

Sustaining Everyday Life - Introduction

Kristina Karlsson & Kajsa Ellegård

Dept. of Thematic studies - Technology and Social Change

Linköping University, Sweden

The conference "Sustaining Everyday Life" was held at Linköping University, Campus Norrköping, on April 22-24 2009. It was the second in a series of international conferences organised by the Nordic research network for Everyday Life Processes in Nordic Welfare Societies (ELPiNOWS), subsequently called Everyday Life Processes in European Societies (ELPiES). The network was founded in 2007 by professor Kajsa Ellegård, Department of Thematic Studies - Technology and Social Change, Linköping University, Sweden, professor Lars Dencik and PhD Allan Westerling, Department of Psychology and Education, Roskilde University, Denmark, and doctoral assistant Pirjo Korvela, Department of Home Economics and Craft Science, University of Helsinki, Finland.

The first conference "Paths to researching everyday life in the (near) future - stepping out of the frames of the disciplines" was held at the Department of Home Economics, University of Helsinki, Finland, March 2008. Presentations and discussion among a group of international researchers on everyday life laid a ground for developing the research field on studies of daily life from an interdisciplinary perspective. The conference was successful and there was a demand for further networking and a chain of conferences and a decision was taken to arrange the 2009 conference in Sweden.

The aim of the Sustaining Everyday Life conference was to consolidate the field of everyday life research and the collaboration with international researchers bringing two important research fields – daily life and sustainability – together and put them to the fore. Within the frame of this collaboration different complexes of problems in people's daily lives and in different phases of the life cycle are studied. The studies demand different theoretical and methodological approaches and, thus, the field of research is multi- and interdisciplinary. Many of the research questions that are posed focus on people's sense making and action space within the frame of constraining factors including, for example, time, space, material resources, laws, rules, and cultural values.

The intention was, thus, to tighten the link between everyday life and sustainability issues. The overall theme of the conference was the question of what sustainability stands for in everyday life in the sense of social, ecological, political, and economical dimensions. Nowadays the question of who is/are to be held accountable for an ecologically sustainable development is addressed to individuals in all areas of society and at all levels of the social

system. Based on the assumption that individual citizens' actions in daily life are resource demanding and have implications for other people and the surrounding environment, both locally and globally, an individual responsibility is assigned to each and every one of us. However, the demand for an ecologically sustainable development need to be accompanied with knowledge of how the world's limited resources are to be allocated and hence, questions of social, political, and economical aspects of sustainability need to be addressed.

During the conference, the theme "Sutaining everyday life" permeated the following seven sub-themes;

- 1) domestication of technologies in everyday life,
- 2) activities and practices of everyday life,
- 3) mobility and everyday life,
- 4) energy use in everyday life,
- 5) planning for everyday life,
- 6) everyday life for an ecologically and socially sustainable future,
- 7) institutionalisation of everyday life.

These themes, complemented with psychological sustainability, were reflected in the keynote lectures held by, in order of the themes: *Margrethe Aune*, Dept. of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway, *Eeva Jokinen*, Dept. of Social Policy, University of Joensuu, Finland, *Randi Hjorthol*, Institute of Transport Economics, Oslo, Norway, *Kirsten Gram-Hanssen*, Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, Denmark, *Valentina Santi*, Dept. of Architecture, Venice University, Italy, *Thomas Gröbly*, Baden – Switzerland (www.ethik-labor.ch), *Jan Kampmann*, Dept. of Psychology and Educational Studies, Roskilde University, Denmark, and finally, regarding psychological sustainability, *Liisa Horelli*, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Aalto University, Finland.

Two parallel workshops took place on the second day of the conference, including in total 21 presentations.¹ All participants engaged in creative discussions. Many of the sub-themes as well as the multi- and interdisciplinary character of everyday life research were reflected in the presentations. The participants were inspired by the possibility of encountering and discussing research they probably not would have encountered otherwise and still being able to see and contribute new ideas to the common field of everyday life research. In one of the workshops more issues related to ecological sustainability were discussed, whereas different aspects of social sustainability were addressed to a greater extent in the other.

Ten of the 29 presentations, including keynote lectures, have been transformed into full papers and are published in this proceeding. The abstracts of the remaining 19 presentations and two keynote speakers' power point presentations are also published. On the third and last day of the conference the ongoing work of writing a literary survey on everyday life research were presented and discussed. The survey has been finalized and a link to the report is found in the proceedings. The papers cover the variation of themes and deal with: psychological presence as a prerequisite for psychological sustainability; characteristics and social processes contributing to the understanding of mobility in daily life; the diversity of time frames experienced by people living inside and outside the labor market; two interpretations of the potential of reducing householder's consumption of electrical energy found in the literature;

1 The workshops were organized according to the following: About four 10 minutes presentations were given in succession by four different presenters. After that, short group discussions followed. Each participant in the same workshop chose to discuss with three of the four presenters who sat at different tables. The participants changed table and presenter after each round of discussion that went on for 10 minutes.

how practice theory can be used to understand the role of objects and technologies in the constitution and change of routines and practices related to the use of everyday-life technologies; the “one family work method” aimed to help and support families facing the threat of exclusion; participatory design as a prerequisite for safer living environments for the elderly; the constitution of communality and individuality in everyday family life; local opportunities for improving energy efficiency that arise in households’ everyday practices and in relation to energy guidance; and the content of time in everyday life as experienced by the next of kin of haemodialysis patients. Taken together these papers offer intriguing reading on how to sustain everyday life in the double meaning of the expression!

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