealing collectivities of housing in the Czech Republic Jan Malý Blažek, Tomáš Hoření Samec My house, my home, my consumption Barbora Vacková Self-Help Reconstructions of Post-War Prefabricated Timber Housing: Between Production, Re-use and Consumption Slavomíra Ferenčuhová Conflict and Social Capital: two sides of the sharing coin Tullia Jack, Toke Haunstrup Bach Christensen, Jesper Ole Jensen
10:45–12:15	**Food 4: Food Systems** CHAIR: BENTE HALKIER Crisis, Culture, Food: Exploring rural-urban divides and imagined food futures in Denmark Amanda Krog Juvik, Emil August Andersen, Kia Ditlevsen Scaling social innovations for transformative change: Insights from scaling pathways of Alternative Food Networks Louise Longton, Christian Scholl, Filippo Oncini Alternative to What? Reassessing Western AFNs through a Southern Lens Carla Galan Guevara, Francesca Forno What do consumers know about the climate impact of foods? Andreas Bschaden	**Cultural Consumption 3: Class And Leisure** CHAIR: JANNA MICHAEL Cultural reproduction in the everyday life of working-class families Eeva Majalahti Children's Leisure Activities and Family Cultural Capital: the case of Slovakia Ivan Chorvát, Jiří Šafr Social and cultural stratification of subjective life expectancy Anu Siren, Ossi Sirkka, Sara Sivonen, Semi Purhonen The Social value of Culture: a systematic literature review of the available evidence Hanne Goemaere, Bram Spruyt, Jessy Siongers	**Economic Sociology** CHAIR: FRANCESCA FORNO Pay to win: Intergenerational reproduction of financial position and the increasing importance of owning rights to capital gains. Markus Lynum The consumption of nature between commodification and decommodification Roberta Bartoletti 'Five Fingers Discount': Shoplifting as a Consumption Practice Antoine Völki
12:15–13:15	**LUNCH**		
13:15–14:45	**Consumer Racial Hierarchies** CHAIR: CASSI PITTMAN CLAYTOR Festive Material Cultures: Consumption & Belonging in the Netherlands Bel Kerkhoff-Parnell, Martijn Kerkmeijer Mindful Materiality: Race, Consumer Culture, and the Religious Lives of Black Buddhists Kevin Thomas Selling Colonialism and Racism to Europeans in Safari and Caribbean Tourism/ Consumer racial hierarchies - exclusion and inclusion in consumptive practices and market relations June Francis From Self-Help to Self-Care: Identity Transformation Scripts and the "Essence Woman" Amanda Koontz	**Cultural Consumption 4: Experiencing Culture** CHAIR: MIKKO LAAMANEN Curtains Up: How Ukrainians Turned to Theater During the War Yevhen Voronin Cultural filter bubbles? The effect of personalized recommendations on cultural diversity and inequalities on a music streaming platform Samuel Coavoux A Rhythmanalysis of Consumer's Aesthetic Experience of Being Alone Pekka Saarikorpi Reading culture as a shared ethos: the profile of Finnish self-identified readers Maaria Linko, Roosa Suomalainen	**Digital 1: E-Commerce** CHAIR: ARVE HANSEN How do e-commerce transactions differ cross-nationally? Cases of Czechia, France and Ukraine Maksym Kolomoiets Online Shopping Scam Victimization among Young People. Antecedents and Consequences Terhi-Anna Wilska, Jussi Nyrhinen, Jesse Tuominen Consuming Convenience: Pace, Rhythm, and Sustainability of Digital Consumption Felippa Amanta The impact of digital transformation on consumers: an explorative research project Ariela Mortara, Rosantonietta Scramaglia

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Thursday 28 Aug

	ROOM 1.12	ROOM 2.11	ROOM 2.42
15:00–16:30	**Household Practices** CHAIR: ONDŘEJ ŠPAČEK Ambivalences of the dishwasher in voluntary modest households Lucie Galčanová Batista, Vojtěch Pelikán The good life and sustainable consumption Amanda Krog Juvik, Line Kryger Aagaard, Malene Freudendal-Pedersen, Bente Halkier Doing with less while doing more? An infrastructural perspective on second-home living Hannele Toivonen, Jenny Rinkinen, Sanna Tegel Failing to circulate: understanding why garments remain dormant in households Réka Tölg, Olga Cieslak	**Discourse on Sustainability** CHAIR: TULLIA JACK From more and bigger to less and better? Finnish media discussion on sufficiency in consumption Senja Laakso Challenges and Perceptions of Sustainable Consumption in the Face of Climate Change: Insights from Spain Carlos Jesús Fernández Rodríguez Conceptualizing sufficiency-oriented consumption: A framework to understand the de-intensification of everyday practices Emmelina Eriksson, Christian Fuentes (Net)zero consumption – or the consumption of zero Martin Friis Nielsen	**Digital 2: Digital Intermediaries and Lifestyle** CHAIR: ALEXANDRA KVIAT Consuming Autonomy: Digital Lifestyles as Platform Mediated Consumption Practices Lilian Leupold Unchartered territories of social influence. The de-influencing wave Geraldina Roberti, Ariela Mortara Digital forms of presenting and valuing consumer objects: New intermediaries, new challenges!? Nico Maximilian Steinmann
16:30–17:00	**COFFEE BREAK**		
17:00–18:30	**Waste** CHAIR: MARY GREENE Unpacking Convenience for Re-use Consumers: Using household provisioning practice groupings to understand complex enabling factors for re-usable packaging systems. Jack Pickering Discounting suboptimal foods in supermarkets – reducing or relocating food waste? Rosa Hellman, Jonas Bååth, Nicklas Neuman, Sara Spendrup Digitally reducing food waste: How surplus food platforms reconfigure household practices Christian Fuentes, Emmelina Eriksson, Manisha Anantharaman, Live Bøyum, Arne Dulsrud, Jennifer Heung, Noemi Linares-Ramirez	**Commodities: History and Politics** CHAIR: FRANCESCA FORNO Neglected and / or forgotten? Revisiting the sociology of wood consumption Atle Wehn Hegnes, Håkon Aspøy Translations of Sugar Jan Ferwerda, Henk Roose Connectivity and consumption: China's changing cartography of meat consumption Tracey Fallon	**Digital 3: Hanging in (Post)Digital World** CHAIR: IRMAK KARADEMIR Liminal hanging in a flat relationality: The material (un)bundling of young people's digital practices Clara Julia Reich, Mikko Laamanen Staying with the trouble: towards a theory of postdigital consumer culture Alexandra Kviat Digital Resonance: Mapping the Sensorial Turn in Platformised Consumption Alberto Cossu
19:30–21:30	**SOCIAL DINNER ČERVENÝ JELEN** Hybernská 1034/5, Prague 1		

Friday 29 Aug

	ROOM 1.12	ROOM 2.11	ROOM 2.42
9:30–11:00	**Food 5: Food and Valuation** CHAIR: STEFAN WAHLEN 'Preferences' for 'Prime cuts' of meat as an outcome of changing practices. Sonja Schönberg The Rise of White Meat? Culinary Hierarchization in the 2020s Thomas A.M. Skelly Moral Aestheticism and Consumer Citizenship: The Intertwining of the Political and the Aesthetic Evaluation in Food Consumption Ella Miller	**Household and Energy** CHAIR: SENJA LAAKSO Locking-into energy vulnerability: how wealth and life phases shape households' control over energy costs in their new homes Lise Desvallées How electricity structures life in the amazon: a case study of a Xikrín village Daniel Costa Jařab Understanding Private Water Consumption in Germany Stefan Brachat, Stephan Lorenz The Shifting Sands of Time: A study of socio-temporal flexibility across social classes Eivind Hjort Matthiasen	**Digital 4: AI, Bots and Consumption** CHAIR: MIKKO LAAMANEN Merchants of Memory – Exploring the Commercialization of Grief through digital Deadbots. Paul Eisewicht, Carsten Ohlrogge The odd companion: how children tame and domesticate conversational AI-models Dag Slettemeås Using AI in consumption research Tullia Jack The Cybernetic Cosmology of Consumption – Future, Past or Both? Joern Lamla

11:15–12:15	**Keynote: Petr Jehlička** AULA

12:15–12:45	**ESA RN 5 News** AULA

12:45–13:30	**LUNCH**

13:30–15:00	**Consumer Society and Democracy** CHAIR: FRANCESCA FORNO Consumer Society and the Crisis of the Democratic Imaginary Daniel Welch From Citizen, Consumer, and Prosumer to Citimer: The Case of Healthcare Dino Numerato Neither Passive nor Individualized? About the Potential of Consumers to Democratize the Economy Through Collective Self-Organization Nicholas Pohl, Victoria Becerril Nito, Philip Balsiger, Fabian Petutschnig Deserts, swamps, gardens, and farms: The geographic imaginaries of food access Wesley R. Dean	**Bodies, Guts, and Consumption** CHAIR: BENTE HALKIER Normativity in Knowledge Regimes: Understanding the Construction of Gendered Bodies in Contemporary Debates Alexandra Stuhlmann The Gut as Uncharted Territory: Microbiopolitics, Consumption, and the Posthuman Body Stefan Wahlen Tasting listening metabolizing: Notes on cooking/eating as a participatory research method Katerina Hola, Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer The sociability of the meal Christian Stenbak Larsen	

15:10–16:40	**Roundtable: Consumption of high socio-economic-status people** Organisation: Tullia Jack, Lise Desvallées	**Roundtable discussion on embodied consumption** Organisation: Stefan Wahlen, Roberta Sassatelli, Paul Eisewicht, Bas Spierings, Alberto Cossu	

16:40–16:55	**CLOSING**

Friday 27 Aug

Keynote Speakers

Roberta Sassatelli

University of Bologna, Italy

Wednesday 27 Aug, 17:00-18:00
Karolinum, Blue Lecture Hall, Celetná 20

Bodies, Billionaires and the Logic of the Commodity. Conspicuous Sustainability, Degrowth and Decoloniality

As we are both increasingly accustomed and stunned by it, the logic of the commodity has revealed its ambivalence with superb clarity. A series of consumer boycotts and ethical consumer initiatives have accompanied the expansion of the commodity frontier through the historical development of consumer capitalism, and we have come to recognize that the idea that commodities exist outside of politics is just one side of the coin. Consumer activism has emerged as a powerful tool for political and ethical resistance, showing that commodification is both routinely taken for granted and continuously challenged. The logic of the commodity entails the banalization of the gap between production and consumption as well as the objectification of a utilitarian reconciliation of individual and communal matters – and yet concerns about inequality and climate change continually challenge the boundaries between these spheres of life.

Today, following decades of neoliberal dominance, consumption is no longer viewed solely as a space for individual self-expression. Instead, it is increasingly framed through moral and political lenses both by market actors and within civil society. A proliferation of sustainable goods has emerged across the Global North, promoted as ethical alternatives: environmentally friendly, supporting fair labor practices, and addressing global inequalities. These products often coexist with, or contrast against, systemic approaches like reducing, reusing, and recycling. Together, they form a complex and sometimes contradictory system that demands significant emotional, cognitive, and temporal investments from both consumers and producers. Indeed, the rise of fair trade and sustainable consumption itself introduces new forms of social differentiation. Far from being socially neutral, these practices can reinforce inequalities and status distinctions through discourses on moral legitimacy as well as access to resources. Efforts to protect a shared ecological future are often entangled with cultural, social and economic structures that are based on and perpetuate inequality. Taken together, debates on decolonization and degrowth may help ponder on the puzzle of the commodity today: they increasingly intersect with environmental concerns, reframing sustainability as not only a technical or scientific issue but also a cultural, economic and political battleground.

This paper draws on the historical moralization of the commodity form, considering its performative role in defining the boundaries of consumer capitalism, consumer embodied subjectivities, and social dynamics. It highlights how subjective embodiment and social inequality are crucial for critically understanding how sustainability may be implicated in conspicuous distinction and reworked through notions of degrowth and decoloniality – approaches that

demand a fresh look at the social bonds and the ways they can be reimagined beyond our hegemonic models.

Dr. Roberta Sassatelli is Professor of Sociology at the Department of History and Cultures of the University of Bologna, specialising in consumer culture, cultural theory, gender studies and the sociology of the body. She received her PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence in 1996.

Prior to her current position, Dr. Sassatelli held academic positions at the University of Milan and the University of East Anglia in the UK. She is a founding member of the journal "Studi Culturali" and is currently co-editor of the "European Journal of Sociology". Her recent publications include "Italians and Food" (2019) and "Body and Gender" (2024).

Petr Jehlička

Institute of Sociology CAS, Czech Republic

Friday 29 Aug, 11:15-12:15
Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Aula

Eastern Europe, sustainable food consumption and the sociology of knowledge production: Insights from the epistemic periphery

What would be the contours of the body of sociological knowledge on sustainable food consumption if it drew on research outside the epistemic centre, and specifically in Eastern Europe? Replicating the flow of policy know-how 'from the West to the Rest', international institutions exported the globalised notion of sustainable consumption in East European countries in the early 2000s. Since then, in this part of Europe, the ethical and political variant of sustainable food consumption has coexisted and interacted with its 'vernacular' forms that predate the import.

Despite its considerable potential to extend sustainable consumption scholarship, the latter form has been lingering in the margins of academic interest. Seeking to script knowledge from this epistemic periphery as the region-transcending novelty and inspiration, the talk proposes a range of shifts in how we think about sustainable consumption. The first shift is a dissolution of the separation between sustainable food consumption and production. Many consumers in Eastern Europe are simultaneously food producers. The second is the break from the notion of sustainable consumption as an act related exclusively to market relations. Third, as sustainable food consumption East-European-style demonstrates, it can be a widespread, well-established, inclusive, affordable and 'everyday' practice, rather than precarious, niche and elitist. This disassociates the achievement of sustainable consumption from the unspecified future as a result of the adoption of learned intentionality and conversion towards ethically motivated consumptive behaviour. It also allows for a more complex understanding of the temporality of sustainability that embraces the past and present as equal to the future.

The findings from Eastern Europe question the dominance of capitalist linear time and retrofit nature-related cyclicity in sustainable consumption thinking. Importantly, this notion of 'already existing' sustainable food consumption also removes the burden of conceptualising sustainable consumption as an outcome of amplified innovation and novelty. Overall, the talk is an invitation to contemplate a scenario of reversing the flow, or at least extending the range of sources, of sociological knowledge on sustainable consumption.

Dr. Petr Jehlička is a researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, focusing on informal economies, everyday sustainability, resilience, alternative food networks and environmental politics. He received his PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge in 1998, with a dissertation on environmental politics in Western and Eastern Europe.

Dr. Jehlička has taught environmental geography at the Open University in the UK and has been a visiting scholar at the European University Institute in Florence and the Ruralia Institute in Finland. His research emphasises the importance of informal food production and distribution in promoting social resilience and sustainability.

Roundtables

Consumption of high socio-economic-status people

organisation: Tullia Jack, Lise Desvallées

Friday 29 Aug, 15:10-16:40, ROOM 1.12

Background:

The issue of inequalities in greenhouse gas emissions and the disproportionate contribution of the rich, documented by carbon footprint studies (Chancel, 2022; Hubacek et al., 2017; Nielsen et al., 2021; Oswald et al., 2020; Wiedmann et al., 2020) are an emerging research topic in the social sciences. Beyond these increasing accounts, the specific consumption patterns of the rich - and their diversity beyond the richest 1% (Anand and Segal, 2017; Barros and Wilk, 2021) - are still an uncharted territory within the sociology of consumption. This contrasts with the breath of studies addressing constrained consumption and poverty and calls for new research efforts which are central for environmental and energy transition: the richest 10% are responsible for 50% of emissions, and thus pose high potential for policies to reduce resource demand and associated emissions (Cass et al., 2023)

Objectives:

This special session brings together scholars interested in charting new pathways for addressing the impacts of income and wealth on consumption, by presenting existing projects or ideas addressing:

1. Research questions: studying the consumption of the wealthy opens up a wide range of questions, for example issues concerning the carbon impacts of their ways of life, or their contribution to norms and standards of desirable levels of comfort.
2. Methods: if the top of the income distribution has remained less examined, it is partly because of the methodological challenges in identifying, reaching and studying the rich. Beyond the upper income threshold established by the Institute for German Economy, definitions of wealth are scarce in Europe, and provide little tools to grasp the internal diversity of the upper 10%.
3. Policies: implementing energy and environmental transition objectives are under pressure to address social justice issues. But justice oriented instruments targeting the rich, and their social acceptance, such as levies, caps and bans (Büchs and Mattioli, 2024), are still contested

Roundtable discussion on embodied consumption
organisation: Stefan Wahlen, Roberta Sassatelli
Paul Eisewicht, Bas Spierings, Alberto Cossu

Friday 29 Aug, 15:10-16:40, ROOM 2.11

The roundtable aims to...
... establish the sociology of the body as a vital lens for understanding uncharted dimensions of consumption.
... showcase diverse perspectives, including those from Eastern Europe and non-European counties, on embodied consumption practices and theories.
... foster interdisciplinary dialogue and generate innovative questions for future research.

Background: In contemporary consumer societies, the body has emerged as both a site and an object of consumption, mediating the interplay between cultural norms, social identities, and material practices. Despite its centrality to lived experiences and its increasing commodification, the body remains an underexplored territory within the sociology of consumption. This roundtable seeks to chart new pathways for understanding the body as a crucial, yet often overlooked, locus of consumption practices, meanings and relations. It invites scholars to reflect on how the sociology of the body can enrich the sociology of consumption by uncovering embodied dimensions of consumption across diverse geographical, cultural, and historical contexts.

We propose the body as an "uncharted territory" for the sociology of consumption in at least three senses (and would be happy to extend the list):

1. Theoretical: Moving beyond dominant frameworks, how can theories of embodiment, intersectionality, and materiality offer fresh perspectives on consumption practices?
2. Sociological: How do specific social contexts, e.g. those in Eastern Europe, illuminate diverse embodied consumption practices that challenge Eurocentric paradigms?
3. Temporal: How can an embodied approach to consumption reconcile tensions between the fascination with futurity and the importance of historical legacies, traditions, and practices tied to the body?

Food 1: Making Food

Wednesday 27 Aug
10:00-11:30, ROOM 1.12

Household food resilience: gender aspects of food consumption and prosumption

Marta Kolářová, Jan Vávra, Petr Daněk, Lucie Sovová, Petr Jehlička
Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

This paper focuses on gender aspects of food consumption and prosumption in households in the context of contemporary crises. It brings together two academic perspectives: feminist food studies which study various aspects of food consumption and production but have addressed home production to a lesser degree, and recent research on food self-provisioning which has often focused on households as units and has not studied the division of labor within the households. The paper is a gender and intersectional analysis of foodwork in individual households. It is structured around these research questions: what is the division of labour regarding food within Czech households? What roles do men, women, and people with other genders have in food practices, especially prosumption (food self-provisioning, home production, food sharing, gathering, and planning) and how do they perceive these roles? The paper is based on a mixed methods research design including 12 focus groups with various consumers/prosumers in different social and geographical contexts and a representative quantitative survey of Czech households. The research is in progress and will mostly present data obtained in 2024 and 2025 with some insights into the previous surveys carried out in Czechia.

Exploring household food practices in an uncharted economic climate: from 'business as usual' to 'quiet' sustainability transitions?

Jonathan Beacham
University of Bristol, United Kingdom

It is widely acknowledged that household food practices – spanning activities of meal planning, provisioning, preparation, cooking, eating, and the disposal of 'waste' – carry major consequences for both environmental sustainability and public health. Recent years have seen growing attention paid to the ways in which these might be mitigated. Against this backdrop, sociological analyses have notably drawn inspiration from the conceptual resources of Social Practice Theory (SPT) to understand the different 'moments' by which practices unfold, their temporal organisation and routinisation as performances (e.g. Paddock, 2017; Keegan and Breadsell, 2021; Plessz and Wahlen, 2022). Building on these, this paper argues for the utility of theoretical engagements with innovation studies, particularly the Multi-Level Perspective (Geels, 2002), and the cultural politics of sustainability transitions (Smith and Jehlička, 2013). To furnish this argument, this paper presents preliminary findings of research exploring food practices in some UK households in an uncharted economic climate. Alongside rising food prices and high energy costs, recent years have seen the popularisation of 'new' cooking practices (e.g. 'air fryers' as an energy efficient cooking method); different modes of food provisioning (e.g. TooGoodToGo); alongside concerns around the health effects and ubiquity of 'Ultra Processed Foods' (UPFs). In exploring how households are responding to these varied and competing pressures, this paper asks whether sociotechnical landscape-level dynamics are acting as 'sources of pressure' (Morone et al., 2016) serving to entrench an unsustainable 'business as usual' in household food practices or are potentially prompting a turn to 'quieter' – but no less significant – sustainability transitions.

Plasticity of everyday food habits: Examples from Danish pensioners' food practices

Bente Halkier
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Food is one of the top-three carbon emitters, which makes food habits one of the central targets for public behavioral change discussions and interventions on climate change. Sociological research has already shown that change of food consumption in less resource-intensive directions are complex and dynamic social practice changes, and that reproduction of routines in meal provisioning and eating at the same time involves little adaptations, negotiations and experiments. In other words, there are already small elements of constant change in the reproduction of food habits. This is one of the assumptions in many practice theoretical studies of food practices in everyday life (Warde, 2016).

However, what does such social change-abilities in food practice performing involve concretely, and how does this apparent plasticity of food habits play out in particular social settings? This is the question asked by a new research project, which studies qualitatively the food habits in relation to critical times of ecological change across four different generations of Danes; young adults, parents with preschool children, empty nesters, and pensioners.

This paper makes the theoretical argument for plasticity of food habits with a practice theoretical starting point. Furthermore, the paper presents the first empirical examples from the subproject with pensioners, who have a whole lifetime experience of reproducing and changing food provisioning, cooking and eating. Data are produced through qualitative re-interviewing and participant observation with Danish pensioners.

Conflicting care: food consumption and intergenerational care among Danish empty nesters in a time of climate crisis

Katinka Amalie Schyberg
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

This paper - and the research project it derives from – explores what happens when food consumption habits become contested in a time of climate change, and particularly how such contestations are handled in food consumption related to intergenerational care practices.

Based on qualitative research currently in its early stages, the paper presents fresh empirical insight into how food consumption and intergenerational care practices intersect in the life of Danish empty nesters. As part of a research project on food consumption, generations, and the elasticity of habits, the paper attends empirically to how this particular generational cohort and social group experience and navigate food consumption dilemmas arising from climate change awareness. It asks what happens when what has previously been considered a way of caring for one's kin – cooking for them - can now also be seen as an act of neglecting to care for the planet and future generations. How, it asks, do empty nesters who have grown up with increasing meat-consumption - and to whom "good food" usually involves carbon heavy foodstuff – experience and navigate such conflicting acts of care in their food consumption practices?

While taking individual consumption habits, deliberations and dilemmas as the locus for inquiry, the paper takes a view of the individual as inherently relational. Taking its cue from anthropological studies of how food consumption participates in relational caring practices (Carstens 1995), the paper explores how individual food habits are continuously shaped by the exchanges taking place between intimate others such as family and friends.

Media Consumption and Politics

Wednesday 27 Aug
10:00-11:30, ROOM 2.11

New forms of online information consumption.
Articulating alternative and mainstream media.

Quentin Gilliotte, Marion Michel
Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas, France

This paper will present the initial results of the InfoAlt project on information consumption practices, with a particular focus on so-called 'alternative' media online. About one-in-five Americans say they get news from influencers on social media (Pew Research, 2024). Despite the significance of the practice, there are still many grey areas as to exactly how social media are consumed and articulated with others. We already have a clear picture of the social structure of media consumption practices (Louguet, 2023) and it is well established that upper class individuals tend to get more information, and use a greater diversity of sources (Comby et al., 2011; Jouët et al., 2013). However, in existing surveys, online information sources are often placed in very broad categories such as 'social networks' or 'information websites', or referred to the platforms themselves ('Facebook', 'Youtube', 'Twitter', etc.), without further details on the type of consumed content. Moreover, little is known about the exact methods of consumption: how is this content discovered, selected and shared? Which creators are trusted, and on what basis? To what extent do they provide an alternative to traditional media? Drawing on data from a quota-based survey (n=5000) and the findings of semi-structured interviews on information usage, we investigate the heterogeneity and volume of the sources of mobilised information, according to social origin, gender, age and political orientation.

Social media consumption patterns and political participation: evidence from Czech young adults

Ondřej Špaček, Marie Heřmanová
Charles University, Czech Republic

The evolving landscape of media usage has undergone significant shifts since the advent of the internet (e.g., Heikkilä et al. 2022). A major transformation in the past decade stems from the growing influence of social media, which continues to develop rapidly, introducing new modes of consumption and interaction that diverge significantly from traditional media. This raises important questions about the relationship between social media consumption practices and political participation (Feio and Oliveira 2024).

In this paper, we examine this relationship among young adults in the Czech Republic. Using survey data, we analyze the variety, intensity, and modes of social media usage. Latent Class Analysis is employed to identify distinctive social media consumption patterns. To address our central research question, we explore how these patterns relate to political participation and political orientation. Our findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the role social media plays in shaping political engagement among young adults.

Cancel Culture, Social Media, and Polarization: Cultural Consumption as a Practice of Cultural Resistance and its Critical Issues

Piergiorgio Degli Esposti, Laura Tirabassi
University of Bologna, Italy

Cancel culture (CC) has emerged as a highly significant phenomenon in the global context, particularly with regard to cultural consumption dynamics and cultural restitution (Stec et al., 2023). Digital platforms, with their ability to instantly connect millions of people, have transformed CC into an interconnected and pervasive phenomenon, capable of migrating offline and influencing business, political, editorial decisions, and contemporary cultural practices (Symons, 2022) while spreading in the platform ecosystem (Van Dijck et al., 2018). On one side, movements advocate for social justice, equality, and progressive change, on the other, there are groups defending traditional values and cultural heritage. This clash is often played out on digital platforms, where CC becomes a battleground for competing ideologies as fringe content migrates from the edges of the online ecosystem to the mainstream arena in an "osmotic process" (Meraz and Papacharissi, 2013). By examining the interplay between CC, the commodification of activism and fringe democracy, this contribution aims to provide a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by genuine social movement where, while visibility and support are crucial for driving change, critical issues arise when movements for social justice and private platform's purposes collide.

The play-along method: An ethnographic-based approach to understanding virtual worlds

Kamilla Knutsen Steinnes, Clara Julia Reich, Henry Mainsah
Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Online games are integral to the daily lives of young people, yet their digital consumption dynamics remain underexplored, and suitable research methods are scarce. This paper introduces the play-along method, a novel approach designed to engage with players within their gaming environments. The method, inspired by the 'go-along' and 'walkthrough' techniques, facilitates digital interactions between researchers and informants. By observing and participating in gameplay, researchers gain insights into player agency, game mechanics, and consumption practices within virtual worlds. Carried out across three research projects involving 60 young informants aged 10-24, the play-along method offers several advantages: immersion in the gaming context, and a flexible, informal interview setting. It provides a unique opportunity to observe real-time interactions, digital purchases, relevance of devices, affordances and design, and relational dynamics. However, the method also presents challenges, such as gameplay interference, parental restrictions, and technical issues. Ethical considerations include maintaining the privacy of third parties and managing the blurred boundaries between the informant's private and research contexts. Despite these challenges, the play-along method represents a significant methodological advancement for studying virtual worlds. It underscores the need for child-centered approaches that acknowledge the relationalities between players and digital infrastructures, and map unexplored digital terrain in video games. The method's participatory nature positions informants as experts in their own lives, providing rich, authentic insights into the commercial and social dimensions of online gaming.

Buying Consciously

Wednesday 27 Aug
10:00-11:30, ROOM 2.42

Sustainable Clothing Consumption

Stephanie Zwetzbacher
University of Vienna, Austria

This thesis examines how the practices of clothing consumption are organised for consumers of sustainable clothing in Vienna. Based on the praxeological approach of Theodore Schatzki, the dynamics of social, economic, ecological and aesthetic aspects in selection and purchasing practices are analysed. The research was conducted in an urban context in which second-hand shops and sustainable fashion initiatives play a central role. Qualitative methods such as problem-centred interviews, go-alongs, an artefact analysis and autoethnographic reflections were combined to capture selection and purchasing processes in detail with regard to key theoretical concepts. The findings show that sustainable clothing consumption represents a complex interplay of skills, routines, rules, teleoaffective structures and material conditions. Consumers' purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by practical considerations such as price, fit, durability and ecological criteria. Spatial and institutional settings as well as the arrangement of material elements such as clothes rails, mirrors and decoration organise shopping processes and shape the perception of products as sustainable or fashionable. In addition, practice ensembles were identified that include selection, purchase, maintenance, transport and transfer practices, which are interconnected. The thesis contributes to the academic debate on sustainable consumption by showing how practices of sustainable clothing consumption are embedded in social and material contexts and what challenges arise in the process. Finally, it offers perspectives for further research and recommendations for promoting sustainable consumption patterns through the targeted design of framework conditions.

Sustainable Fashion or Selective Consumption? Understanding Eco-Certified Clothing (non)Buyers in the Czech Republic

Eva Richter, Silvia Petty
Charles University, Czech Republic

Who buys eco-certified clothing in the Czech Republic, and why? And who doesn't – and why not? This study combines semi-structured interviews with buyers of eco-certified fashion and a web-based survey of a representative sample of Czech adults collected in 2021. The qualitative phase explores motivations and barriers in consumer decision-making, while the quantitative analysis maps attitudes, purchase intentions, and key predictors using a short version of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Our findings show that half of Czech consumers recognize at least one eco-certificate, and one-fifth purchased eco-certified clothing in the six months prior to the survey. Another third intended to do so within the following six months – yet half had no intention and no experience of purchasing any. Logistic regression analysis confirms that subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict purchase intention, alongside personal norms from the Value-Belief-Norm theory. We further identify specific beliefs shaping both engagement with and disengagement from eco-certified fashion, emphasizing the role of consumer resilience in balancing sustainability aspirations with economic and practical constraints.

By examining the Czech Republic – a historically underexplored consumer landscape – this study contributes to broader discussions on sustainable consumption in post-socialist economies. While embedded in global fashion trends, the Czech market is shaped by unique socio-economic transitions that influence consumer behavior. In line with the conference's call to explore "uncharted consumption landscapes," this paper brings insights from Central Europe into wider debates on ethical consumption, sustainability labels, and shifting perceptions of sustainable fashion.

Black and Plugged In: An examination of Black EV owners and their attitudes about sustainability, climate change, and environmental justice

Cassi Pittman Claytor
Case Western Reserve University, United States of America

Transportation is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and electric vehicles (EVs) are considered a key tool to reducing this impact (Bleviss 2021). However, the data on EV owners in the U.S. indicates that they tend to be high-income, highly educated, white male homeowners (Hardman et al 2021). Conditions such as inadequate and unequal distribution of charging stations affect Black buyers disproportionately and may contribute to lower rates of EV ownership among Blacks despite their expressed interest in purchasing EVs (Hardman et al 2021; Marpillero-Colomina 2022). Drawing on interview data with Black EV owners this paper will reveal how race impacts Blacks' experiences navigating the green economy as consumers. The goal of this work is to gauge the social, ideological, as well as financial factors motivating their decision to purchase an EV for Blacks. Additionally, this research will highlight the barriers Black EV owners confront, and if and how their racial identity impacts their purchase decisions. Beyond their purchase decision, this paper will reveal respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and concerns about climate change and environmental justice. Insight into diverse communities' attitudes toward and perceptions of the benefits and tradeoffs of adopting green technologies will be valuable as efforts and policies are implement to transition to a green economy, especially given the dramatic racial demographic shift in the U.S. that will occur simultaneously with the push to decarbonize the U.S. economy by 2050.This research places race at the forefront, examining the Black consumers engagement in sustainable consumption practices and interogating how race impacts ideologically driven consumption and the adoption of green technologies.

Beyond convenience: how consumer awareness influences sustainable e-commerce deliveries

Delphine Pernot, Ross Phillips
TØI - Norwegian Centre for Transport Research, Norway

The rapid growth of e-commerce deliveries has significant societal consequences, contributing to pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion, noise pollution, and public health concerns. Mitigating these impacts requires shifting to less polluting and safer transport modes, improving shipment consolidation, and worker well-being. In this context, consumers also play a crucial role – by prioritizing sustainable delivery options, they can support mitigation efforts.

This study, conducted within the CodeZERO EU-project, examines how consumers become aware of the societal impacts of e-commerce deliveries and explores behavioural change processes leading them to choose more sustainable options. Grounded in the Transtheoretical Model of Behavioural Change (Prochaska and Velicer, 1997), the research addresses:

•   How aware are consumers of the societal impacts of e-commerce deliveries and returns?

•   To what extent does consumer awareness influence delivery choices?

•   What triggers behavioural change toward sustainable options, and how does it happen?

Using a biographical approach (Cailly et al. 2020; Belton Chevallier et al. 2023), 21 interviews were conducted with consumers from Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway. Findings reveal that consumers have limited understanding of delivery-related sustainability issues. Retailers and policymakers play a minimal role in enhancing consumer awareness, despite their potential influence. Awareness of the consequences of deliveries can trigger behavioural changes, but only when aligned with pro-sustainability values or supported by opportunities such as convenient or cost-effective delivery options.

This research advances understanding of consumer choices in e-commerce logistics, highlighting pathways to more sustainable delivery practices.

Food 2: Eating Off-Menu

Wednesday 27 Aug
11:50-13:20, ROOM 1.12

From 'waste' to 'edible': exploring the revalorisation of surplus food at Sopköket

Jonas House
University of Southampton, United Kingdom

The significant amount of food waste generated in Western food systems is a major sustainability issue. Increasing scholarly attention is being paid to the causes of food waste – across the whole supply chain – as well as potential solutions. Important sociological contributions in this area have shown how food waste is shaped by the coordination of mundane practices, as well as the broader configuration of food system activities. Among such debates, another key issue is edibility: that is, the categorisation of something as 'food'. For example, if surplus or out-of-date food is to be 'revalorised', it needs to be classified as food rather than waste. While edibility is a recurrent theme across interdisciplinary literatures on food waste, sociological understanding of how things move in and out of the category of food remains limited. This paper aims to advance these debates. The paper is based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork at Sopköket, a Stockholm-based social enterprise that provides commercial catering based on 'rescued' surplus food. The research, which is currently in progress, seeks to understand how things are enacted as food, then waste, then food again, by attending to the material and discursive practices through which this is achieved. Alongside practical insights into how food waste may be effectively revalorised, the paper tries to develop understanding of how the category of 'food' is established, contested and changes. In doing so, it seeks to make a theoretical contribution to debates around sustainable dietary change and the sociology of consumption more broadly.

When is a meal not a meal? Taking animal products off the menu in meat-reducing households

Mike Foden
University of Bristol, United Kingdom

For many who are or cutting down on eating meat, or cutting it out entirely, its status as potential food is brought into question by a combination of environmental, health and animal welfare concerns. Drawing on qualitative research with 20 vegan, vegetarian and meat-reducing households in northern England, I first explore how their relationship with animal products is changing, highlighting the materialisation of ethical commitments in everyday encounters between human eaters and their potential food, and noting the embodied and affective dimensions of these encounters. I then consider what happens when competing '(in)edibilities' are negotiated in everyday domestic foodwork. As household members – varying in their ethical commitments, cultural expectations, culinary repertoires and embodied taste preferences – encounter potential ingredients and meals with their own diverse qualities and affordances, they must navigate competing claims as to the material and symbolic boundary between food and non-food. Here, the unresolved status (at least for some participants) of meat as no longer viable food, is brought into negotiation with a host of other claims, including those concerning wasting 'perfectly good' food, questions of what is natural and unnatural, fears around highly processed foods, expectations of what constitutes a meal, and bodily experiences of hunger, pleasure and disgust. In turn, the outcomes of these negotiations are routinised into everyday practice in the form of cooking repertoires, recipes, meal plans and shopping lists, and the varying deployment of red lines and rules of thumb.

Systems of edibility and meat replacement in contemporary Asia

Arve Hansen, Jonas House, Johannes Volden, Ulrikke Wethal
University of Oslo, Norway

Replacing conventional meat with non-animal or lab-grown alternatives – 'meat replacers' – is regarded as a crucial step towards sustainable diets. However, consumption research shows that substituting meat is complex. It remains unclear how and why particular meat replacers become accepted as edible, desirable food (or not), and the processes behind this (un)acceptability. Understanding this, we argue, requires a holistic approach to studying 'edibility formations' across scales and value chains, accounting for both production and consumption. This paper addresses this need. It focuses on Eastern Asia, a region which – despite long histories of meat replacement, and the fastest growing global markets for meat replacer products – remains largely underexplored in debates on sustainable meat replacement. The paper marks the beginning of a new research project, which aims to develop a holistic account of how distinct edibility formations develop across the regulation, production, supply and consumption of meat replacers in Eastern Asia. The paper has two main aims. First, drawing on previous research and digital sources, we explore which meat replacer products are currently produced and sold in the region, and identify central meat replacement practices. Second, through secondary data and document analysis, we map regional trends in the regulation, production and political economy of meat replacement. Building on this, we present a first systematic account of East Asian meat replacement products, practices and provisioning actors. We also indicate how this informs our developing 'systems of edibility' approach: a theoretical and methodological account of how things become qualified as edible, palatable and appropriate food.

Fermentation, microbiodiversity, and health: partnering with the 'good' microbes

Maxence Blanchet
Lyfe Institut Research Center, France

Microbes have long been seen as threats to human health. Their association with disease and dirt can lead to avoidance (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1989). Yet, in recent years, fermented foods have gained popularity. These foods are seen as both healthy and safe, aligning with what Paxson (2008) calls 'post-pasteurian paradigm', which frames microbes as health allies.

This presentation explores how consumers of fermented foods perceive health benefits and associated representations.

To investigate this, around 30 producer-consumers in France, Sweden, and Hungary are being interviewed between January 2024 and May 2025. As fermentation requires knowledge and involvement, these individuals, considered 'early adopters' (House, 2016), offer insights into the drivers of dietary integration, among which is health.

Through practice theory (Shove & Pantzar, 2005), the study examines how the practice of fermentation varies by context and explores its social frameworks. It explores how the links between microbes, health, and well-being are articulated among producers-eaters.

Preliminary results from France and Sweden suggest a link between microbial diversity in fermented foods and perceived health benefits. The importance of ingesting living microbes is emphasized, as consuming them symbolizes incorporating life itself (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1989). Further observations will deepen this exploration within specific social contexts.

In a broader perspective, this research will help to understand how well-being and perceived health benefits can drive the integration of a new food into the diet, across different social settings.

Clothing and Reuse

Wednesday 27 Aug

11:50-13:20, ROOM 2.11

Circular pasts, presents and futures: understanding the contextual dynamics of everyday circular practices

Mary Greene
Wageningen University and Research, The Netherlands

The Circular Economy is often framed as a forward-looking sustainability transition, yet circular practices, such as repair, reuse and resource-sharing, have long histories. While some practices persist, others have faded or re-emerged in altered forms, shaped by economic structures, governance regimes, socio-material infrastructures and cultural norms. However, little attention is given to how these contextual forces shape circular practices over time.

This paper argues for a temporally embedded approach to circular consumption, integrating social practice theory, political economy and historical/futures sociology to examine the past, present and future of circular practices. It explores: (1) how everyday circular practices have emerged, declined and re-emerged across different socio-economic settings; (2) how contemporary socio-technical shifts are shaping circular consumption today; and (3) how future socio-material contexts and governance regimes might influence circularity over time.

As a position paper, this work develops a conceptual framework rather than presenting empirical findings. It proposes a comparative agenda examining circularity across diverse socio-economic contexts (e.g., Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa), using historical inquiry, contemporary practice analysis, and futures-oriented methodologies such as scenario-building and participatory foresight. This paper advances a historically and contextually situated perspective on circularity, challenging assumptions of linear transition and offering directions for research and policy on the conditions under which circular practices can be reclaimed, reinvented or adapted in different contexts.

Revaluing clothes: Retailing, alternative modes of valuation, and the enabling of circular consumption

Christian Fuentes, Devrim Aslan, Frida Eggert
Lund University, Sweden

There is broad agreement that circular consumption is demanding for consumers. Sociological studies of circular consumption have shown that this mode of consumption demands considerable consumption work, financial resources, specific competence, and supporting infrastructure. Against this background, it has been argued that we need to understand better how infrastructures and economic arrangements can be put in place to support circular consumption. This paper attempts to take a step in this direction by investigating the phenomenon of circular retailing.

Retailers are working to enable the reuse, repair, and redesign of products and materials through take-back systems, second-hand sales, and repair services. However, for this to be possible, retailers need to "circularize" consumption by constructing circular products, recruiting consumers, and enabling circular practices. This is a challenge made even more difficult by contemporary consumer culture and its focus on novelty and convenience.

In this paper, we empirically explore and conceptualize the work of "revaluing" made by retailers to enable circular consumption. Theoretically, we combine theories of practice with the sociology of valuation to explore the valuation work of retailers and how these products are then re-valued by consumers as they become incorporated into their everyday practices.

Empirically, the focus is on clothing retailing. We draw on an ethnographic study of Nudie Jeans – a Swedish clothing retailer that promotes product longevity. The study comprises ethnographic interviews with management, store workers, and consumers and observations of stores and online material.

Digital Platforms and the Valuing of Second-Hand Clothing: The case of Vinted

Frida Eggert
Lund University, Sweden

The dominant consumer behavior approach to circular consumption says little about the social, cultural, and material complexity involved in the everyday practical accomplishment of circularity by consumers. To help bridge this gap and to contribute to the emerging field of circular consumption research focusing on practices, this paper explores the use of second-hand clothing platforms. To be the enablers of circularity they often are framed as, these platforms would need to change the clothing consumption of their users in ways that maintain the value of clothing. How are second-hand clothing platforms shaping the valuation of clothing? Does this valuation enable circular clothing consumption, and if so, how?

The paper combines theories of practice with sociology of valuation. As such, what is of interest is how the use of second-hand platforms could impact how the value of clothing is assessed, negotiated, contested, established, and maintained in everyday practices. This in turn could enable, but also potentially hinder, the performance of circular clothing consumption, for example in terms of which clothing is bought, and sold, which is worn, and for how long - and under what conditions. Empirically, material is collected through digital observations of the second-hand clothing platform Vinted and interviews with consumers using it.

This paper is a part of my compilation thesis 'When Second-Hand Fashion Goes Online: Digital platforms and the promise of circularity' and is currently in progress.

Mothers' motivations for purchasing secondhand children's clothing on peer-to-peer platforms

Minna Kallioharju, Terhi-Anna Wilska, Annamari Vänskä, Eero Rantala
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This study aims to illuminate the consumption of secondhand branded children's clothing, with a focus on the motivations of mothers who purchase secondhand items on peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms. Previous discussions about motivations have mainly centered around products or clothing in general, overlooking the rise of markets for pre-owned children's clothes. We have explored two previously identified key motivations for secondhand shopping from a parenting perspective: economic and sustainability. Additionally, we introduced a new motivational factor, which we call good parenting. Furthermore, we analyzed how sociodemographic variables are associated with different motivations. The study used a convenience sample of Finnish mothers from branded children's clothing P2P groups on social media. An online survey gathered 210 responses, and descriptive frequency and regression analysis were used to study motivations and demographic factors. We found that economic, sustainability and good parenting motivations were all significant drivers of mothers' purchasing. Younger participants were more influenced by financial factors. Respondents who were not on parental leave and those with higher education exhibited a stronger inclination towards sustainability, whereas those on parental leave were more inclined towards purchase incentives related to good parenting. These insights are valuable for the children's clothing business sector and for promoting sustainable consumption.

Sustainability, Attitudes and Actions

Wednesday 27 Aug
11:50-13:20, ROOM 2.42

Sustainability Without Sacrifice? On Middle-Class Justification Strategies regarding Sustainability

Robine Horckmans, Bram Spruyt
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Research on sustainable consumption has repeatedly identified an attitude-behaviour paradox (ABP), wherein people's attitudes toward sustainability do not translate into actual behaviour. Building on this work, we adopt a cultural sociological perspective to examine how middle-class individuals justify their consumption choices across four life domains: clothing, housing, transportation, and food.

A thematic analysis of 20 in-depth interviews revealed three justification strategies. First, respondents expressed a sense of entitlement regarding certain unsustainable behaviours, framing them as essential to 'self-development' and 'self-expression' – core middle-class values. Second, they framed their behaviour through a 'conscious-awareness logic', perceiving their behaviours as justifiable despite their inherent unsustainability. Related to this, respondents established 'boundaries' to their sustainability efforts, acting only on changes they deemed feasible. Both justification strategies illustrate that beneath seemingly strong ecological attitudes lies a reluctance to give up certain comforts and desires. Here, compensation comes into play. Precisely because (1) respondents were unwilling to abandon specific behaviours, (2) they had the financial means to make adjustments, and (3) sustainability is inherently multidimensional, they could compensate for unsustainable actions by engaging in sustainable practices elsewhere. Some consumption patterns hold such significance for the voracious middle class that they remain non-negotiable – even in the name of sustainability. This is particularly apparent in the domain of transportation, specifically travel.

Theoretically, this suggests that the ABP may not exist, as respondents express a broader individualistic middle class narrative, complicating the pursuit of sustainability through individual efforts alone.

Green Attitudes Versus Action: Lessons Learnt From Four ECoC Cities

Katalin Formadi
University of Pannonia, Hungary

The Greencool project (No. 2021-1-HU01-KA220-HED-000027563) explored environmental attitudes and actions among young people. Despite positive attitudes, it is not clear how these translate into actions. The research aims to understand young people's environmental attitudes and actions in these cities and how demographic characteristics influence this.

In the current study, we seek to answer two research questions (Q1): What are the green attitudes and actions of youth in European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs)? (Q2): Do the demographic characteristics of youth in ECoCs influence their green attitudes and actions? How do attitudes turn into real action?

The attitude-behaviour-action model and the theory of planned behaviour can be used together to look at how attitudes to eco-friendly behaviour are affected by things like what peers think and social norms (the beliefs individuals have about what others should do and how important these are), the perceived ability to perform the behaviour depends on skills, but also on the availability of resources and opportunities to do so.

A questionnaire survey was carried out between April and June 2022 in four different countries (Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania) that have already been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture. Descriptive statistics and relationship analysis (Cramer's V and Kendall's Tau) were used to analyse the collected data (n = 712) based on primary questionnaire surveys.

This research adds to our knowledge of the relationship between green attitudes and actions and provides practical guidance for policy-makers to promote green behaviours and tailor initiatives accordingly.

Meat consumption and sufficiency – a practice theoretical study of a social movement supporting sustainable lifestyles

Katri Weckroth
Tampere University, Finland

This study examines sustainable meat consumption in the empirical context of a Finnish social movement. Meat is one of the most carbon intensive objects of consumption and thus a key issue of ecological sustainability within food consumption. The study takes a practice theoretical perspective tentatively combined with the sufficiency concept, and looks at sustainable meat consumption from the perspective of everyday food practices. The social movement is a registered association and a sustainable lifestyle centre, part of the international Transition Network, that aims to help 3,5% of Finnish people transition to a "sustainable life" by 2030 with their workshop and online course programme and regular events. Their programme provides information and peer-support, while making participants choose from actions to reduce their carbon footprint towards the sustainable, yearly 2,5 tonnes of CO2e. Methodologically, this study takes an ethnographic approach, combining in-depth interviews with programme participants, participant observation and online materials. The study is in progress, but the preliminary research questions are: What does the goal of sustainable life entail for meat consumption in food practices? What is the role of sufficiency in these endeavours? The aim is to contribute to practice theoretical sociological consumption research in the sustainability context.

Making Places

Wednesday 27 Aug

14:00-15:30, ROOM 1.12

Imaginaries of Authenticity and Mediatization of Consumption Practices in Italian Hamlets

Enrico Mariani
University of Urbino "Carlo Bo", Italy

The debate surrounding the hamlets of Italy's inner areas experienced a surge during the Covid-19 pandemic, partly driven by the desire to escape densely populated and congested urban centers. This contribution focuses on the media imaginaries of Italian hamlets, taken as a case study within the broader issue of Europe's inner peripheries, economically and politically marginalized. The contribution aims to identify the distinctive features of the media imaginaries of hamlets in relation to the social and cultural phenomena catalyzed by the pandemic. These imaginaries are intrinsically tied to classification criteria assessing the authenticity of hamlets. This research examines specific media artifacts that convey the conception of authenticity, treating them as narrative dispositifs that contribute to constructing the value of the experiences offered by Italian hamlets. The research highlights several value systems that describe authenticity and provide guidelines for its recognition, thereby legitimizing the worth of certain experiences. Changes observed in the analyzed media artifacts regarding authentication processes, both pre- and post-pandemic, allow the conclusions to foster a critical perspective on the dominant orientations of contemporary inner peripheries' consumption practices. The prevailing model of short trips to villages not only promotes visits to historical, cultural, and natural heritage, but also reflects a recent trend of narrating encounters with locals through comedic and ironic lenses, showcasing a certain idea of the experience offered by Italian inner areas' hamlets, hiding the issues of marginalization and exalting an idealized authentic daily life.

Houses and cities as social mirrors. How lifestyles and consumer practices shape private and public spaces

Gian Paolo Lazzer, Francesca Setiffi
University of Padova, Italy

This paper interprets houses and cities as lenses for understanding social changes and how consumer practices shape private spheres (houses) and public spaces (urban areas). A growing interest in urban changes and their effects on daily life has emerged; however, scholars have paid less attention to interpreting social changes by together examining houses and urban spaces and how the meaning of "home" has evolved.

By analyzing diverse data on social changes and consumer practices, we explored how house designs and practices in Northeast Italy have changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, how overtourism redefined urban and domestic life in Santa Marta (a Venice neighborhood), how elderly care homes can be experienced as "total institutions" or "proper homes", and how architects are influencing visions of future housing. This paper applies practice theory, cultural dichotomies (public/private, clean/dirty, etc.), and academic literature on future studies to interpret social and cultural changes starting from domestic life.

Defining and redefining what constitutes a home today is crucial for understanding people's reactions during the pandemic and how sustainability, digital innovation, changes in work practices, and future imaginaries are shaping people's domestic lives and urban spaces.

Commodification as remedy and problem: the everyday negotiation of territorial stigma in Scampia

Sara Iandolo
Istituto di Studi Politici San Pio V, Italy

Drawing on insights from cultural and consumption studies on stigmatization and commodification (Kosut, 2006; Merkel, 2006; Sandikci & Ger, 2010) and research on tourist valorization of marginalized urban areas (Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Frenzel, 2016), this study examines the commodification of territorial stigma (Wacquant, 2007; Marelli, 2019) in Scampia, a peripheral neighborhood in Naples, southern Italy. Understanding commodification as a dynamic, ongoing process, with goods and services continuously entering and exiting the market (Sassatelli, 2007), the paper explores how the stigma is reconfigured and leveraged as a commodity by the music, film, and tourism industries, as well as by residents in their daily lives in the neighborhood. Scampia is internationally known for its "Vele", monumental public housing inspired by Le Corbusier's designs, and is burdened by stigma related to poverty, unemployment, and institutional neglect, amplified by media and political narratives (Wacquant, 2007). The global success of the Gomorrah franchise – spanning literature, film, and television – along with the rap music industry, has entrenched this stigmatization, while also amplifying fascination with the underground aesthetic of the neighborhood, transforming it into a tourist destination. Based on one year of ethnographic research and analysis of cultural products (newspapers, films, music videos, song lyrics, novels, and books), findings reveal that the commodification of territorial stigma involves not only major creative industries but also residents, who view it as both an opportunity for a redefinition of stigma, while simultaneously confronting it as a challenge to be negotiated, asserted, or rejected.

Cultural Consumption 1: Patterning Culture

Wednesday 27 Aug
14:00-15:30, ROOM 2.11

Digital Divides: Visual Literacy and Status Signaling Through Travel Content on Social Media

Jana Kovářová, Zuzana Chytková
Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Republic

Social media platforms have democratized access to status symbols and cultural education and contemporary research suggests this can potentially lead to transforming how social status is constructed and maintained. This study challenges this assumption by examining how working-class and middle-class young adults create and curate travel content on social media, revealing persistent class-based differences in digital self-presentation strategies.

Through semiotic analysis of 750 Instagram posts and interviews with 16 content creators (aged 25-39), we demonstrate that effective status signaling requires sophisticated understanding of visual codes and cultural connotations that remain closely tied to class position. While all participants actively use Instagram to document travel experiences, their approaches differ significantly. Working-class participants focus on direct documentation and universally recognized symbols, creating content primarily for immediate social circles. In contrast, middle-class participants engage in strategic narrative building, demonstrating cultural understanding through carefully curated "experiential CVs" that showcase both existing cultural capital and their ability to grow it.

These findings contribute to our understanding of how class position influences not just the consumption of travel experiences, but more importantly, the ability to effectively translate these experiences into status signals in the digital age. This suggests that the digital divide in social media status construction may be less about access to experiences or platforms, and more about the class-based cultural competencies required to navigate the sophisticated visual language of contemporary status signaling.

From Non-Participants to Culture Enthusiasts and everything in-between: A study of stability and change in Flemish participation profiles

Elke Van Dam, Jessy Siongers, John Lievens
University Ghent, Belgium

This study examines leisure and cultural participation patterns and profiles in Flanders using theories of cultural capital, social stratification, cultural omnivorousness and voraciousness. The research addresses questions about stability and change in participation profiles from 2004 to 2021, incorporating a focus on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using latent class analysis, we identified clusters based on participation in out-of-home cultural and broader leisure activities. Data were sourced from the Participation survey across multiple years (2004-2021). Four participation profiles emerged from 2004 to 2020: "stay-at-homes," "heritage and museum visitors," "cultural browsers," and "culture enthusiasts," distinguished by their levels and types of engagement. In 2020-2021, the profiles expanded to five, incorporating pandemic-specific leisure adaptations such as increased reliance on family-based and socially-oriented activities. Cultural omnivores and voracious participants exhibited shifts towards alternative activities due to limited access to cultural venues during the pandemic. Findings confirm the persistent role of social stratification in participation patterns, with higher education, urban living, and cultural socialisation predicting greater engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the resilience of broader participation profiles, while also illustrating temporary shifts in leisure patterns, raising questions about post-pandemic trends. This study contributes to policy development by offering insights into barriers to cultural participation and the need for equitable access, especially for lower-educated, rural, and economically disadvantaged populations. It underscores the importance of fostering cultural capital and accessibility in shaping inclusive cultural and leisure policies.

Fragmentation, 'Middle-Classification' or Stability? Working-Class Culture in Finland, 1981–2017

Jarmo Kallunki, Semi Purhonen
Tampere University, Finland

It has long been a commonplace in sociology and cultural studies to think that working-class culture has fragmented. However, systematic evidence for fragmentation is, at best, scattered. The problems in the literature are evident: definitions of 'working class' and 'culture' vary, understanding of fragmentation is often ambiguous, and the period over which the assumed fragmentation transpires is unspecific. In this work-in-progress paper, we address the fragmentation of working-class culture by reconsidering the debates over fragmentation and the 'middle-classification' of working-class cultures. Empirically, we use high-quality survey data from Finland covering the period 1981–2017 (N=17,394). We operationalize working class as conventionally as possible (defining it by occupation and educational level) and culture as widely as possible (using over 100 items of cultural practices). By fragmentation, we mean increasing within-class variation of the working-class-typical cultural items and patterns between 1981 and 2017, while middle-classification refers to the increase in mixing of working-class and middle-class-typical items and patterns over the same period. We employ two analyses. The first approach constructs patterns of class cultures for each survey year (1981, 1991, 2002, 2017) to estimate whether working-class culture remains stable, gets fragmented, or middle-classified. The second approach starts from the first year (1981), defines class cultures based on it, and follows their evolution over time, keeping the definitions intact. Our study highlights the importance of being attentive to the coherence of class cultures over time, particularly working-class culture, which is often assumed to be a monolithic counter-image of middle-class culture.

Changing Consumption

Wednesday 27 Aug
14:00-15:30, ROOM 2.42

Can workplace lunches help normalize more plant-based eating?

Morten Wendler, Thomas Bøker Lund, Mette Weinreich Hansen
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

The paper investigates how consumers' understandings and experiences of plant- and meat-based food are influenced by their workplace lunch services. The paper utilizes data from a qualitative investigation of workplace lunches in 6 different organizations. More specifically, the analysis is based on 40 qualitative interviews with employees, 7 interviews with lunch coordinators and managers from the participating organizations as well as field notes from participant observation sessions during lunch breaks at each corporation. With an outset in theories of practice, the analysis investigates connections between how employees understand and use the lunch service. In addition, the paper investigates how the everyday food practices of lunch goers are organized and focus on the role of plant- and meat based foods in both contexts. This forms the basis for a discussion of if and how workplace lunch services can serve as a political tool, e.g. as lunch interventions, for normalizing more plant-based food practices. The paper thus contributes to current discussions within the field of sociology of consumption by empirically investigating if and how normalization works.

Phased routinisation of plant-based food consumption in Finland

Roosa Luukkanen, Sami Koponen, Mari Niva
University of Helsinki, Finland

There is an urgent need to move towards more plant-based diets in many countries, but progress has been slow. Recently, the sociology of sustainable food consumption has increasingly paid attention to the food consumption patterns of 'flexitarians', that is, to the ambiguous category of consumers with some interest in meat reduction. Correspondingly, this study dives into the multifaceted and often messy process of dietary change from the perspectives of consumers (from omnivores to vegetarians) who have reduced, or have at least attempted to do so, the consumption of animal-based foods in the past few years. We draw on practice theoretical literature on sustainable food consumption, and House's concept of 'phased routinisation' in particular. We are interested in understanding how enduring shifts in food consumption take place in consumers' lives when adopting more plant-based food consumption practices. Drawing on 25 thematic interviews with Finnish consumers, the main objective of the paper is to enrich current knowledge about everyday complexities involved in dietary transitions by elucidating consumers' progression through various phases and the setbacks that may occur along the way. The data collection will be completed in spring 2025. The research questions will be fine-tuned as the data analysis progresses. Nonetheless, our presentation offers preliminary findings on the phased routinisation of plant-based oriented diets in Finland. Additionally, we discuss the suitability of the concept of phased routinisation for the empirical analysis of dietary transitions in the context of plant-based food consumption.

The sociology of consumption and the experimental turn: Reflections from food research

Nicklas Neuman
Uppsala University, Sweden

A distinctive development of the social and behavioral sciences after the millennium shift is a move towards causal identification, reproducibility, and replicability as the most prized scientific virtues. This can be seen in "the credibility revolution" of Economics and the aftermath of the replication crisis, which first hit Psychology and then spread widely across different scientific domains (including medicine and natural sciences). In the midst of all this, we can also speak of a new methodological "turn" of mainstream social sciences: an experimental turn. Today, there is a vast literature in Sociology where experimental methods – like quasi and natural experiments, survey experiments, and randomized controlled trials (RCT) – are employed, yet the experimental turn is not yet as firmly established in the discipline as it is in current Economics and Political Science.

The reasons why Sociology has not adopted the experimental turn to the same extent, and whether or not this is a disadvantage for the discipline, lie beyond the scope of this contribution. My aim is humbler: to reflect on the experimental turn with a concrete application to the sociology of consumption; a subfield that, I dare to say, would greatly benefit from catching on to the general experimental currents of social science. I will present three studies focused specifically on food-related topics, all of general relevance for the sociology of consumption: one natural experiment, one survey experiment, and one RCT. They all test a causal relation between phenomena of interest for the sociology of (food consumption): the effect of childhood schooling on adult men's housework, the effect of scenario framing on consumer support for a "food-tax exchange", and the effect of repeated social reinforcement on everyday food behavior. Based on these studies, I reflect upon how to investigate sociologically relevant questions about consumption experimentally, as well how a sociological imagination can be of great benefit to the contemporary mainstream of experimental consumer research.

Towards routinisation of more sustainable lifestyles: Successes and failures of the engagement in 'low-tech' practices

Simon Vuille
University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

I study people engaging in a conscious and volitional change by participating in a citizen science experiment. Theoretically, I'm using practice theories that capture materials, competences, and meanings. My research question is: when and how do participants manage to change consumption and routinise new practices?

The empirical gateway of my study is a low-tech experiment. Low tech qualifies objects, techniques or technical systems that meet three criteria: usefulness, accessibility, and sustainability. It is an attempt of social change through diffusion of practical, useful, and less environmentally harmful technologies. The experiment comprises eight low-tech practices (from a bioponic tank to a fog shower) that participants could choose. Participants had one month to implement the low-tech system at their place of residence and the actual trial of the system lasted two months. The experiment reached four hundred participants and demanded regular feedback through weekly questionnaires. Alongside these longitudinal quantitative data, I conducted 35 interviews.

Data analyses are ongoing. Quantitative data allow me to dress socio-economic profiles of people engaging in low-tech practices, while overall gathered data enable the analysis of processes and conditions of adoption or rejection of these practices. Through statistics, I have information about the economic and social factors that can support the pursue of the low-tech practice through time. Finally, I can observe the re-organising that the engagement in a new practice demands in regards to other routine practices. This study can help understanding how to mobilise people in order to routinise more sustainable lifestyles.

Food 3: Food, Poverty and Status

Thursday 28 Aug

9:00-10:30, ROOM 1.12

The materiality of food consumption among families with low socioeconomic status: results from photovoice study

Ewa Kopczyńska
Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Poland

The everyday food practices of consumers with low socioeconomic status have been studied in various contexts. These practices are usually perceived through the lenses of crisis, deprivation of resources, and seen as coping strategies, practiced out of pragmatic necessity rather than as cultural artifacts. However, this line of interpretation carries the risk of reductionist conclusions regarding e.g. the social and economic role of alternative, informal food practices, their resilience capacities and sustainability potential. The studies on informal food supply strategies in Eastern Europe carried out for few decades now and encapsulated in Jehlicka's concept of quiet sustainability, provides different perspective and the alternative framing for food consumption.

This paper focus on the materiality of everyday food practices of people with limited financial resources and limited agency as food products customers. The empirical data for the study are photos taken by parents of school-age children in Krakow, participants of three focus groups. These photos are analyzed with the tools of actor-network theory and social practices theory, with focus on sociomaterial agency of food. Instead of defining the practices through the lens of reduced consumers' choice, the materiality of food environments will be seen as actively and positively contributing to cultural values, social bonds and unique resources. The aim of the paper is to identify these values and resources as inscribed in food's sociomateriality. In particular, the role of cooking skills is analyzed as building the individual and collective resilience and strengthening family bonds. Identifying the elements (eg. highly-processes food, kitchen infrastructure) composing specific eating occasions and the roles these elements play in the change of eating patterns helps to go beyond 'catching-up' interpretation of post-socialist cultures. The results of the analysis provide the basis for understanding the risks and opportunities of financially deprived families' food patterns, dimensions of food insecurity, their vulnerability, and resilience.

Who can afford the effort? How Everyday Time Constraints Affect the Likelihood of Meat Reduction

Alicia Dunker
University of Hamburg, Germany

In meat-normative societies, reducing meat consumption requires conscious effort, even for individuals aware of its sustainability concerns. This study examines how everyday life circumstances either facilitate or hinder this effort, with a primary focus on time constraints arising from work obligations and caregiving responsibilities. These constraints are analysed in interaction with individuals' awareness of the unsustainability of meat consumption, while controlling for other social and socio-economic factors.

The first objective is to assess how time constraints and responsibilities affect the likelihood of reducing meat consumption. Using logistic regression models with interaction terms, this study analyses data from a cross-sectional survey conducted in Hamburg, Germany. The second objective is to explore whether these effects vary by gender, as women – particularly mothers – often face greater time demands due to unpaid domestic labour and childcare responsibilities.

Preliminary findings indicate that structural time constraints, such as living with children under 13 or working full-time (as opposed to being retired), reduce the likelihood of meat reduction, particularly at lower levels of awareness of meat's unsustainability. However, this effect diminishes as awareness increases and may even reverse at very high awareness levels – though this finding should be interpreted with caution due to data variability. Additionally, findings suggest that these negative effects are slightly stronger for women.

By examining the interplay between awareness, caregiving responsibilities, and work obligations, this study contributes to broader discussions on sustainable food practices and the allocation of time as a critical resource to effectively support individual-level meat reduction efforts.

Sufficient? Negotiating everyday necessities and social relations on low-paid benefits

Silje E. Skuland, Andreea I. Alecu
SIFO/OsloMet, Norway

Despite generous welfare arrangement in Norway, households relying on benefits were heavily impacted by the post-covid high inflation on everyday necessities such as food, energy and housing. This paper investigates the unmet needs, coping strategies and budgetary restriction of recipients of financial assistance (a means-tested, temporary and low paid benefit scheme meant to cover basic needs). Drawing on 20 in-debt interviews and a survey (n=1500) benefit recipients to study carried out in 2022-23, this paper combines the two related theoretical concepts on everyday consumption needs; 'adequacy' and 'sufficiency'. Both attempts to define a certain scale of (reduced) consumption. While adequacy draws on a need-oriented and right-based approaches to a decent living standard (Penne et al, 2019), sufficiency is often oriented towards social practices (e.g. stretching resources, sharing, repairing) voluntary carried out by the practitioners. To make ends meet, the respondents employed several strategies to reduce the costs such as repairing, buying second-hand, rationing resources, borrowing and sharing as well as ongoing searching for sales. While these coping strategies were tedious and time-consuming, they gave a sense of accomplishment. Periods of relying on help for others provoked feelings of shame. Meanwhile, social needs (having guests, serving snacks, gift-giving, wearing make-up) were prioritized albeit resulting in less at the end of the month. This suggests the importance of upholding a sense of social dignity and that adequate needs are intrinsically socio-material.

Anything but hard discount: The social stratification of grocery shopping venues in Italy, 2014-2022

Filippo Oncini
Maastricht University, The Netherlands

Quantitative research on the social and cultural stratification of food consumption patterns has primarily focused on differences in the foods consumed rather than the venues where these items are purchased. This oversight is significant, as shopping venues play a crucial role in conveying social class membership and distinguishing consumption patterns, particularly in terms of ethical, innovative, and sustainable practices. Using detailed data from the ISTAT Household Budget Consumption (HBS) survey from 2014 to 2022, this paper examines the distribution and temporal evolution of 20 food and drink items commonly consumed by Italian families across eight different grocery shopping venues: traditional shops, street markets, hard discounts, supermarkets, department stores, direct from producers, and the internet. The findings indicate that alternative, more sustainable, and innovative venues remain extremely marginal in routine shopping habits, and that overall patterns exhibit only minor fluctuations over time. In addition, contrary to the literature focused on food consumption, our results suggest that income, rather than educational level, is a strong predictor of food shopping patterns. Upper income families are more likely to frequent venues perceived as more sustainable and innovative, and in line with the omnivore-univore literature, they demonstrate greater diversity in their grocery shopping styles, purchasing a wider variety of food types from different locations, while consistently avoiding hard discount venues.

Cultural Consumption 2: Organizing Culture

Thursday 28 Aug
9:00-10:30, ROOM 2.11

Cultural capital and public libraries in the age of algorithms

Riie Heikkilä
Tampere University, Finland

Recently, automated algorithms and recommendation systems have been claimed to be re-shaping cultural tastes. While being able to recognize peoples' cultural consumption patterns and to recommend infinite new cultural items, algorithms have been also shown to narrow cultural repertoires. Nevertheless, there is little empirical information about how algorithms actually affect cultural consumption. This paper seeks to study this within an cultural institution which plays an important role for the transmission of cultural capital: the public libraries. For instance Anne Goulding (2008) has argued that public libraries freely offer all three subtypes of cultural capital: objectified cultural capital (fiction and non-fiction books, different audio-visual materials and so on) meant to enable the acquisition of embodied cultural capital (knowledge and linguistic skills) which, in turn, plays a key role in achieving institutionalised cultural capital (educational qualifications). In Finland, over the recent decade or so, several public libraries have started to manage their collections using algorithmic collection management. Through 24 interviews with library managers and one-week-long ethnography periods in altogether 11 Finnish libraries from 4 larger library networks, I compare libraries using algorithmic collection management with libraries still relying on partly or completely human-led collection management. I analyse the interviews and field diaries with the help of content analysis and ask: How does machine-led versus human-led collection management contribute to the dissemination of cultural capital in the libraries – and how do Finnish public libraries produce and transmit cultural capital in the era of algorithms?

Cultural consumption and creative placemaking in institutional context: the case of Cultuur&Campus Putselaan

Janna Michael, Amanda Brandellero, Natasha Taylor
Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Cultuur&Campus Putselaan (C&CP) aims to become a hub that brings cultural consumption, creative placemaking, sustainability transitions, learning and research together. While uniting these activities, it further aims to be a place for encounters and co-creation between locals, students, and professionals.

In this paper we are drawing on participant observations, interviews, and document analysis as part of an institutional ethnography (Smith, 2006), a critical method of inquiry and 'sociology for people'. We explore how different stakeholders make sense of C&CP and navigate its institutional context. Thereby we further explore how the institutional context affects the social production of space (Lefevbre, 1991) and C&CP's ambitions to serve as a third place (Oldenburg, 1989).

By examining how institutional constraints inform cultural consumption, creative placemaking, and forms of organizing at C&CP, this study expands on existing academic debates on the social production of space and third places while offering practical insights for policymakers, urban planners, and cultural organizations striving for inclusive and participatory urban spaces.

Legitimising Islamic Art: An Analysis of Religious, Political, and Aesthetic Frameworks Deployed by Cultural Intermediaries in Turkey

Irmak Karademir, Ozgur Yaren
University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Debates surrounding legitimation in the field of cultural production often centre on the struggle for recognition by newcomers, who are frequently positioned as avant-garde and politically progressive. In this paper, we explore the tensions that arise in the legitimation processes of the arts in Turkey, which stem from the rise of what is referred to as 'Islamic art', an important aspect of Erdoğan's quest for cultural hegemony. We specifically focus on cultural journalists as intermediaries between a so-called 'Conservative/Islamic audience' and cultural producers, playing an essential role in defining what constitutes 'good' taste. We ask: What kind of frames do critics publishing for a 'conservative audience' employ? How do they utilise religio-political values? To what degree is there consensus in deploying aesthetic and political values? We merge a descriptive quantitative analysis of the criteria employed in critiques with an inductive qualitative analysis of the themes underpinning critics' evaluative frameworks. Our analysis reveals that cultural journalists — particularly those publishing in 'highbrow' outlets — tend to use universal aesthetic frames in their judgement. In contrast, those publishing in lowbrow outlets draw more on religio-political values, using frames such as 'Anti-establishment', 'Islamic moral sensitivities', 'Outsiders/Adversaries', and the Political position of the artist. We discuss our findings in relation to existing studies that problematise how political and religious frameworks shape cultural judgements, and we also refer to context-specific literature on the transformation of Turkish cultural fields, which often treats the 'Islamic' cultural producers, consumers, intermediaries, and audiences as a homogeneous block.

Cultural consumption, media and generations between fragmented imaginaries and mediatization of memories in the Italian context

Silvia Leonzi, Giovanni Ciofalo, Lorenzo Ugolini
Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

The paper presents the first results of the research "The Interplay of Memory, Imaginaries and Generations in the Age of Hybrid Media" (Sapienza University of Rome), focused on exploring how the evolution of media consumption and prosumption in a scenario characterized by deep mediatization and full hybridization impacts the creation of a shared memory and a collective imaginary across generations. Starting from the capability of transmedia narratives to fuel the dissemination of contents and symbols, activating co-creative practices traceable to prosumption logics, we aim to understand whether and to what extent it might correspond to an erosion of the construction of a shared memory and imaginary among individuals and communities, potentially changing the social role of memory, and eventually, from the context of cultural industry, having broader effects on social life.

More specifically, the paper presents the result of a phase of the research focused on the consumption among the Italian young people of "cult" media products produced in the last decades and addressing relevant social issues (as for example "Sex and the City" and "Desperate Housewives" with respect of gender-related issues). These products were discussed within focus groups in which participants belonged to Generation Z, aiming at understanding whether and to what extent those products were still known, consumed and related to the addressed social issues.

The first results of the research show that the fruition of meanings related to cultural products appears to be increasingly disconnected from the roots of narratives and, as a paradoxical consequence, increasingly linked to their representations, deprived of meaning. The considered products appear to be still well-known, but more as a tool to produce re-semantized contents (such as memes) rather than for the original disruptive social-related meaning.

Self-Help Housing (Re)Constructions

Thursday 28 Aug
9:00-10:30, ROOM 2.42

Hidden and revealing collectivities of housing in the Czech Republic

Jan Malý Blažek, Tomáš Hoření Samec
Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic

In our contribution to the special session "Self-Help Housing (Re)constructions: An Uncharted Territory for the Sociology of Consumption", we address the under-researched collective and collaborative aspects of self-help/DIY housing. We focus on the ways in which self-help housing involves the collaboration of different actors usually attributed to different forms of collaborative housing (such as co-ops, cohousing, baugruppen, etc.). While supposedly highly individualised, we argue that self-help/DIY housing also constitutes an assemblage of relations, affects, politics and materiality that needs to be enacted, sustained and also governed, particularly in the context of deepening housing, environmental and political-legitimacy crises. In this sense, we aim to discuss the extent to which the hidden collectivities are (analytically) revealed, engaged and adopted, building on previous experiences with applied research, which focused on the co-introduction of collaborative housing innovation into the Czech housing regime with residents and city officials. In doing so, we aim to contribute to discussions rooted in housing studies in relation to research on the scaling (infrastructuring) of collaborative housing and discussions related to the in/formal governance of housing, discussing the interface between formal housing policies, institutionalised actors and informal affects, needs and values.

My house, my home, my consumption

Barbora Vacková
Masaryk University, Czech Republic

(abstract proposed for the session Self-Help Housing (Re)constructions: An Uncharted Territory for the Sociology of Consumption)

My presentation will focus on two seemingly distant issues: home, its creation and experience, and consumption, both framed with DIY activities. I will introduce several examples of the self-help construction or adaptation of residential houses in different political and socio-economic conditions. I also want to show that the home creation process is usually a process of specific consumption.

I will focus on:

(1)   Different motivations for the self-help (DIY construction by the private builders) housing construction in the time of "normalization" (thus during the communist regime in the 70s and 80s of 20th century in Czechoslovakia) and in the liberal conditions of capitalism (Czech Republic). In other words, how did the political and economic conditions involve the decision to build one's own house by him/herself?

(2)   Possible "benefits" of self-help building, or how can "virtue out of necessity" become an advantage? Where does a home come from?

(3)   How are the DIY re/constructions connected with consumption?

By answering these questions, I will show what forms of consumption appeared in self-help construction before and after 1989, if and how they differed.

The presentation is based on several empirical studies I have worked on in different research teams over the years, focusing on family house constructions in the 1970s and 1980s (individual and cooperative construction) and individual family house construction and modifications from 2000-2010. In all cases, the subject is urban or suburban housing, primarily middle-class.

Self-Help Reconstructions of Post-War Prefabricated Timber Housing: Between Production, Re-use and Consumption

Slavomíra Ferenčuhová
Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

This paper examines self-help house reconstructions as a complex interplay of practices of consumption, re-use, production, and formation of a sense of place, developed through residents' interaction with the material structure of their home. It focuses on a very specific type of housing: post-war prefabricated timber houses built in former Czechoslovakia between the 1940s and 1960s. Originally constructed during post-war reconstruction as temporary housing, many of these houses remain inhabited. Many have undergone manifold resident-led adaptations to address various challenges, including changing housing standards, changing local climate and maintenance needs.

Using data from focus groups conducted in summer 2022 with residents of these neighbourhoods in several Czech cities, this research explores how residents have perceived, interacted with, and modified their homes' materiality and spatial configurations. I focus specifically on do-it-yourself (DIY) reconstructions and repurposing as strategies for adapting standardized housing to individual needs.

This paper pursues three aims. First, it investigates the motivations behind self-help reconstructions and their relationship to expert and market-based housing adaptations. Second, it observes the types of self-help reconstructions undertaken and the strategies employed. Finally, it analyses how these reconstructions influence residents' relationships with their homes and their sense of place. This analysis considers the ways in which residents transform standardized housing stock into personalized homes through DIY practices.

The abstract is proposed for the session "Self-Help Housing (Re)constructions: An Uncharted Territory for the Sociology of Consumption".

Conflict and Social Capital: two sides of the sharing coin

Tullia Jack, Toke Haunstrup Bach Christensen, Jesper Ole Jensen
Lund University, Sweden

Living smaller or sharing housing is a potent solution to achieve a 1.5-degree lifestyle (Cohen, 2019; Ellsworth-Krebbs, 2020; Jack & Ivanova, 2021). From a sustainability perspective, shared housing should be a high on the policy agenda, but to date there is little known about social factors leading to sharing or living alone.

To address this gap, we explore solo vs shared living arrangements in Denmark, a country with a high proportion of single-occupant households and a growing co-living movement. Drawing on qualitative interviews with individuals living alone (n=29) and those in various forms of shared housing (n=12), we examine how different living arrangements impact everyday life experiences.

Our results show that shared living can foster increased social capital through communal activities, resource pooling, and readily available support networks. However, sharing also presents challenges in managing interpersonal dynamics and potential conflicts. Conversely, individuals living alone often develop diverse strategies to build and maintain social capital, such as engaging in hobby groups, fitness networks, and cultivating strong friendships, albeit with significant time and effort investments. We see this as "two sides of the sharing coin" – the potential for enhanced social connections and support in shared living, balanced against the complexities of navigating shared spaces, relationships and potential conflicts. For those living alone, the coin flips to less conflict but potential isolation risks. For policy makers interested in transitioning towards a 1.5 degree lifestyle, this knowledge poses low-hanging potential emission reduction. How can we leverage social capital and mitigate potential conflict to increase the attractiveness of shared living?

Food 4: Food Systems

Thursday 28 Aug
10:45-12:15, ROOM 1.12

Crisis, Culture, Food: Exploring rural-urban divides and imagined food futures in Denmark

Amanda Krog Juvik, Emil August Andersen, Kia Ditlevsen
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Food consumption lies at a pivotal intersection between societal and cultural change. It represents a site where economic forces, political regulation, social norms, cultural trends, societal agendas, and symbolic distinctions meet individual needs, resources, tastes, and everyday practices.

In Denmark, alongside enduring trends such as class-differentiated tastes and an individualized focus on the healthiness of food, two ongoing crises are currently reshaping food practices and culture. Rising food prices have challenged food habits, particularly among low-income groups, and the climate crisis is reflected in culinary shifts, new moral boundaries and food-focused subcultures.

This project, "Eating up the crisis: Cultural change seen through the lens of food (CrisisCultureFood)", investigates these dynamics by conducting multiple rounds of interviews with participants. The research seeks to uncover how people navigate economic pressures, environmental concerns, and changing cultural norms in their everyday food practices. It will therefore shed light on the shifting landscape of food and eating practices in Denmark.

At the conference, our research group will present findings from the first round of participant interviews, focusing on two preliminary themes: rural-urban divisions in food consumption and consumers' reflections on the imagined futures of food practices at both individual and societal levels. These early findings highlight the complex interplay of societal crises, cultural change, and individual food choices.

Scaling social innovations for transformative change: Insights from scaling pathways of Alternative Food Networks

Louise Longton, Christian Scholl, Filippo Oncini
Maastricht University, Belgium

This paper studies how Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) in Wallonia, Belgium, contribute to transformative changes in food systems through different scaling strategies. AFNs often arise from social movements and challenge dominant models of food production and consumption by developing more democratic and participatory alternatives. Their amplification is not only about increasing access to local food but involves deeper social, economic, cultural, and political shifts in food governance. A literature review explores the different scaling pathways of social innovations and contextualizes AFNs as hybrid governance initiatives with the potential to drive food system transformation.

This paper addresses the question: How do AFNs scale their impact through different mechanisms to transform our food systems? Using an extended case study approach in five Walloon cities and at the regional level, data was collected through interviews and observations. The research recognises four types of scaling – scaling out, up, deep, and through – analysed to understand their interactions and contribution to food systems transition. A methodological framework to operationalize 'scaling' in empirical research is also developed.

Findings highlight how governance tensions within AFNs, stemming from their hybrid nature, are navigated to foster cross-sector collaboration, and mobilize citizens as active participants in food system change. By fostering cooperative food schemes, food policy councils, and producer-consumer networks, AFNs promote promoting civic engagement and alternative governance models.

This research contributes to theoretical debates on scaling social innovations, food system transformation, and hybrid governance. It provides an analytical framework to study the interplay between different scaling processes in fostering food transition.

Alternative to What? Reassessing Western AFNs through a Southern Lens

Carla Galan Guevara, Francesca Forno
University of Trento, Italy

Western research on economic practices proposing alternatives to dominant economic systems – such as consumer-producer networks, community-supported agriculture, fair trade, and food co-ops – often frames these initiatives as pathways to socio-ecological transformation. However, the limited potential of these practices for driving structural change and the mechanisms by which they claim to offer genuine alternatives remain insufficiently explored.

This paper critically examines these initiatives through a Southern lens, challenging Eurocentric interpretations and analysing the epistemological and power structures shaping their prevailing understanding. The study focuses on Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) attempting to transform dominant food systems, employing a qualitative methodology that includes ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews. Key research questions include: How do AFNs conceptualise and implement alternatives to dominant food systems? To what extent do their practices disrupt entrenched power dynamics and contribute to socio-ecological transformation?

Preliminary findings indicate that AFNs navigate significant tensions between localised sustainability efforts and broader systemic constraints. By emphasising the need for critical reflexivity, this paper identifies a series of paradoxes that limit these practices' transformative potential.

This work seeks to inform both academic discourse and practical strategies, contributing to the search for sustainable and inclusive alternatives. In answering the conference's call to explore uncharted territories in the sociology of consumption, it draws on the collaborative dialogue of the two authors, both scholars interested in solidarity/community economies, bringing perspectives from both the South and the North.

What do consumers know about the climate impact of foods?

Andreas Bschaden
University of Hohenheim, Germany

The food system is responsible for up to one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, with individual contributions varying by dietary choices. Replacing animal products with plant-based alternatives can reduce the climate impact by approximately one-third. Consumer awareness of the climate impact of foods and dishes is essential for making sustainable dietary choices. However, research indicates that consumers tend to underestimate the climate impact of animal-based products, while detailed insights into their level of knowledge remains limited.

This cross-sectional survey aimed to assess consumer knowledge regarding the environmental impact of various foods and dishes, and to explore differences between socio-demographic groups. Participants completed tasks comparing the carbon footprint of different foods and dishes, as well as their origins and production methods, as well as estimating proportions and numerical values of their climate impact.

The results suggest that consumers still underestimate the climate impact of meat and dairy products, often placing greater emphasis on factors like transportation. Moreover, most respondents struggled to provide numerical estimates of food-related emissions, either in absolute terms (grams of CO2e), or in relation to other activities. Similarly, many were unable to accurately compare the climate impact of specific food products, such as dairy milk versus plant-based alternatives.

These findings highlight a gap in consumer knowledge regarding the climate impact of food choices. To promote more sustainable diets, targeted education and transparent carbon footprint labelling could help bridge this knowledge gap and support informed decision-making.

Cultural Consumption 3: Class and Leisure

Thursday 28 Aug
10:45-12:15, ROOM 2.11

Cultural reproduction in the everyday life of working-class families

Eeva Majalahti
Tampere University, Finland

Cultural orientations, as well as class advantages and disadvantages are transmitted from generation to another in a process called cultural reproduction. Classed parenting practices shaped by different cultural logics are a key driver of this process. Examining the everyday practices of families can illustrate what kind of cultural capital each social class deems necessary to maintain and transmit to the next generation in a society that particularly values the cultural orientations of the middle and upper classes. In this paper, I discuss the preliminary findings of my dissertation exploring the process of cultural reproduction in working class families living in a relatively equal Nordic society. I ask (1) how and what kinds of cultural orientations are transmitted to children in the everyday life of Finnish working-class families, (2) what values and goals guide child-rearing in working-class families, and (3) how other social characteristics of working-class parents (such as gender, residential area, or occupational sector) vary the answers to questions 1 and 2. The research data has been collected by interviewing Finnish parents working in blue-collar jobs (N=36) and observing a smaller subset of families during everyday activities. Using this rich data and drawing from the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Annette Lareau, and Michèle Lamont, among others, I aim to provide new insights into everyday life, cultural reproduction and childrearing in contemporary Finnish working-class families.

Children's Leisure Activities and Family Cultural Capital: the case of Slovakia

Ivan Chorvát, Jiří Šafr
Matej Bel University, Slovak Republic

Experience with valued forms of culture is important for the development of children and intergenerational transmition of privilege as shown by e.g. results of survey in families with children aged 5–10 years in England [Leguina, Karademir-Hazir, Azpitarte]. Our paper deals with the differentiation in leisure time of older school-age children. It is based on the survey on sixth- and ninth-grade primary school pupils in Slovakia, the Banská Bystrica region, 2023. It specifically addresses the question of the role played by the cultural capital of the family in the differentiation of leisure time. It shows that the educational and cultural resources of the family are an indicator of children's active leisure time (reading books, playing sports, attending extracurricular activities, etc.), while passive activities, primarily associated with the consumption of digital media content, are somewhat more frequent among children from families with lower educational and cultural resources. The differences in the leisure time of today's children point to the shape of the process of the emergence of class-based cultural inequalities in Slovak society.

Social and cultural stratification of subjective life expectancy

Anu Siren, Ossi Sirkka, Sara Sivonen, Semi Purhonen
Tampere University, Finland

It's widely acknowledged that life expectancy varies in many ways within the population - for example, people of higher socioeconomic status tend to live longer than those of lower status. However, this study examines how many years people believe they will live, exploring whether subjective life expectancy reflects actual life expectancy differences. In our study, we use OLS regression to analyze survey data (N=3228) collected from Finns born in 1960, 1965 and 1970. We first ask how various background variables, social support, self-rated health, and future time perspective factors are related to subjective life expectancy. We then introduce various cultural lifestyle factors: highbrow participation, reading and entertainment, organizational and religious activities, sports, exercise, and outdoor activity, everyday participation and digital participation. Our results show that Finns' assessment of their lifetime differentiates in many ways and mirrors some of the actual differences in life expectancy. There are differences in age, gender, parental longevity and survival, education level, self-rated health and future time perspectives. Moreover, a range of lifestyle factors were associated with subjective life expectancy: participation in organizational and religious activities, sports, exercise and outdoor activities, and above all, participating in highbrow culture, increased subjective life expectancy. Findings highlight the importance of cultural capital – both institutionalized (education) and embodied (cultural participation) – in shaping how individuals assess their remaining lifespan. People with more resources estimate to live longer than people with fewer resources. Our results suggest that future studies on subjective life expectancy should consider differences in peoples' lifestyles and cultural participation.

The Social value of Culture: a systematic literature review of the available evidence

Hanne Goemaere, Bram Spruyt, Jessy Siongers
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

What is the value of culture? While this question is often discussed in economic or artistic terms, it is clear that the social value of culture and cultural participation is equally significant. This study is part of a series of reports on the value of culture (economic, social, health-related and cognitive) and focuses on the social value of culture. In this study, the social value of culture is examined through a systematic literature review conducted on 95 peer-reviewed articles that were published between 2010 and 2024. Five key aspects were identified: social capital, social skills, social cohesion, social inclusion, and local image/community. The findings indicate that cultural consumption strengthens social capital, where bonding and bridging capital enhance social networks and mutual resources. Cultural consumption contributes to the development of social skills, such as communication, empathy, and cooperation, particularly among younger age groups and various socially vulnerable groups. Additionally, social cohesion is fostered through shared cultural experiences, which promote trust and collaboration within and between groups. Social inclusion is enhanced as cultural consumption reduces social isolation and increases the engagement of marginalized groups in society. Furthermore, culture plays a role in strengthening local image, identity, and community development. This study highlights that culture (and cultural consumption) makes a crucial social contribution, making it relevant beyond the cultural and artistic domains themselves. In the conclusion of the paper, we identify key research gaps concerning the social value of culture.

Economic Sociology

Thursday 28 Aug
10:45-12:15, ROOM 2.42

Pay to win: Intergenerational reproduction of financial position and the increasing importance of owning rights to capital gains.

Markus Lynum
Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

A growing body of literature (e.g. Pfeffer & Waitkus, 2021; Pikkety, 2020; Nordli-Hansen & Toft, 2021, Adkins, 2021; Langley, 2021) has shown a transition to a financialized economy with increasing wealth disparities in Western countries. Exploring how financialization has impacted markets, there's little research on the effect of financialization on households. As an exception, class and stratification research (author, author) points to how wealth has outpaced income in driving economic inequality since the turn of 21st century. This strand of research nevertheless neglects the way in which households may or may not take advantage of available financial instruments to divest their income into assets that can appreciate over time. In this paper I theorize   the potential emergence of classed practices of investment; empirically I examine the degree to which children reproduce their parents' financial position. Emphasizing the way in which financial embeddedness (the degree through which one's economic stake is tied to financial markets) interacts with monetary spending power, this paper highlights how financial consumption (meaning the purchase/ownership of assets that appreciate over time) intersects with the structures of economic inequality through wealth accumulation. Drawing on comprehensive data set from Norwegian register data, I illustrate the importance of: 1) the ability to leverage wealth through debt-financing and investment to amplify personal net worth increase rate, and 2) the role that financial embeddedness plays for individuals in realizing capital gains through investment practices.

The consumption of nature between commodification and decommodification

Roberta Bartoletti
University of Bologna, Italy

Nature is undoubtedly an under-researched topic in consumption studies. It's not unanimously recognised as a legitimate object of the sociology of consumption, even though nature is culturally and socially widely framed as a good that is consumed, as a commons, as a public good or as a commodity. Thus, sustainable consumption scholars must also examine the ideas, values and practices of animals that are framed as food in order to promote a reduction in meat consumption (see Martens et al. 2021).

I argue that examining how nature is framed and made meaningful in our consumer culture offers a relevant perspective for research on consumption and sustainability (Bartoletti 2013, Bartoletti and Cecchelin 2016, Bartoletti 2022). I will then focus on the current forms of commodification and decommodification of nature from a cultural perspective (Kopytoff 1980). It's well known that the commodification of nature is at the origin of modern capitalism, as Marx's distinction between first and second nature underlines, and that neoliberal capitalism finds in nature new opportunities for commodification that actualise this original distinction - think of the concept of "ecosystem services" or "green gentrification" in urban metropolises. A deeper understanding of the framing of nature in contemporary consumer societies, its new and old commodification and decommodification - for example, the recognition of wild urban nature as a commons - allows us to get to the root of capitalist and consumer societies and their contradictions, and to foster imaginaries for alternative futures of consumption and human life.

"Five Fingers Discount": Shoplifting as a Consumption Practice

Antoine Völki
University of Geneva, Switzerland

Shoplifting is a recurrent problem for major stakeholders – including retail chains and law enforcement – whose high prevalence and economic costs have made it a subject of numerous cognitive-behavioral studies. Framed as "consumer dysfunctional behavior," these accounts tend to individualize its causes, leading to repressive security responses. In contrast, few sociological works have offered alternative narratives that foreground the collective dimensions and neglected consumption processes inherent in the practice. Positioned at the intersection of market agencement and practice theory, this study examines shoplifting as a form of consumption practice. Methodologically, it uses a content analysis of activist fanzines, a Reddit discussion thread, a radio program, and interviews with individuals engaged in the practice at varying intensities. Even though the research is ongoing, preliminary findings reveal that engagement in shoplifting resonates at the core of multifaceted dispositions, with the market – understood as a (dys)functional entity – playing a significant role in the material and compulsive side of the practice. It is then through procedures and understandings, shaped by dynamics of attachment to and detachment from goods and agencies, that this practice unfolds, suggesting that shoplifting functions as a reframing of market excesses and outflows through which consumers are differentially empowered. This study contributes to the field by emphasizing the need for long-term political resolutions, promoting equitable access to consumption while mitigating the ecosystem damage it entails. Ultimately, shoplifting emerges as a subversion of traditional market exchange, shedding light on the evolving trajectories of mass consumption.

Consumer Racial Hierarchies

Thursday 28 Aug
13:15-14:45, ROOM 1.12

Festive Material Cultures: Consumption & Belonging in the Netherlands

Bel Kerkhoff-Parnell, Martijn Kerkmeijer
European Race and Imagery Foundation, The Netherlands

In submission as part of the proposed Consumer racial hierarchies - exclusion and inclusion in consumptive practices and market relations session, organised by Dr. Cassi Pittman Claytor and Dr. Kevin D. Thomas.

When discussing Dutch practices of belonging, the notion of "gezelligheid" comes immediately to mind. There is no better mainstreamed custom intended to evoke gezelligheid than the annual festival of Sinterklaas. A key character of this festival – Zwarte Piet, traditionally performed by white people in blackface – also makes it an example of social exclusion in the Netherlands (Aouragh, 2019; Cain, 2018; Esajas, 2014; Van der Velde, 2019; Wekker, 2016). An underexplored component of the discourse around Zwarte Piet remains the commercial role of brands in guiding the nature of Sinterklaas-related consumption, and how this impacts and reflects race relations in the Dutch context. To address this knowledge gap and contribute to the growing field of Race in the Marketplace (Grier et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2019; Shabbir et al., 2023), ERIF began conducting longitudinal research in 2015 (Kerkhoff-Parnell & Kerkmeijer, 2024) to follow the evolution of merchandise based on how Zwarte Piet is incorporated into Sinterklaas marketing by online and in-person fieldwork of 11 franchised stores in the Netherlands. The results and conclusions of our ongoing data collection and analyses, building year-on-year, demonstrate how marketing and interrelated consumption practices shape notions of racialised belonging in the Netherlands. General trends point to a slow diminishing of the blackface character on products. Other forms have taken its place, however, and the character is by no means gone. There is much to say about who gets to control the Sinterklaas narrative, as well as how this plays into interethnic power dynamics in the Netherlands: i.e., who does Sinterklaas specifically, and Dutch culture generally, belong to? Moreover, who is allowed to belong in the Netherlands?

Mindful Materiality: Race, Consumer Culture, and the Religious Lives of Black Buddhists

Kevin Thomas
UC Santa Cruz, United States of America

For consideration in the following paper session: Consumer racial hierarchies - exclusion and inclusion in consumptive practices and market relations

This research paper investigates the intricate relationship between consumption behaviors and the lived experiences of Black Buddhist practitioners in the Global North. While Buddhist philosophy often emphasizes detachment from material possessions, and consumerism pervades contemporary society, little is understood about how these opposing forces intersect within racialized communities. Focusing on Black Buddhist practitioners, this study explores how they negotiate the seemingly contradictory tenets of Buddhist non-attachment and the socio-economic realities of consumer culture under racial capitalism.

By employing critical race theory as a guiding framework and qualitative methodologies including discourse analysis and (auto)ethnographic observation within Black Buddhist communities, this research examines the consumption patterns related to religious practice (e.g., ritual objects, sacred spaces), daily life (e.g., food, clothing, technology), and identity formation. Preliminary findings suggest that consumption is not merely a secular activity but is imbued with religious meaning and serves as a site for negotiating multiple identities – Black, Buddhist, and often, those shaped by socio-economic backgrounds and experiences of marginalization. The study will highlight how Black Buddhists creatively adapt and reinterpret Buddhist principles to navigate consumer culture, potentially demonstrating unique approaches to mindful consumption, ethical sourcing, and the role of material possessions in spiritual practice. This research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the diverse expressions of Buddhism in the Global North and the complex interplay between faith, racial oppression, and consumerism in contemporary society.

Selling Colonialism and Racism to Europeans in Safari and Caribbean Tourism/ Consumer racial hierarchies - exclusion and inclusion in consumptive practices and market relations

June Francis
Simon Fraser University, Canada

Consumer racial hierarchies - exclusion and inclusion in consumptive practices and market relations

This paper argues that the sociology of consumption studies current focus on consumers provides only a limited perspective on the effects of consumption activities. It ignores the racially or economically marginalized groups who may not be consumers but whose identities and identity formation are affected by others' consumption activities. The paper draws heavily on Identity theory in sociology that sees identities as socially formed and therefore recognize the salience of others' behaviours on identity, including racial identity, formation.

An analysis of the dominant discourse in advertising and consumption service design in two contexts - African Safari experiences and luxury tourism in the Caribbean, aimed at European consumption, are presented. Drawing on Identity theories in sociology, post-colonial theory, critical race theory and other critical sociological perspectives, the analysis identifies the ways in which notions of conquests, slavery, dispossession and servitude are served up to provide a "neocolonial experience" for the consumption of European consumers. The findings further show how these consumption experiences may provide benefits for the consuming group but are at the expense of the group whose image and identities are traded on. This commoditization of often invented traditions, landscapes, artforms and industry are not benign but serve to degrade the social, cultural and economic life of these communities. While EU advertising regulations are geared at promoting consumers from direct and obvious discrimination, more nuanced approaches are required to addresses these subtler but nonetheless important forms of advertising racism.

From Self-Help to Self-Care: Identity Transformation Scripts and the "Essence Woman"

Amanda Koontz
University of Central Florida, United States of America

This work examines Essence lifestyle advice narratives within magazine issues from 2013-2020 to explore how "self-help" transformed into "self-care" narratives. We argue these ideologies integrate outward-facing, positive middle-class images to counteract negative racial stereotypes, even while such narratives appear prescriptive and accommodating to oppressive white values. To understand these contradictions, we draw from Goffman's script theory to understand how emotional capitalism, racial uplift narratives, and lifestyle and consumer culture combine to form what we call an identity transformation script that defines and creates the "Essence woman" – representative of a new petit bourgeois class.

We determined three sets of attributes. The realistic dreamer defines success in concrete terms, the visionary leader recognizes and innovates trends to accomplish that success, and the resilient self-creator actualizes herself by focusing on her habitus, confidence, and adaptability. Our findings support and expand on past research suggesting racial uplift as both aspirational and prescriptive; in turn, such uplift is intertwined with guidelines for cultivating Black cultural capital, which is then packaged and sold back to a constructed niche audience.

Summarily, we argue that the lifestyle advice in Essence outlines a new, Bourdieusian petit bourgeois class. Essence lifestyle advice narratives offer a script for how to transform one's identity into the "best," "highest," or most desired state of being. However, much of this advice remains constrained by idealized neoliberal understandings of what constitutes power, success, and happiness for Black women, thereby connecting to a form of emotional capitalism.

Cultural Consumption 4: Experiencing Culture

Thursday 28 Aug
13:15-14:45, ROOM 2.11

Curtains Up: How Ukrainians Turned to Theater During the War

Yevhen Voronin
University of Wuppertal, Germany

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought uncertainty to the lives of most Ukrainian citizens. Despite the traumatic experiences caused by the war, Ukrainian theaters got a new life, benefiting from the unprecedented popularity, as noted by representatives of the theatrical community. One prominent example is the theatrical adaptation of The Witch from Konotop, a satirical fiction story written by Ukrainian author Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko in 1833, which has rapidly gained popularity among the audience in Kyiv. The play premiered on 28 April 2023, coinciding with another air attack by Russia on the country. Since then, tickets for this play have become highly coveted. Notably, this case exemplifies the broader surge in theater attendance observed during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

This paper investigates the potential rising popularity of Ukrainian theaters and provides supportive evidence using Google Trends data on search interest. After that, we employ structural topic modeling (STM) on social media data from Instagram, investigating the meanings and thematic focuses associated with theater-going. Key themes include the role of theaters as spaces for expressing gratitude to cultural actors and defenders, fostering emotional connections, socialization, support and political consumption. We discuss how theater-going offers individuals a chance to escape the web of negative events, construct civic identities, and embrace authenticity amidst the challenges of wartime.

Cultural filter bubbles? The effect of personalized recommendations on cultural diversity and inequalities on a music streaming platform

Samuel Coavoux
CREST, ENSAE, France

Streaming platforms have been accused of trapping cultural consumers into "filter bubbles" through personalized recommendations. However, there is only scarce empirical research on this topic, often at the aggregate, rather than individual level, and with narrow operationalization of "diversity".

In this paper, I estimate the effect of the use of recommendation on a large panel of metrics of individual diversity of consumption. I use a longitudinal dataset, a digital log of the detailed consumption of a random sample of 16,794 paying subscribers of music streaming platform Deezer, followed for eight years (2017-2024). The main independant variable is the share of use of recommendation (vs. organic plays). A large set of outcome variable describe diversity: variety of artists and genres played, gender composition, country of origin, and popularity of artists played, and acoustic features of songs played. I use two-way fixed-effect models to control for individual and period effect.

I find that the use of recommendation is mostly positively correlated with diversity. There is especially a very large correlation with the variety of artists played and an intermediate correlation with genres played. Overall, this is evidence against the filter bubble hypothesis. There are however negative correlations with gender (recommendations are associated with more male artists) and acoustic diversity (recommendations are associated with lower disperion over songs' acoustic features). Finally, contrary to expectations, editorial recommendations are more associated with diversity than algorithmic recommendations.

A Rhythmanalysis of Consumer's Aesthetic Experience of Being Alone

Pekka Saarikorpi
Hanken School of Economics, Finland

This paper employs Henri Lefebvre's theory of space and rhythmanalysis in examining consumer's aesthetic experiences. We argue that consumers' aesthetic experiences are mobile in nature and in constant flux between various spatio-temporal and affective intensities, such as what is shared and what is intimate. That is, consumers navigate between various dynamics of presence and absence, with aesthetic experiences alternating between co-constructed narratives, sociopleasures and personal embodied sensations. Our rhythmanalytical focus is on dialectical relations of repetition and difference: socio-spatial rhythms that are given, taken and imagined.

The paper builds on a multi-sited and longitudinal ethnographic study of an art installation in four different exhibitions, with the focus being on multiple encounters of diverse participants, and the interaction and movement between them in relation to the curated exhibition space and its multiple rhythms. The paper contributes to the literature on temporal and affective dynamics of consumer experiences by challenging the often-painted picture of the so-called social turn in consumer culture, and its dominant focus on co-production or co-creation. In this literature, the concept of being alone in a social space has received very little research interest. Thus, we ask: What are the rhythmic dynamics attuning consumers to aesthetic moments of being alone?

Rhythmanalysis provides a lens for understanding the dialectical logics of consumption spaces and experiences–the way consumer experiences and practices are negotiated and navigated through repetitive and divergent rhythms and temporalities–some imposed on consumers, and some taken and imagined by consumers themselves.

Reading culture as a shared ethos: the profile of Finnish self-identified readers

Maaria Linko, Roosa Suomalainen
University of Helsinki, Finland

Instead of investigating the reading habits of the entire population, this presentation aims to advance the understanding about voluntary book reading in the 2020s. Our focus is on Finnish self-identified readers: Who are they? What is characteristic of their reading activity in their leisure time? In Finnish society, reading is appreciated although the number of both avid readers and books read has decreased since their peak in the 1980s, and the social stratification of reading among the population is becoming more polarized Based on an online survey of 955 respondents conducted in 2021, our statistical analyses show, however, that these recent developments are not visible within the specific group of people who identify themselves as readers. The findings indicate that among self-identified readers, the level of education, gender and place of residence do not induce significant differences in reading activity (Hiidenmaa et al. 2024). In the context of the historic continuum of Nordic reading cultures, where literacy is perceived as the basis of democracy and equity, our study indicates that public institutions such as the nationwide network of libraries and an equal education system still have an essential role in providing access to literary cultures and involvement in reading. The presentation is based on research conducted together with Pirjo Hiidenmaa, Ilona Lindh, Maaria Linko, Roosa Suomalainen, University of Helsinki, and Timo Tossavainen, Luleå University of Technology.

Reference

Hiidenmaa, P., Lindh, I., Linko, M., Suomalainen, R., & Tossavainen, T. (2024). Reading culture as shared ethos: A study of Finnish self-identified readers. Poetics, 105, 101912. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2024.101912

Digital 1: E-Commerce

Thursday 28 Aug
13:15-14:45, ROOM 2.42

How do e-commerce transactions differ cross-nationally? Cases of Czechia, France and Ukraine

Maksym Kolomoiets
Charles University, Czech Republic

E-commerce platforms simplify and standardize the buying process in a globalized world. This research aims to uncover, to what extent the online purchase experience is indeed homogenous internationally. Theoretically, this research is grounded in the organizational division between a core platform and third-party complementors that configure the final product or service purchased by users within the platform ecosystem. Complementors encourage certain shopping behaviors by acting as agencements.

My research thus focuses on consumers' online shopping experiences in Europe across chosen countries, in order to assess their variation and consequences for the national consumer cultures. I compare e-commerce transaction experiences in the Czech, French and Ukrainian e-commerce segments. The research findings are based on a qualitative analysis of 20 semi-structured interviews with e-commerce users in each country.

The navigation on the core platform is largely homogeneous for users. Those are the accompanying complementor services - payment and delivery – which constitute the most salient differences across the countries' e-commerce settings. From an organizational perspective, this research demonstrates that the different styles, availability and adoption of third-party complementors are a part of location boundedness, which can make or break the international expansion of e-commerce platforms. From a cultural perspective, the research shows how market-agencing achieved by country-specific complementors enacts tacit expectations about how the normal e-commerce transaction happens. This constitutes tangible yet subtle differences between national consumer pools of e-commerce.

Online Shopping Scam Victimization among Young People. Antecedents and Consequences

Terhi-Anna Wilska, Jussi Nyrhinen, Jesse Tuominen
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Frequent presence on social media and other online platforms makes young people particularly susceptible for commercial persuasion, also exposing them to scams and frauds. Detecting online scams and frauds is not always easy. Therefore, strong digital financial literacy is needed in commercial digital environments. Financial and digital literacies are also essential for young people's financial well-being that is a crucial part of life-satisfaction and identity for young people striving for financial independence.

Based on sociological and psychological theories of persuasion, social influence, financial identity and financial well-being, we examined how young people's financial and digital financial skills and susceptibility to persuasion relate to online shopping scam victimization. Consequently, we examined how online scam victimization affects indebtedness and subjective financial well-being.

In the analysis of our data (young people aged 15-29, N=1500), using a structural equation model, we found that a high level of financial literacy and digital financial skills reduced young people's probability to become victims of online shopping scams. Susceptibility to persuasion increased the risk for online shopping scam victimization, which increased the likelihood of indebtedness and decreased subjective financial well-being. Based on our results we conclude that financial and digital education should include advanced knowledge of the persuasion techniques in digital environments to help young people combat fraud and scams. In addition to schools and families, also other societal actors and networks are needed to build young people's resilience to online persuasion and scams.

Consuming Convenience: Pace, Rhythm, and Sustainability of Digital Consumption

Felippa Amanta
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Digital technology is often associated with the acceleration and fragmentation of time that are transforming social structures and practices. This transformation will have massive implications for social and environmental sustainability. This research examines how digital innovations in everyday consumption shape households' temporal experiences and expectations, and traces its implications to broader social acceleration and resource use. I use mixed-method research combining in-depth qualitative interviews and a nationally representative survey focusing on households' use of on-demand digital services in the United Kingdom. On-demand digital services (e.g., movie streaming, food delivery, ride-hailing, e-commerce) are prime examples of this phenomenon as they allow consumers to purchase or access products and services anytime, anywhere. The research finds a self-propelling cycle between supply-side technical acceleration through improvements in networks and logistics and households' perceived need for on-demand digital services. Households, regardless of their frequency of use, observe an acceleration of service delivery as the new norm. Yet, households use digital services in nuanced and complex ways as they adapt or reject digital innovations based on their own values and needs, emphasizing the significance of the moral economy of the household as a countervailing force to the acceleration. The tension between households and the surrounding economic forces ultimately shapes social and environmental resource use of digital consumption practices. This research contributes considerations of time and speed to discussions on the role of digital innovations in sustainable consumption.

The impact of digital transformation on consumers: an explorative research project

Ariela Mortara, Rosantonietta Scramaglia
IULM University, Italy

The sociology of consumption has increasingly intersected with digital transformations, yet uncharted territories remain in understanding the sociotechnical dynamics shaping consumer behaviour. Emerging technologies – such as artificial intelligence, algorithmic decision-making, and data-driven personalization – have fuelled both hopes and fears concerning consumer agency and market structures. Optimistic perspectives suggest that technological advancements enhance convenience, efficiency, and sustainability in consumption. However, critical scholars warn of surveillance capitalism and algorithmic manipulation, which threaten autonomy and deepen socioeconomic inequalities.

Unexplored areas include the psychological impact of predictive algorithms, evolving digital consumer identities, and the ethics of hyper-personalized marketing. Automated choices threaten individual agency, while digital platforms blur the line between consumers and producers, reinforcing new forms of digital labour.

The paper presents some preliminary results or a research project aimed at exploring the social impact of the introduction of smart technologies, investigating how they are transforming people's daily lives, both in their private and professional spheres. At the core of our analysis there are the individuals, with their values, expectations regarding the improvement of quality of life and work, and the concerns these innovations raise, including risks such as technological unemployment, loss of privacy, and new forms of inequality.

We applied a quantitative methodology by administering an online questionnaire, containing closed-ended questions, as well as widely tested and internationally recognized attitude and behaviour scales.

We collected a sample of approximately 12,000 questionnaires from both Italian and international respondents between November and December 2024. The data have been entered into an Excel database and are being analysed using SPSS. The analysis is still in progress.

Household Practices

Thursday 28 Aug
15:00-16:30, ROOM 1.12

Ambivalences of the dishwasher in voluntary modest households

Lucie Galčanová Batista, Vojtěch Pelikán
Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies, Czech Republic

Washing the dishes represents one of the most mundane, taken-for-granted activities done in almost all homes, and many gladly delegate the wet, dirty and never-ending work to a machine. The current academic reflections on dishwashers are limited to studies of their efficiency, mostly in the context of debates on sustainability and the environmental impact of domestic energy and material consumption. We want to develop these debates by focusing on how the possession and use of the dishwasher are imagined, deliberated and reflected by members of the Czech environmentally friendly households. Drawing on the conceptual tools outlined by Shove, Southerton and Hand in their studies on freezing, washing or cooking, we present its transformative potential and ambivalences. In interviews, of all domestic items, the dishwasher sparked the most heated debates reflecting the household members´ relations, roles or values. The dishwasher can be ecological, but only under certain circumstances and with scripts of use that must be "correctly" incorporated into daily routines. It saves time, but compared to a hand wash, it captures and holds the dishes for much longer. The dishwasher can do well the work delegated to it, but by doing so, it steals the easy yet formative work from some household members. It occupies space but, on the other hand, provides legitimate storage for polluted items and brings dirt out of sight. It cleans but is often seen as contaminating, by detergents or germs cultivated in its inner environment. As one of our participants puts it: "The dishwasher sucks".

The good life and sustainable consumption

Amanda Krog Juvik, Line Kryger Aagaard, Malene Freudendal-Pedersen, Bente Halkier
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

This paper examines different understandings of the "good life" in relation to sustainable consumption by comparing perspectives from households and professional organizations. The study analyses interviews with 31 Danish households (young adults aged 25–35) and seven focus groups with 52 professional stakeholders from the food, mobility, and housing sectors. Following the 'practice turn' in social theory we bridge theories of practices and conventions theory to explore the cultural conventions of the "good life" that underpin practices among everyday life consumers and professionals.

The analysis highlights how the households' aspirations for the good life – such as spacious homes and car-based mobility – reinforce resource-intensive consumption in everyday life, reflecting deeply entrenched conventions through which practices are contextualized and either reproduced or changed. In contrast, while professional assessments of the good life to a high degree echo the tendencies found amongst the households, their perspectives point toward reimagining the good life through more sufficiency-oriented values, promoting smaller homes, reduced consumption, and collective well-being within planetary boundaries.

The findings thus reveal contrasting conventions: while household practices and aspirations towards the "good life" are often guided by domestic, industrial, and market conventions, professionals' discussions emphasize green, civic, and project conventions, denoting sufficiency and systemic change. By connecting the perspectives of households and professional stakeholders, the paper argues for a systemic approach to sustainable transitions that bridges the gaps between individual and professional practices. It also discusses the role of conventions in shaping (un)sustainable consumption. Ultimately, this study underscores the need to align diverse visions of the good life with sustainable practices to support meaningful societal transformation.

Doing with less while doing more? An infrastructural perspective on second-home living

Hannele Toivonen, Jenny Rinkinen, Sanna Tegel
LUT University, Finland

Many modern-day practices in primary homes are characterized by high resource consumption. The practices are often connected to and shaped by infrastructures which place resource metabolism 'in the background' and make it 'invisible' and intensive (Coutard & Shove, 2024). However, multilocal living arrangements have become increasingly common and sometimes practices take place in alternative settings less connected to these types of infrastructures, demanding and enabling the practitioner to engage in more direct contact with the resource metabolism. In Finland and other Nordic countries, a common example of this is visiting a summer cottage.

While previous practice theoretical research on households' resource consumption has primarily focused on single locations, this research in progress examines the dynamics between primary and secondary home living. The study asks how material arrangements and the (in)visibility of resource metabolism in different spatial settings shape practices and their resource consumption and how the practices in different sites are connected. The study draws on an ethnographic interview study with summer house owners in Finland conducted both in their primary and secondary homes. Zooming-in and zooming-out of practice approach will be utilized to have an in-depth understanding of practices in different settings and for tracing the connections between them. The study advances practice-theoretical research on resource consumption in secondary living spaces by offering insights into the interrelations between space, time, resource use, and practice. Additionally, it explores the conditions that foster low-resource practices and how these practices are linked to – or sometimes in tension with – other ways of living.

Failing to circulate: understanding why garments remain dormant in households

Réka Tölg, Olga Cieslak
Lund University / University of Glasgow, Sweden

According to circularity principles products need to be circulated and re-used. However, a large number of clothes are unused in household storage. While previous research has explored how garments come back to use, resold or donated, less is known about those that remain in storage and how households relate to them. On the other hand, sociological research has shown that dormant objects (Woodward, 2015), piling up as clutter, are complex and carry various affective forces (Callén Moreu and López Gómez, 2019; Woodward, 2021). Bringing these streams together, more knowledge is needed on the complexity of the dormant garments piling up in homes and how this complicates their circulation.

Thus, we ask: How do failures to circulate garments emerge, and what maintains their dormancy? To answer, we draw on ethnographic data from 24 Swedish households, where clothing practices were studied through home observations and interviews. Participants were also asked to identify their most and least worn garments, inspired by wardrobe studies (Klepp & Bjerck, 2014).

In our on-going analysis, we look at how efforts to donate or resell garments fail and what leads to some items remaining in storage. We can preliminarily see how affective forces complicate handling the pile of unused garments, the consumption work it creates, and the challenges imposed by the circular retail landscape.

This study contributes to sociology of consumption by connecting the literature on dormant objects, clutter and their affective forces with circular consumption challenges. It highlights that managing dormancy and clutter in homes is a part of circular consumption work.

Discourse On Sustainability

Thursday 28 Aug
15:00-16:30, ROOM 2.11

From more and bigger to less and better? Finnish media discussion on sufficiency in consumption

Senja Laakso
University of Helsinki, Finland

To mitigate the climate and ecological crises, both volumes and patterns of consumption must change especially in high-consuming countries. Consequently, there is growing academic interest in the concept of sufficiency, which refers to "enoughness" and sustainable wellbeing. However, while sufficiency has been part of the lifestyles of voluntary simplicity and self-sufficiency for some, the societies are also witnessing reverse trends towards "more, bigger, and better" in everyday life.

Studies focusing on the co-evolution of everyday practices and technologies have highlighted the role of escalating expectations for comfort, cleanliness, and convenience in increasing consumption. These meanings are "made" through interactions between various institutions and actors in society. Media not only serves as a platform for these interactions but also actively shapes representations. Previous studies have shown, for example, the role of media in the development of cleanliness conventions and spatial norms in housing.

This on-going study analyses the presence of sufficiency and sustainability in Finnish media items on consumption. The data consists of a sample of media items on housing, mobility, eating, and leisure from the years 2000-2002, 2010-2012, and 2021-2022, and from the two main national media outlets: Helsingin Sanomat and Yle. The presentation discusses the findings of the study on the meanings attached to sufficiency and sustainability in media discussion, their development in the 2000s, and the role of media in normalising sufficiency in consumption across different domains.

Challenges and Perceptions of Sustainable Consumption in the Face of Climate Change: Insights from Spain

Carlos Jesús Fernández Rodríguez
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

In modern societies, concerns about future consumption patterns and the transition to sustainable habits and lifestyles are increasing in response to global warming and the climate crisis. However, to what extent do these concerns shape public perceptions and drive real changes in consumption behaviors? Despite broad scientific consensus on climate change, skepticism and denialist narratives persist, potentially influencing social attitudes. Additionally, previous research highlights the difficulty of moving away from consumerist lifestyles, which remain deeply embedded in societal norms. In Southern European countries like Spain, where income disparities are significant, consumption has long been associated with modernization and an improved quality of life. Understanding how these factors shape attitudes toward sustainable consumption is crucial. In this presentation, we will share preliminary results from an ongoing study exploring lifestyles and public perceptions of climate change in Spain. Using focus groups, we have conducted 12 discussions in both urban and rural areas, engaging participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to examine their views on consumption habits and sustainability. Our research aims to identify the key barriers preventing the widespread adoption of sustainable consumption. By analyzing participants' perspectives, we seek to understand the challenges posed by cultural, economic, and social factors. This study contributes to a broader discussion on the structural limitations that may hinder efforts to mainstream sustainable practices. Our findings provide insights into how public attitudes are shaped and the extent to which change is feasible in the current socioeconomic context.

Conceptualizing sufficiency-oriented consumption: A framework to understand the de-intensification of everyday practices

Emmelina Eriksson, Christian Fuentes
Lund University, Sweden

Previous research has repeatedly pointed out the lack of conceptual clarity regarding sufficiency in the context of consumption. Varying applications and interpretations make the concept vague and difficult to operationalize. To address these uncertainties, we outline a specific theoretical framework to understand sufficiency-oriented consumption based on a practice theoretical understanding of consumption.

Our framework builds on and develops two main arguments. First, drawing on theories of practice and existing studies of sufficiency-oriented consumption, we argue that sufficiency-oriented consumption should be understood as a consumption-orientation driven by the overarching goal of reducing the resource intensity of everyday practices to contribute to environmental sustainability and socio-ecological wellbeing. Second, this consumption-orientation, we propose, is enacted through a range of interconnected processes of resource de-intensification of practices.

Specifically, we suggest that sufficiency-oriented consumption can involve four interlinked processes for resource de-intensification. 1) Reducing - purchasing, using and disposing of fewer goods/resources. 2) Refraining - avoiding the acquisition and use of goods/resources. 3) Refining - acquiring goods differently to reduce resource intensity in both the immediate and long term. 4) Redefining - discursive reframing of previously established low-resource consumption modes as parts of the sufficiency-orientation. These four processes span across the different phases of consumption impacting the acquisition, use and disposal of goods.

This framework enables us not only to identify modes of sufficiency-oriented consumption but also to explore the underlying mechanisms involved in consumers' efforts to de-intensify their everyday practices. It thus provides a theoretical foundation for further empirical studies of sufficiency.

(Net)zero consumption – or the consumption of zero

Martin Friis Nielsen
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

ZERO has become a reoccurring figure and symbol in commercial and public life. In the idea of a future sustainable society, as is the case with the vision of a net-zero 2050 European society, zero is the symbol of an ideal future, a condition being strived towards in which society is imagined to be in a sort of equilibrium with its environment. Everyday products and practices of consumption are also articulated in terms of zero why we can easily interpret advertisement slogans such as Volkswagen's 'Way to Zero', Sony's 'Road to Zero' and in the field of home appliances LG's 'net-zero vision house'. It is not only in connection with a vision of a sustainable future and carbon-neutral forms of production and consumption that zero has become part of how consumption is imagined: we also 'drink' zero as in the case with Pepsi zero sugar, Coca-Cola Zero, etc., pointing to a semantic shift in the way things are offered for consumption. In this sense, zero has become a figure that is part of various forms of individualized practices of consumption and in the total (re)organization of society (e.g. net-zero production). The paper analyses ZERO as a contemporary cultural phenomenon of consumption exploring the idea of zero (consumption) and how this organizes relations and experiences of consumption drawing on social theory of consumption (Baudrillard 1970) as well as anthropological theory of relations (Strathern 1999).

Digital 2: Digital Intermediaries and Lifestyle

Thursday 28 Aug
15:00-16:30, ROOM 2.42

Consuming Autonomy: Digital Lifestyles as Platform Mediated Consumption Practices

Lilian Leupold
Technische Universität Dresden, Germany

This research explores how digital platforms, particularly YouTube, shape consumption practices through self-help and financial independence narratives. It investigates how digital lifestyles such as FIRE (Financial Independence, Retire Early), hustle culture, and digital minimalism manifest as distinct consumption practices involving financial services, productivity tools, and curated digital content.

Grounded in Schatzki's practice theory (Schatzki, 2002), the study conceptualizes YouTube as a practice nexus, where platform algorithms coordinate interconnected consumption practices such as subscribing to financial coaching, purchasing productivity courses, and engaging with minimalist apps. According to Schatzki, values act as teleoaffective structures, orienting practices through shared goals and emotional investments (Schatzki, 2010). Emotions are understood as affective expressions that sustain engagement, stabilizing platform-mediated consumption practices.

The research asks: How do YouTube narratives frame digital lifestyles as consumption practices, and how do users' emotional responses express and reinforce middle-class values of autonomy? It employs a computational and mixed-method approach, combining topic modeling (BERTopic) to identify dominant consumption practices from YouTube video titles and comments, emotions analysis (LEA) to detect user responses such as excitement and anxiety, and qualitative coding to interpret patterns in high-engagement comments.

Preliminary findings suggest emotions like excitement (FIRE) and anxiety (hustle culture) reinforce digital consumption practices, stabilizing orientations toward autonomy. This study contributes to debates on digital consumption and platform capitalism, showing how platforms commodify autonomy through consumption practices. It also illustrates how algorithms function as material arrangements that structure consumption practices and teleoaffective alignments (Schatzki, 2002).

Unchartered territories of social influence. The de-influencing wave

Geraldina Roberti, Ariela Mortara
Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Social media have radically altered the dynamics of social influence on consumption. They have democratized content production, creating an environment where ordinary users can build vast audiences (Pradhan et al., 2023) and monetize their ability to identify new trends and lifestyles. However, the increasing saturation of promotional content on social media fosters consumers' skepticism about the authenticity of influencers' endorsements (Nunes et al. 2021). Consumers are able to decode advertising mechanisms and demand ever greater levels of transparency and consistency.

This scenario offers a new perspective on the dynamics of social influence on consumption, allowing researchers to study the emerging phenomenon of de-influencing, an uncharted territory of counter-narrative to consumption practices. De-influencing encompasses different practices, from discouraging the purchase of certain products to suggesting more economical alternatives and advocating minimalist lifestyle choices (Singer et al., 2023). This contribution aims to explore the phenomenon of de-influencing to identify how de-influencers construct their authority and credibility and what rhetorical and communicative strategies they use to legitimize their role.

Preliminary findings highlight how de-influencing doesn't represent a form of resistance to consumption, but rather its reconfiguration, which capitalizes on consumers' desire for a more authentic and conscious lifestyle. In a sort of communicative paradox, the promotion of a lifestyle focused on containing consumption and reducing spending on unnecessary goods might represent a contemporary iteration of promotional strategies adopted by traditional influencer marketing. This study contributes to the literature on digital consumer culture by offering new insights into how social media intermediaries are evolving in response to changing consumer demands and cultural shifts toward a more conscious lifestyle.

Nunes, J. C., Ordanini A., Giambastiani G. (2021), "The concept of authenticity: What it means to consumers", Journal of Marketing, 85(4), pp. 1–20.

Pradhan, B., Kishore, K. and Gokhale, N. (2023), "Social media influencers and consumer engagement: A review and future research agenda", International Journal of Consumer Studies, 47(6), pp. 2106-2130.

Singer, M.F., Callendar, C.L., Ma, X. and Tham, S.M. (2023), "Differences in perceived influencer authenticity: a comparison of Gen Z and Millennials' definitions of influencer authenticity during the de-influencer movement", Online Media and Global Communication, 2(3), pp.351-378.

Digital forms of presenting and valuing consumer objects: New intermediaries, new challenges!?

Nico Maximilian Steinmann
TU Dortmund, Germany

In times of social media, presenting oneself and one's actions online has seemingly become a matter of course. This also applies to consumer goods, which are discussed, advertised and valued online in a variety of ways (including, but not exclusively, by influencers). YouTube videos are a particularly popular form here, in which ratings and (self-)staging can hardly be analytically separated from one another and are at least implicitly linked to consumer logics. These need to be analysed together and in the context of the digital platforms.

Based on an ongoing PhD project, the submitted contribution examines the interplay of logics of (self-)presentation and valuation in goods-orientated video formats (e.g. unboxings, reviews, hauls) on YouTube, paying particular attention to moments of parasocial interaction. The data is analysed using (audio-)visual grounded theory (e.g. Konecki 2011, Mey/Dietrich 2016).

The coupling of valorisation practices and staging acts as well as the framing of the performers as cultural intermediaries for goods opens up the possibility of a multidimensional measurement of such video formats. First interim results indicate, for example, that the (lack of) (self-)representation of the performers' lifestyle is relevant for the valuation logic of the goods and their representation. It also shows that specific (media) formats of goods valuation are linked to characteristic staging logics and these in turn are linked to parasocial modes of interaction. The article contributes to a differentiated view of (audiovisual) digital valuation and recommendation practices and thus opens up a new way of seeing consumer-sociological phenomena.

Waste

Thursday 28 Aug
17:00-18:30, ROOM 1.12

Unpacking Convenience for Re-use Consumers: Using household provisioning practice groupings to understand complex enabling factors for re-usable packaging systems.

Jack Pickering
University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

Reusable packaging for consumer goods is widely touted as a key part of transitions to circular and sustainable economies, but these systems rely on different retail processes in comparison to disposable packaging systems. As a result, the adoption of reuse is often characterised as inconvenient for the consumer. Research conducted as part of the Buddie-Pack project (reference number: 101059923) has engaged with the idea of convenience through qualitative research with 15 households conducted in 2023, including interviews, ethnographic accompanied shopping trips and cupboard rummages, and Whatsapp-aided packaging diaries. This work aimed to answer the question: "How do consumers interact with reuse systems?" with a focus on how reusable packaging changes existing consumption practices. This approach builds on recent research using the consumer work approach to focus on reuse practices, which has demonstrated continuity between reuse and non-reuse specific practices (Beswick-Parsons et al, 2025). Key findings from the analysis of the data from the Buddie-Pack project include the identification of six practice groupings (either practice complexes or bundles): bulk buying, coordinated, online (automated), organised, responsive, weekly shopping. Each of these have distinct teleological characteristics related to convenience. This raises new questions for those concerned with theoretical approaches to sustainable consumption especially around the idea of convenience. Empirical questions are also raised around the progress and potential of sustainability transitions, including the significant unevenness of consumer mobility and new or newly mediated aspirational aesthetics of domestic life related to waste reduction.

Discounting suboptimal foods in supermarkets – reducing or relocating food waste?

Rosa Hellman, Jonas Bååth, Nicklas Neuman, Sara Spendrup
SLU, Sweden

Food surplus in supermarkets causes food waste, often due to overstocking and demands on appearance and expiration dates. Although the sociology of consumption has engaged thoroughly with practices of (un)sustainable food consumption and their development, the role of prices and consumers' valuations for such consumption has been sparsely investigated. Still, discounting the prices of suboptimal foods is a common market-based practice among retailers to avoid food waste.

Suboptimal foods are safe to eat but have, for example, shorter expiration dates or don't meet aesthetic standards. By discounting the price, retailers seek to incentivise consumers to select the food items likely to be wasted, thus avoiding waste in the supermarket. However, evidence is lacking regarding whether discounting suboptimal foods leads to reduced food waste, or if waste is merely relocated from retailers to households and whether the discounts prompt less sustainable consumption patterns.

Addressing the identified research gap, this study investigates how, why, and to what degree consumers who purchase discounted suboptimal foods consume them. Presenting preliminary results from an ongoing, experimental survey, the study shows how consumers evaluate and manage such foods from purchase to consumption or wastage. The research combines in-store and household data on purchases and uses of discounted surplus foods. Thereby, the study furthers sociological insights into how pricing may (or may not) promote sustainable food consumption and its future relevance as a means to reduce food waste.

Digitally reducing food waste: How surplus food platforms reconfigure household practices

Christian Fuentes, Emmelina Eriksson, Manisha Anantharaman, Live Bøyum, Arne Dulsrud, Jennifer Heung, Noemi Linares-Ramirez
Lund university, Sweden

Digital food provisioning platforms such as advisory apps, surplus food platforms, and food-sharing apps, have been suggested as tools to fight food waste. However, while these digital platforms seem promising for reducing food waste, we know little about how they are used in everyday practices. How do these newly launched digital food provisioning platforms fit into the nexus of food/non-food practices that households perform?

While previous research has explored the value that various food provisioning platforms provide for businesses and users and what factors make the use of these platforms more likely, it seldom provides any insights into how these platforms are integrated into households' everyday routines.

This issue is important for two reasons. Answering the questions posed above is key when discussing the sustainability potential of these platforms. If, and under what conditions digital food provisioning platforms enable the sustainable reconfiguration of household practices cannot be understood without examining the relationship between the platform, the practice(s) it makes possible, and the connecting nexus of household practices.

Against this background, this paper aims to explore under what conditions and through which mechanisms surplus food platforms reconfigure household food practices to promote sustainability. To make sense of these issues, we take a practice theory approach and take a particular interest in the interactions between the surplus food platform and household practices. Empirically, the analysis draws on ethnographic interviews with users of TooGoodToGo in Sweden, Norway, and the USA.

Commodities: History and Politics

Thursday 28 Aug
17:00-18:30, ROOM 2.11

Neglected and / or forgotten? Revisiting the sociology of wood consumption

Atle Wehn Hegnes, Håkon Aspøy
Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Wood has played an important role in human development, serving as a key resource for energy, construction, and industrial processes. It has no less significance today, as wood is widely considered key to a transition from fossil fuels to renewables. Despite its historical and contemporary importance, the sociological dimensions of wood consumption have been largely overlooked in favor of economic and ecological analyses and focus on other bioresources, such as those related to food. This neglect is evident in limited sociological research addressing how societal structures, cultural practices, and economic shifts influence patterns of wood use and resource management. Indeed, the many ways in which wood are entangled in processes of social change indicate that it offers an opportunity for sociology that should not be missed. However, there are examples on the consumption of wood as part of forestry industry (Weber 2006; Ogburn, 1922) and certification (Klooster 2005), as part of constructions of buildings Bourdieu (1962 [1958]) and as utensils in Italian cuisine (Harper 2009).

Against this backdrop, our presentation aims to revisit and explore the sociological dimensions of wood consumption through a review of strategically selected contributions from historical and contemporary sociological literature. Focusing on the consumption of wood-based products, our review identifies underlying social drivers, cultural influences, and economic factors contributing to current challenges and opportunities in promoting sustainable resource use. Preliminary findings indicate that consumption of wood is a theme in classical sociological works but still has a marginal and underdeveloped position in the sociology of consumption

Translations of Sugar

Jan Ferwerda, Henk Roose
UGent, Belgium

Our lust for sugar is an undeniable biological fact. Yet, a biological craving is neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for the consumption of food. Sugar consumption varies dramatically across contexts and often exceeds by large margins what is biologically needed. In order to be considered edible and socially appropriate, sugar, like all food, needs to be translated into culture first. But how does sugar enter culture? By analysing 20 years of folders (1984 - 2004) by the 'Sugar factory of Tienen', Belgium's biggest producer of sugar, we aim to map the 'translations of sugar', asking: How is sugar; a substance extracted from nature and transformed through industry, not only turned into a product, but also into a symbol: a carrier of meaning and morality? The results show how the domestication of nature, the extraction of sugar from sugar beets, the transformation of the substance into 'purer' and 'purer' forms, and the sublimation of the substance into shapes, textures, and imagery suggestive of social situations with cultural value (a coffee, a cookie, a birthday cake, etc.) is realized through shifting discursive articulations, frames and codes, in multimodal ways. Some of these articulations persist through time, while others show degrees of variability. The meaning of sugar changes each time as a function of its 'translation'. To conclude: sugar does not just enter the body as a mere physical need, but is realized through shifting interlocking discourses that translate sugar into culture.

Connectivity and consumption: China's changing cartography of meat consumption

Tracey Fallon
University of Nottingham Ningbo, United Kingdom

China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has facilitated agriculture cooperation and improved rail infrastructure for products between China, its neighbouring countries, and links through to Europe. This paper examines the role of transcontinental rail in meeting China's growing demand for meat. While international relations scholars often interpret these developments through the lens of shifting international order, this study adopts a critical geography and sociology perspective to analyse them as a process of socio-spatial restructuring, that is, the organization of economic and social landscapes through infrastructure.

Drawing from Chinese newspaper and local government reports, this research traces the development of rail services for meat and live animal imports at China's border regions and inland logistics hubs. Since the reform and opening up, rising incomes has fueled rapid nutritional transition, making China now the greatest producer and consumer of meat in the world. The expansion of rail corridors is not only facilitating trade but also reshaping spatial relations, linking up extractive meat production landscapes in Central Asia and Europe with urban areas of high-meat consumption in China.

The increasing capacity for meat imports by rail signals a shift in China's food security strategy by diversifying to Central Asian and European partners away from the Americas and Australasia. This reconfiguration highlights a changing cartography of meat production and consumption along BRI corridors, ultimately driven by China's transition to more meat-intensive diets

Digital 3: Hanging in (Post)Digital World

Thursday 28 Aug
17:00-18:30, ROOM 2.42

Liminal hanging in a flat relationality: The material (un)bundling of young people's digital practices

Clara Julia Reich, Mikko Laamanen
SIFO | OsloMet, Norway

In this article, we examine how flat relationality, a problematisation of relational and flat ontologies in practice theorisation, emerge in the dynamic digital practices of young people on social media platforms. In social practice theories, social phenomena are conceptualised as inherently tied to and 'hanging together' through practice, their arrangements and the density, continuity and space-time spread of their constituent relations (Schatzki, 2019). Instead of practice elements (Shove et al., 2012), we see the (un-)bundling of practice related to their temporal, spatial, material and modal dimensions (Forno et al., 2022). We situate these dimensions within the practitioners' sense of belonging in a digital age. Several social theories discuss belonging in the digital age in how technology allows people to relate, belong together, exclude one another, but also how technology shapes and organises these connections (e.g. Bucher, 2018, Latikka et al., 2024). For us, digital belonging stands for the continuous process of young peoples' digital relational practices, their bundles and how these hang together. We draw from data set of fifty one interviews and three focus groups with 10-13 year old Norwegian children. Using vignettes, we highlight the 'liminal hanging' of their digital practices across materiality (software, hardware), platform affordances (type of platform, algorithmic tools) and interrelations (the dynamics of social interaction). Our findings add to the continuing discussions on the impact of non-human actors on social practice and their symmetrical relation to human practitioners (Gram-Hanssen et al., 2019) as well as the practice itself, its morphology and outcomes.

Staying with the trouble: towards a theory of postdigital consumer culture

Alexandra Kviat
University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Existing research offers ample insights into the impact of digital technology on consumers and consumption. Yet, theorisations of the broader, consumer culture-level effects of digitalisation remain scarce and are largely limited to digital commodities, practices and intermediaries, while phenomena such as the analogue revival remain peripheral to this discussion. A more holistic approach can be found in postdigital theory, which looks beyond new technologies and their affordances to the wider cultural context shaped by digitalisation. Drawing on findings from a qualitative study of board game consumption in the UK, which involved ethnographic participant observations conducted at 24 social board gaming venues and 50 in-depth interviews with gamers, meetup organisers, business owners and employees, this paper outlines the contours of postdigital consumer culture. In postdigital consumer culture, digitalisation does not merely produce new technosocial entanglements and imaginaries but also transforms the meaning and value of already existing, pre-digital commodities and consumption practices. Although this transformation is driven by a societal sense of uneasiness about the increasing digitalisation of everyday life, postdigital consumer culture is physically, economically and discursively supported by digital technology. Rather than seeking to resolve this dialectic, the paper builds on postdigital theory and Donna Haraway's provocation of 'staying with the trouble' to draw attention to the diversity and fluidity of individual perceptions and experiences of postdigital consumption, bringing into focus new pressures and expectations, new social and cultural divisions, and new ideals and imaginaries represented in postdigital consumer culture.

Digital Resonance: Mapping the Sensorial Turn in Platformised Consumption

Alberto Cossu
University of Leicester, United Kingdom

This paper explores the emerging phenomenon of digital resonance, a concept that captures the intertwining of embodied sensoriality, algorithmic curation, and digital consumption. With TikTok users spending an average of ninety minutes per day on the platform, this shift reflects the growing dominance of content that prioritises fleeting sensations – such as cleaning videos, ASMR clips, and food preparation montages – over rational, discursive engagement.

Situated within a sociological framework, this paper draws from cultural sociology, theories of embodiment, and media studies to examine how these practices reshape the relationship between bodies and digital spaces, creating new cartographies of consumption. The theoretical contribution interrogates the role of algorithms in curating sensory environments that resonate with users' embodied experiences, positioning the body as "platformised" through interactions that hold together resonance and alienation.

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My contribution argues that digital resonance is central to understanding the evolution of consumption practices, as digital platforms increasingly commodify sensory experiences. By reframing consumption as an embodied, sensory practice mediated by technology, this perspective challenges traditional notions of materiality and agency.

As part of the broader project of exploring uncharted consumption landscapes, this paper contributes to theoretical innovation, offering insights into how digitality reconfigures both the body and consumption in contemporary society.

Bhandari, A., & Bimo, S. (2022). Why's everyone on TikTok now? A qualitative analysis of the algorithmized self. Social Media + Society, 8(1), 1–14.

Miller, D. et al. (2016). How the world changed social media. UCL Press.

Rosa, H. (2019). Resonance: A sociology of our relationship to the world. Polity Press.

Food 5: Food and Valuation

'Preferences' for 'Prime cuts' of meat as an outcome of changing practices.

Sonja Schönberg
Università della Svizzera Italiana, Switzerland

Scientific literature on food consumption behavior often attributes health and sustainability outcomes of what people eat to personal choices and preferences. For example, in Switzerland, consumers are said to 'prefer' 'prime cuts' of meat, leading the industry to prioritize their availability.

This interpretation emphasizes individual responsibility, framing individuals as the sole agents of behavioral change to address public health, environmental, and animal welfare issues.

This theoretical research challenges the dominant paradigm of individual accountability. It examines the conceptual origins of 'choice and preference,' rooted in theories of planned behavior and rational concepts of 'need.' As an alternative, it proposes an approach based on social practice theory, shifting the focus from individual decision-making to social practices. Here, 'preference' is not taken for granted but understood as socially constructed through human doings and sayings embedded in specific socio-cultural and historical contexts.

This perspective redefines how 'preferences' for 'prime cuts' emerge from the interplay of interconnected, socially shared practices related to meat production, processing, and preparation across time and place.

By analyzing the prime example of 'preferences' for 'prime cuts' of beef as an outcome of social practices, this study fundamentally questions prevailing scientific conceptions of eating behavior. It calls for a paradigm shift in Nutrition and Eating Behavior Sciences toward social practice theories, emphasizing shared practices, histories, and multiple 'actors' over individual choices in analyzing food consumption behaviors.

The Rise of White Meat? Culinary Hierarchization in the 2020s

Thomas A. M. Skelly
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

In the Global North, meat has historically symbolized affluence, superiority and 'the good life'. Throughout the 20th century, the intensification of industrial animal food production expanded access to meat, reducing its cost and normalizing high-volume consumption. Consequently, a hot meal became synonymous with meat consumption. However, the increasing public awareness of the need for sustainable societies and the growth of plant-based diets have amplified critiques of meat-centric food cultures. The impact of these cultural pressures on meat's culinary status in the 2020s remains insufficiently understood. This paper explores the current culinary status of meat in a Nordic society through go-along interviews and focus groups with Danish omnivores exhibiting varying levels of meat attachment. I present evidence from research in progress on how different types of meat are ascribed status in everyday settings, formal occasions, and contexts where environmental considerations influence culinary valuations. The research contributes to contemporary discussions in the sociology of sustainable consumption about which foods possess sufficient status to structure meals.

Moral Aestheticism and Consumer Citizenship: The Intertwining of the Political and the Aesthetic Evaluation in Food Consumption

Ella Miller
Tampere University, Finland

Food culture and the study of culinary preferences have long held a place in the sociological research of social and cultural stratification. Recently, it has been suggested that the evaluations conceptualized as political consumerism should be taken into consideration alongside the aesthetic appreciation in the study of cultural taste. This article examines the relationship between aesthetic and political food consumption and the strategies for reconciling them in contemporary Finland, based on data collected through elicited writing. The data are analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The analysis reveals that political and aesthetic perspectives not only differentiate but also strongly intertwine in food-related writings. The practices of food enthusiasts and food activists are conceptualized as culinary profiles that describe classical foodie practices, moral aestheticism, consumer citizenship, and the taste of necessity. These profiles differ in terms of how the dimensions of aesthetic and political valuation principles are emphasized. The proposed classification provides new insights into the reconciliation of political and aesthetic consumption practices.

Household and Energy

Friday 29 Aug
9:30-11:00, ROOM 2.11

Locking-into energy vulnerability: how wealth and life phases shape households' control over energy costs in their new homes

Lise Desvallées
Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, France

This presentation addresses the role of energy drivers in households' residential mobilities in the wake of the 2022 energy crisis in Europe, questioning existing empirical observations suggesting that energy, either the efficiency of the home or mobility, is the first adjusting variable in the trade-offs characterizing residential strategies (Desjardins and Mettetal, 2012).

Drawing upon conceptual work around energy vulnerability (Bouzarovski and Petrova, 2013) and residential mobility (Grafmeyer, 2021) and a large survey of households that moved in the South-West of France, we trace the socioeconomic determinants of energy concerns in the choice of a new home and elaborate a typology of households based on the importance of energy efficiency and mobility costs. The findings reveal that energy considerations, including efficiency and proximity, play a crucial role in residential decision-making. In line with existing work on the determining role of life phases over consumption (2024) we show how life phases are determinant in households' preoccupations with energy. Young people and older people in city centers, with smaller apartments and mobility needs, are more indifferent to the efficiency of their homes, whereas families and especially first-time homeowners have more pressing energy concerns. We also show how these concerns are subjected to compromises, as income and homeownership influence residential choices and strategies. Indeed, decreasing income is associated with a greater concern with mobility and energy efficiency, while more well-off households can offset rising costs with thermal retrofits and control the cost of distance.

We argue for expanding energy vulnerability approaches to considering, within a wider social spectrum, both the adaptive capacity of middle- and high-income households, and the determining role of housing costs. These results highlight the need for policies addressing both energy affordability and sustainable consumption, balancing energy retrofits with measures to control housing costs and prevent increased consumption among wealthier households.

How electricity structures life in the amazon: a case study of a Xikrín village

Daniel Costa Jařab
Masaryk University, Czech Republic

The article will analyze thorugh an ANT framework, how electricity influences spatial and temporal relations in an amazonian indigenous community. The indigenous xikrín people have been exposed to electricity in the last two decades, and since then major changes in their lifestyles have occured. The article will attempt to show how various electrical actors interact to create a new cultural ecosystem.

Understanding Private Water Consumption in Germany

Stefan Brachat, Stephan Lorenz
Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany

So far, private water consumption has received only marginal attention, representing an unchartered territory of sociological consumer research. Although Germany had always been regarded as a water rich country, this has changed in recent years. In the context of climate change and growing uncertainties regarding the future availability of clean drinking water, private water use has gained significant importance. Within the broader settings of socio-ecological transformation, the role of private water consumption must not be underestimated. For this, it is not only relevant to look at consumption figures but to also qualitatively study the meanings and usage patterns of water in households. Such insights reveal fundamental socio-cultural views and values that also shape public discourses, underlie political decisions and affect whole value chains (as discussed under the topic of "virtual water").

This paper presents the results of an ongoing sociological research project on water consumption in German private households (funded by German Federal Ministry of Education and Research BMBF since 4/2023). Given the current lack of qualitative data in this field, our study applies qualitative interview analyses and water diaries. Our findings reveal a relatively large variance of structures of meaning attributed to water usage in private households. Based on these findings, a typology of water consumption in relation to underlying affects, attitudes and values will be presented. This provides a foundation for fostering a more sustainable approach to the consumption of water.

The Shifting Sands of Time: A study of socio-temporal flexibility across social classes

Eivind Hjort Matthiasen
Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway

The 'responsibilization' of consumers as active participants in energy transitions urges people to reflect on how much and when they use their energy. These expectations go hand-in-hand with the digitalization of energy sectors, where smart meters enable consumers to keep up to date with their energy use in real time. Consequently, people's flexibility and time-management has been commodified, as people are incentivized to temporally shift their energy practices to accommodate the capacity-needs of the energy system. This article seeks to broaden insights from previous studies utilizing the concept of flexibility capital; a theoretical concept that builds upon Bourdieu's forms of capital, encouraging studies of how energy flexibility is unevenly distributed across dimensions of social class. Using 37 interviews conducted with people from the upper class (cultural and economic fraction) and the working class in Oslo, Norway, this article delves into classed nuances of energy flexibility, stressing the importance of socio-temporal dimensions that structure the everyday lives of people. Throughout the article, differences in sayings and doings of practices across three themes are studied: (i) working arrangements (ii) technology (iii) the short-term & long-term. The article finds that the privileged have access to flexibility through smart technology, but also through their working arrangements. Furthermore, they value strategies that are anchored in long-term planning, such as installing photovoltaics or similar, but are less inclined to be energy flexible when it comes to making changes to their everyday practices. Conversely, the less privileged exhibit shorter time-horizons affected by economic necessity, as well as often being doubly restricted by working arrangements, which makes being energy flexible harder and more intrusive.

Digital 4: AI, Bots, and Consumption

Friday 29 Aug
9:30-11:00, ROOM 2.42

Merchants of Memory – Exploring the Commercialization of Grief through digital Deadbots.

Paul Eisewicht, Carsten Ohlrogge
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The irreversible death of a person has always posed challenges to people and societies. Institutionalized practices – such as ceremonies and memorial traditions – have served to address these challenges. With the advent of digitalization, mourning and memory cultures have undergone profound changes. The development of "griefbots" or "deadbots" – AI-driven digital avatars of deceased individuals, created using personal data such as text messages, videos, or photos – represent a novel intersection of digitalization, AI, and commercialization.

From a consumption perspective, this presentation examines the integration of griefbots into commodified mourning cultures. Commercial services offering griefbot creation raise significant questions about consumption: How are such products marketed to consumers? What drives families or individuals to opt for commercial solutions? How do consumers engage with griefbots throughout the consumption process – from initial need recognition and data provision to long-term maintenance, storage, or even disposal? Moreover, the co-production of griefbots involves unique negotiations between service providers and customers, raising questions about responsibility, decision-making, and the resolution of ethical dilemmas.

This study draws on user reports and discussions gathered from message boards online to analyze how griefbots are perceived, adopted, and experienced in real-world contexts. By synthesising mediatisation and commodification perspectives, the presentation contributes to the sociology of consumption by addressing how digitalisation and commercialisation transform private and familial remembrance practices. Ultimately, it seeks to uncover the societal implications of these emerging technologies, offering a reflection on the evolving boundaries between life, death, consumption and digital afterlife.

The odd companion: how children tame and domesticate conversational AI-models

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This paper analyses how children domesticate the conversational AI-models My AI and ChatGPT. Domestication theory sheds light on key research questions: How do children appropriate and 'tame' AI in everyday life, and does this AI domestication effort support daily practices and well-being, or challenge critical skills, privacy and autonomy? Children navigate accelerating AI-driven environments, where human-synthetic boundaries blur. AI offers guidance, but persuasive and hyper-personalized AI risk undermining children's autonomy, digital literacy and well-being. Thus, there is a call for more systematic research on how the accelerating AI-development affects children. This paper analyses personal interviews, focus groups and questionnaire data from 18 Norwegian children (aged 12-17), collected in late 2024. Preliminary analysis suggests that opinions about conversational AI-models are mixed. Many find My AI strange, boring, childish and lacking personality, while others use it more frequently when they are bored and alone, even asking it for breakfast suggestions. ChatGPT is used for more practical purposes, in school contexts, and is considered fast and efficient. Some blame TikTok for their newly acquired lack of 'attention span', which amplifies the appeal of ChatGPT. The two chatbots seem to complement each other; while My AI suggests what to be for Halloween, ChatGPT details what to wear, and while My AI comforts you when you're sick, ChatGPT suggests medication and recovery paths. Hence, the young informants seem to understand the chatbots' underlying designed purposes, but they are still considered the 'odd' friend/companion that needs to be properly tamed and domesticated in children's digital life.

Using AI in consumption research

Tullia Jack
Lund University, Sweden

This paper critically examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in consumption research, focusing on the use of large language models (LLMs) in qualitative data analysis and semi-structured interviews. Drawing on an AI administered chat interview of 74 social scientists from a major Swedish university and 23 follow-up email-interviews, we explore the adoption, applications, experience of and implications of AI tools in academic research practices. Our findings reveal a complex landscape of AI integration there is widespread interest in the potential of using AI to help research processes there is also scepticism about the (dis)ability of AI.

While AI tools offer significant potential for enhancing research efficiency and analytical capabilities, their integration into consumption research is fraught with ethical concerns, methodological challenges, and epistemological tensions. Our analysis highlights how researchers navigate issues of data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the potential homogenization of knowledge production in their engagement with AI technologies.

Using an AI-powered chatbot to conduct our interviews, we reflexively engage with the methodological implications of AI in qualitative research. This approach allows us to critically examine the affordances and limitations of AI-assisted data collection, providing insights into the changing nature of researcher-participant interactions in the digital age. This study contributes to ongoing debates about the role of AI in shaping academic knowledge production and consumption practices.

The Cybernetic Cosmology of Consumption – Future, Past or Both?

Joern Lamla
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This paper asks about the possible world relations in consumption and argues that with the social expansion of digitality (and especially AI), a cybernetic cosmology is spreading and prevailing. One possible consequence of this development is that the sense of the ontological heterogeneity of the cosmos, which is becoming increasingly important in times of planetary endangerment and dependency (e.g. Latour), continues to decline. Thus, the widespread notions of sustainable consumption are an important empirical test case for this. From a theoretical point of view, it will be shown that sociology still lacks the conceptual tools for a critical analysis and diagnosis of these developments. To gain this, we borrow from recent anthropological theories. With the help of Descolas' distinctions, the cybernetic cosmology can be reconstructed as a digital renewal of analogistic practices and schemata, the sociological relevance of which has long been underexposed in comparison to discussions of naturalistic and animistic cosmologies. The paper aims to elaborate the extent to which something new is emerging in consumer culture with analogistic world relationships, or rather where these are a continuation or return of structural moments from past societies. It seeks to substantiate the assumption that, in comparison to the cybernetic elements of earlier societies (e.g. in religion, bureaucracy and industry), a new quality of worldmaking is emerging as a result of digital technologies permeating all of everyday life. For this reason, consumption can be seen as the decisive laboratory of social transformation.

Consumer Society and Democracy

Friday 29 Aug
13:30-15:00, ROOM 1.12

Consumer Society and the Crisis of the Democratic Imaginary

Daniel Welch
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The "promissory legitimacy" (Beckert 2020) of the post-Second World War democratic imaginary was inextricably linked to the idea of "consumer society" - the promise of "prosperity for all" and ever-rising living standards realised through mass consumption. Lizabeth Cohen (2003) famously named the faith in the inextricable linkages of consumer society, democracy, egalitarianism, capitalism, economic growth and technological progress, the ideology of "the Consumers' Republic". Despite important reconfiguration in the imaginary of consumer society in the transition from the post-war order to neoliberalism, an important continuity of capitalist political-economic legitimacy lay in the promise of freedom realised through the realm of leisure in mass consumption. Concomitant with accelerating ecological crisis, and particularly following the 2007/8 financial crisis, there has been a profound loss of faith in the imaginary of consumer society. "Consumer society" was a central organising concept of the early sociology of consumption, as well as the subject of a considerable body of historical studies. There is some irony in the fact that "consumer society" has generally ceased to be of interest to the sociology of consumption at precisely the point when its loss as an imaginary is so socially, culturally and politically consequential. I argue that this loss is an under-appreciated feature of the contemporary crisis of the promissory legitimacy of democratic capitalism. What can the sociology of consumption bring to an understanding of the crisis of the democratic imaginary?

From Citizen, Consumer, and Prosumer to Citimer: The Case of Healthcare

Dino Numerato
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The aim of this paper is to introduce and discuss the concept of the healthcare citimer, by exploring the interplay of citizen, consumer, and prosumer identities. The prefix citi- refers to the expressions of citizenship while the suffix -mer refers to the identity of the prosumer (e.g. Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010) who is the health care consumer and, at the same time, the health care (co-)producer. This contribution conceptually extends our understanding of citizenship in the healthcare context and develops the recently elaborated notions on the patient-consumer (e.g. Mol, 2008; Mold, 2015) or the citizen-consumer in healthcare (e.g. Clarke et al., 2007; Derkatch & Spoel, 2015; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). The study draws on two data collection campaigns that focused on the civic engagement of patients. The first campaign was carried out between 2017 and 2019. It primarily consisted of observations, and semi-structured interviews with representatives of patient associations, citizens, and policy-makers, as well as a documentary analysis. The second data collection campaign took place during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and involved the analysis of available documents and media articles. The analysis suggests that health-related behaviour has political and economic implications and has been bottom-up-oriented and top-down-driven. I conclude that the concept of citimer is a heuristic tool that can comprehend health- and healthcare-related behaviours not only in healthcare contexts but also in contemporary societies more broadly.

Neither Passive nor Individualized? About the Potential of Consumers to Democratize the Economy Through Collective Self-Organization

Nicholas Pohl, Victoria Becerril Nito, Philip Balsiger, Fabian Petutschnig
University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Economic democratization results from political intervention or from workers taking control of production - at least this is the common understanding in the sociological literature about economic democracy. Consumers are seen as influencing economic processes more indirectly: either by creating incentives for producers through aggregate consumer choices, or by exerting pressure through the formation of interest groups and social movements. However, consumers can actively participate in the democratization of the economy by forming consumer-owned enterprises and democratically organizing their supply of goods and services.

This paper introduces the notion of "consumer-driven economic democracy" to understand how consumers' collective self-organization can democratize market relations. Combining economic sociology and organizational studies, it draws on the literature on prefigurative organizing to propose a twofold process. First, consumers can democratize the economy through their active participation in specific consumer-owned enterprises. Second, as collective actors, consumer-owned enterprises can then transform broader economic relations, particularly by redefining relationships with supply chain actors. Empirically, the paper draws on preliminary data from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the spring of 2025 in two consumer-owned and participatory supermarkets in Berlin. The paper renews academic discussions of economic democracy and prefigurative organizing by discussing the potential of consumers to collectively reshape economic relations. Its findings also have societal relevance by empirically informing current socio-political debates about "needs-based economies" and food democracy as responses to contemporary environmental and social challenges.

Deserts, swamps, gardens, and farms: The geographic imaginaries of food access

Wesley R. Dean
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Many of the organizing metaphors of food access are spatial. A non-exhaustive list of these geographic imaginaries includes terms such as food environments, food swamps. food deserts, urban gardens and farms, foodsheds, kitchenscapes, tablescapes, platescapes, and foodscapes. I propose to examine these and other imaginary geographies of food consumption from a perspective informed by the scholar Kenneth Olwig who probes the relational nature of landscapes. He identifies two general frames. The spatial or "scenic landscape" has its roots in perspectival painting and lends itself to abstracted, cartographic accounts of the elements and relationships to be found within a landscape. These geographical imaginaries elide the sociopolitical nature of landscapes. He contrasts this to "substantive landscapes" which speak to resident polities and explicitly evoke the moral content of the relationships between these polities and other landscape constituents. I first propose to systematically survey the academic and policy literature on food access to identify distinct geographic imaginaries of food access, arranging them according to Olwig's frames, and then identifying the elements and relationships that constitute these landscapes. I will then ask three questions: 1) what are the moral norms that underpin the different elements and relationships within these landscapes; 2) how are the moral norms that underpin these relationships established, adjudicated, and legitimated; and 3) do these relationships map onto distinct conceptions of justice?

Bodies, Guts, and Consumption

Friday 29 Aug
13:30-15:00, ROOM 2.11

Normativity in Knowledge Regimes: Understanding the Construction of Gendered Bodies in Contemporary Debates

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In recent years, public debates about gender and body ideals have increased significantly in Western cultural contexts. What is considered a 'proper' body, and how to form such a body it is increasingly discussed in the media and socially normalised. This has led to various definitions of 'proper' femininity or masculinity. However, the underlying social dynamics driving them are often insufficiently addressed in sociological research.

A comprehensive understanding of the construction of gendered bodies requires a systematic analysis of the underlying social dynamics. To achieve a better understanding, this conceptual paper develops the notion of knowledge regimes and explores its relationship to normativity. Knowledge regimes ("Wissensordnungen") are systems of collective knowledge and culturally encoded intentions that are produced and applied through discursive practices. However, existing perspectives overlook the normative structures embedded in these knowledge regimes, which are central to their performative enactment. Normativity – i.e. societal ideas about what is considered appropriate or desirable - should be recognised and systematically analysed as a key component of such knowledge regimes.

Building on this theoretical reflection, I illustrate the relevance of the normativity of knowledge regimes through empirical vignettes. The 'protein hype' serves as an example of how normative knowledge regimes shape female-gendered body ideals and are performatively enacted. This analysis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how concepts of 'proper' masculinity and femininity are produced and established through discursive practices.

The Gut as Uncharted Territory: Microbiopolitics, Consumption, and the Posthuman Body

Stefan Wahlen
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The human microbiome has emerged as a key site of scientific, economic and political interest, yet its role in the sociology of consumption remains largely unexplored. This paper proposes to conceptualise the gut as an uncharted territory of consumption, where food, microbes and biopolitical interventions shape human bodies beyond conventional models of consumer agency. Drawing on microbiopolitics, this study examines how power operates at the microbial level - through dietary regimes, probiotic markets, and medical discourses - to govern bodies from within.

By framing the gut as an ecosystem co-produced by human and non-human agents, this paper engages with posthumanist perspectives that question the boundaries of the consuming subject. If the microbiome actively transforms bodily states, what does this mean for theories of consumption, health and agency? Furthermore, as gut health becomes a lucrative market, how do neoliberal wellness industries commodify microbial life and create new hierarchies of bodily optimisation?

This paper argues that understanding consumption at a microbiopolitical level challenges anthropocentric and product-focused models of consumer behaviour. It invites a rethinking of consumption not as an act of individual choice, but as an entangled, multi-species process shaped by science, industry and governance. By mapping the microbiome as a site of biopower and market expansion, this research contributes to a broader interrogation of how consumption is being redefined in an era where the human body itself becomes a terrain of commodification and control.

Tasting listening metabolizing: Notes on cooking/eating as a participatory research method

Kateřina Holá, Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer
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With renewed concern about food justice, chronic metabolic disorders, and planetary systemic inflammation, surprisingly little attention has been paid to cooking and eating as a (new) materialist participatory method of research that is simultaneously personal, performative and full of transformative potential. While food is famously 'good to think (with)' (Levi-Strauss), it has often been considered a pathway to researching other things. In this presentation we draw on a series of cooking workshops with three Romani women from northern Bohemia that we organised with Czech and Slovak gender and anthropology students to learn how to cook Romani dishes. Following Heldke's (1992) argument that cooking is a relational inquiry, we ask what kind of practices and knowledges are activated, generated and transmitted through movement, touch, smell, taste and voice, and how change is enabled and enacted. In what ways can our culinary lecturers can be considered co-researchers? Here we zoom in on situated pathways for surfacing what matters, including the energetics of ephemeral gestures as memory practices, and the constrictions and limits of metabolising and absorbing heavy dishes and stories of state assimilation and violence with our ears and guts.

The sociability of the meal

Christian Stenbak Larsen
University College Copenhagen, Denmark

In health promotion and social work meals are used to facilitate sociality or even community. In lack of clear evidence on the matter some are referring to Georg Simmel's classic essay "The sociology of the meal" – often citing the phrase: "a tremendous socialising power". The paper offers a re-reading and re-interpretation of Simmel's arguments in the context of his sociology. Further the paper points out what difference this different interpretation will have for the use of meals in health promotion and social work. The main point being that the meal in itself does not produce sociality/community among the commensals, but the meal can for humans who strives for sociality/community be a facilitating setting.