

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

**Felippa Amanta**

Supervisors:  
Prof Charlie Wilson & Dr Emilie Vrain



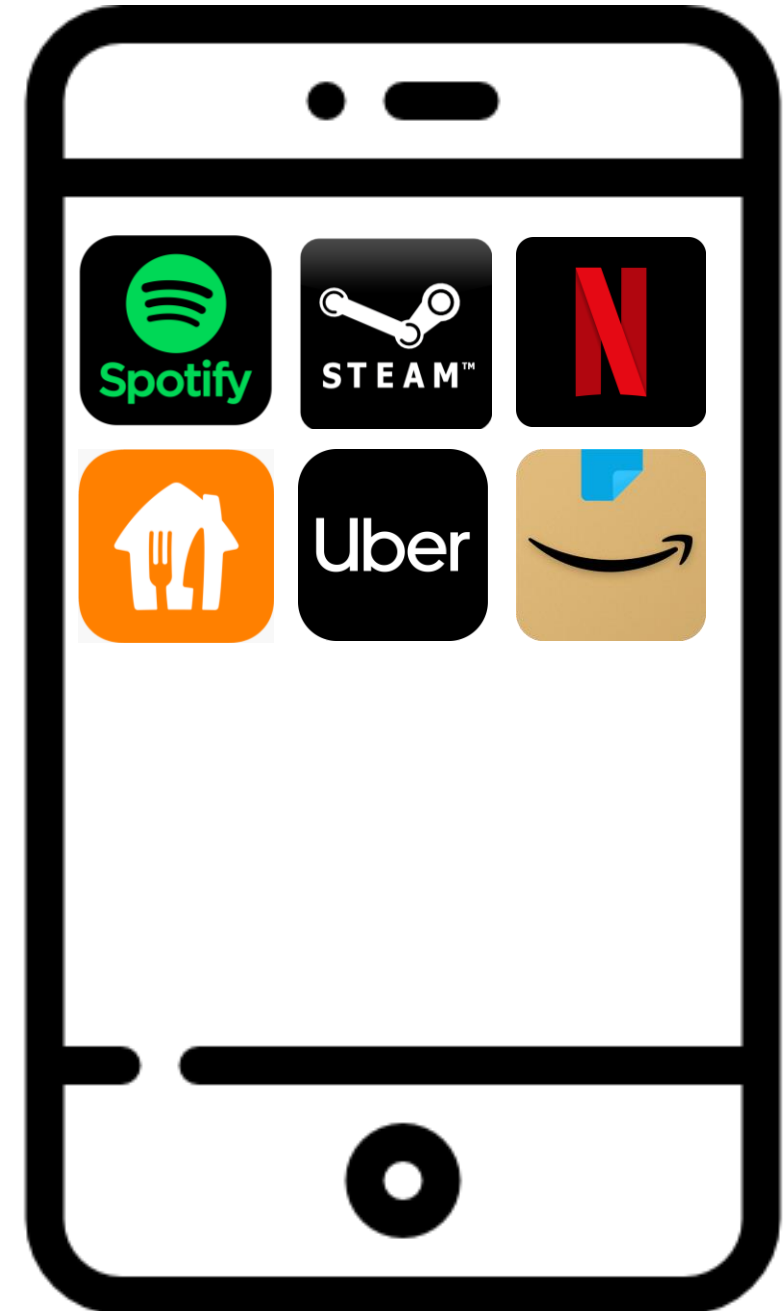
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# Background

- Digital innovations enable faster consumption
- Definition: digitally-enabled services able to provide fast fulfilment of various products and services (Smith, 2016; Taylor, 2018; Bissell, 2020)
  - Not necessarily platform/gig



# Why does this matter?

- Social implications
  - Precarity and vulnerability of workers
  - Competition to local businesses
  - Landscape of urban infrastructure
  - Community connections
  - New expectations of immediate gratification
- Environmental implications
  - Prevents consolidation and introduces inefficiencies
  - Higher carbon emissions



Photo by Margarida da Mota on Pexels

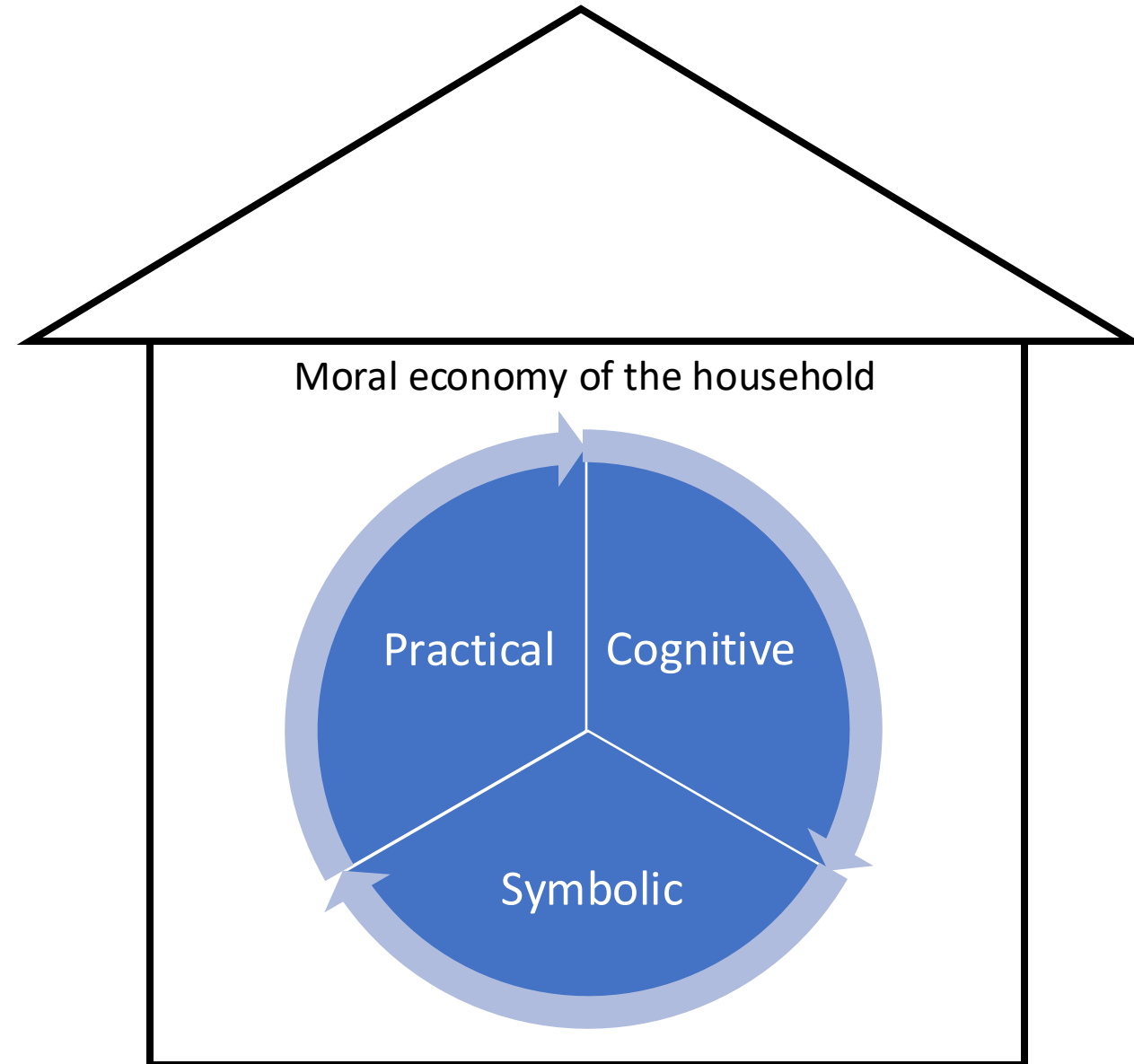
# Research questions

- How do households domesticate on-demand digital services?
- How do on-demand digital services shape households' everyday consumption?
- Under what conditions and how did the acceleration of consumption emerge?



# Theoretical Framework

- Domestication Theory
- Diffusion of Innovation
- Rosa's Social Acceleration Theory



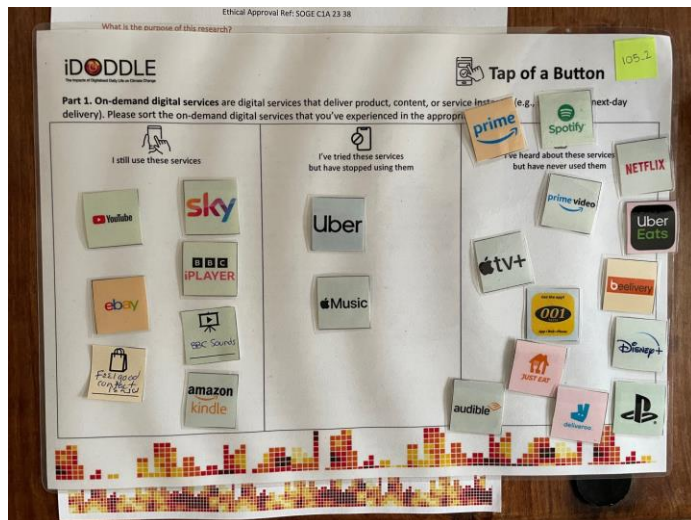
# Methods

Living Lab  
n=20  
June 2023-Jan 2024

National Survey  
n=1,512  
June-July 2024

Process Tracing  
Upcoming

- 20 individuals from 14 households
- 11 female, 9 male, ages 32-87
- In-depth semi-structured interviews, trial
- n=252 adopters and 252 non-adopters of food delivery, next-day retail, and ride-hailing



# Acceleration of delivery is the new norm

- Mutual dynamic between people's temporalities and on-demand digital service use
- Identity and moral economy determine the value of speed
- Interdependencies between experiences in various services

When I was growing up, you'd watch a show on TV and a new episode would come out once a week and you would wait all the time. Now that everything's on demand ... I would say maybe **I have higher expectations...** I think maybe slightly less so for like food delivery services, because obviously that's constrained a bit more by where you're located and what's available in the place, but, yeah, definitely, I have expectations of **being able to get stuff quickly and having a big selection.**

-Jessica, F, 33

Time comes relative from me, so **I don't need a fast service.**

-Alex, M, 74

# People adopt on-demand services because of the speed



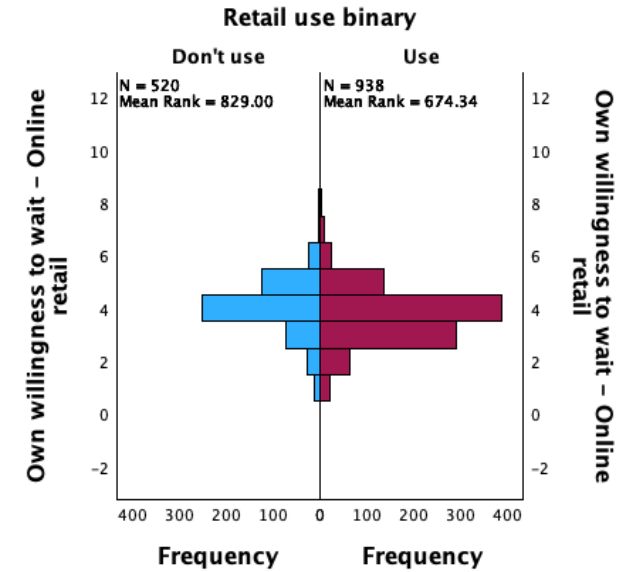
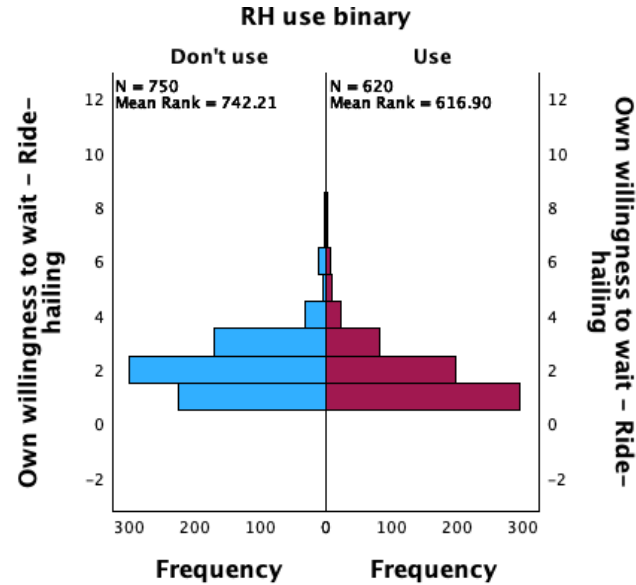
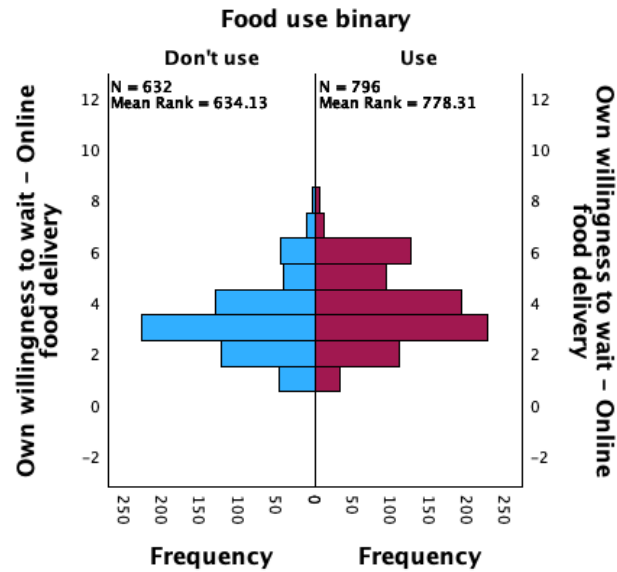
n=756

# People with high pace of life and time pressure perceive greater value from on-demand digital services

Variables	Dependent variable = Relative advantage								
	Ride-hailing			Food delivery			Retail		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Constant	-.428	.341		-.292	.326		-.767	.310	
Pace of life	.026	.004	.269***	.013	.004	.138**	.012	.004	.128**
Time scarcity	-.009	.008	-.044	.017	.008	.093*	.036	.008	.208***
Gender	-.037	.085	-.018	-.113	.088	-.050	.007	.084	.004
Employment	.144	.086	.070	.186	.090	.086	.051	.087	.026
Age	-.146	.027	-.238***	-.224	.028	-.362*	-.124	.026	-.219***
Number of children	.163	.045	.149***	.079	.050	.062***	.123	.055	.096*
Model summary	$R^2 = .238, p < .001$			$R^2 = .297, p < .001$			$R^2 = .199, p < .001$		

n=1,512

# Adopters of on-demand services are more impatient



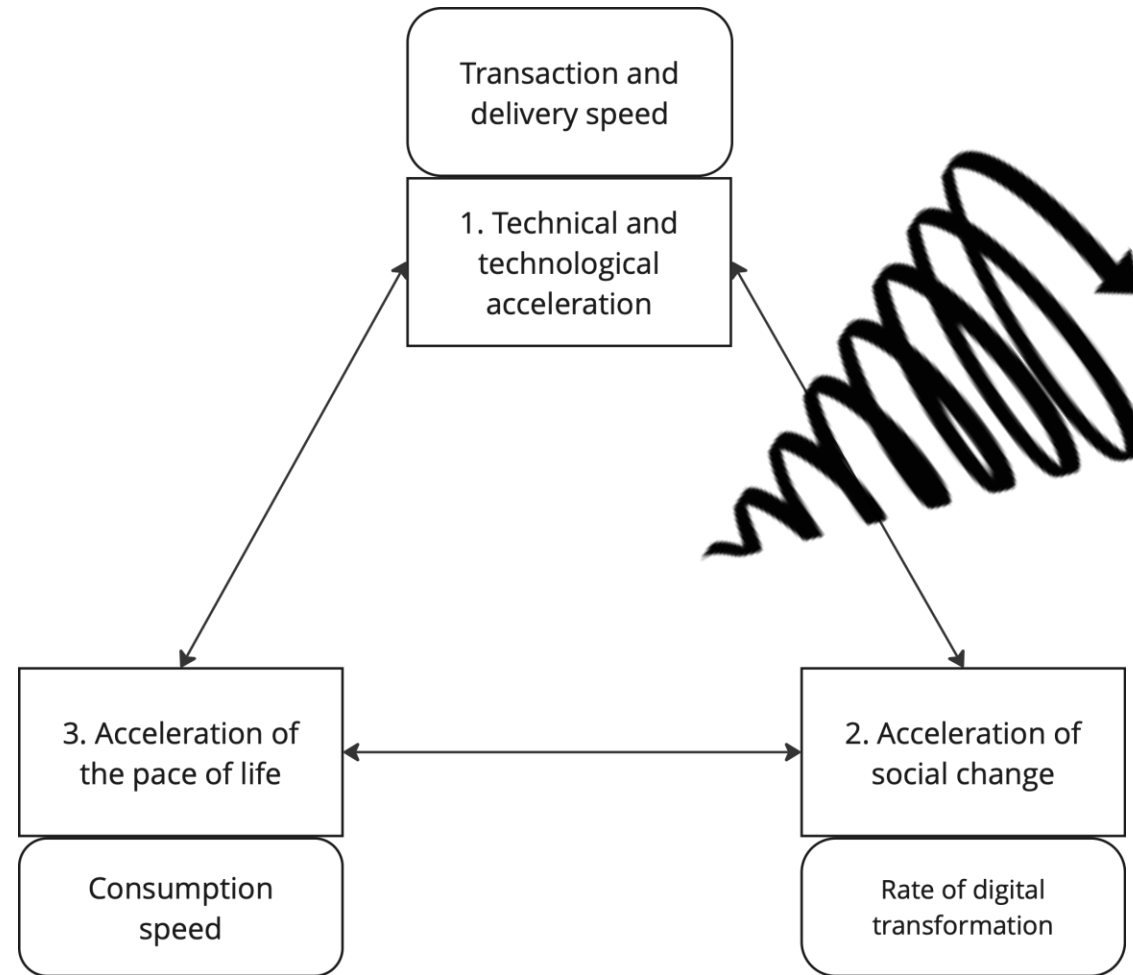
# Formation of new routines

- Households develop new routines around on-demand digital services, while they allow for new time management and coordination practices

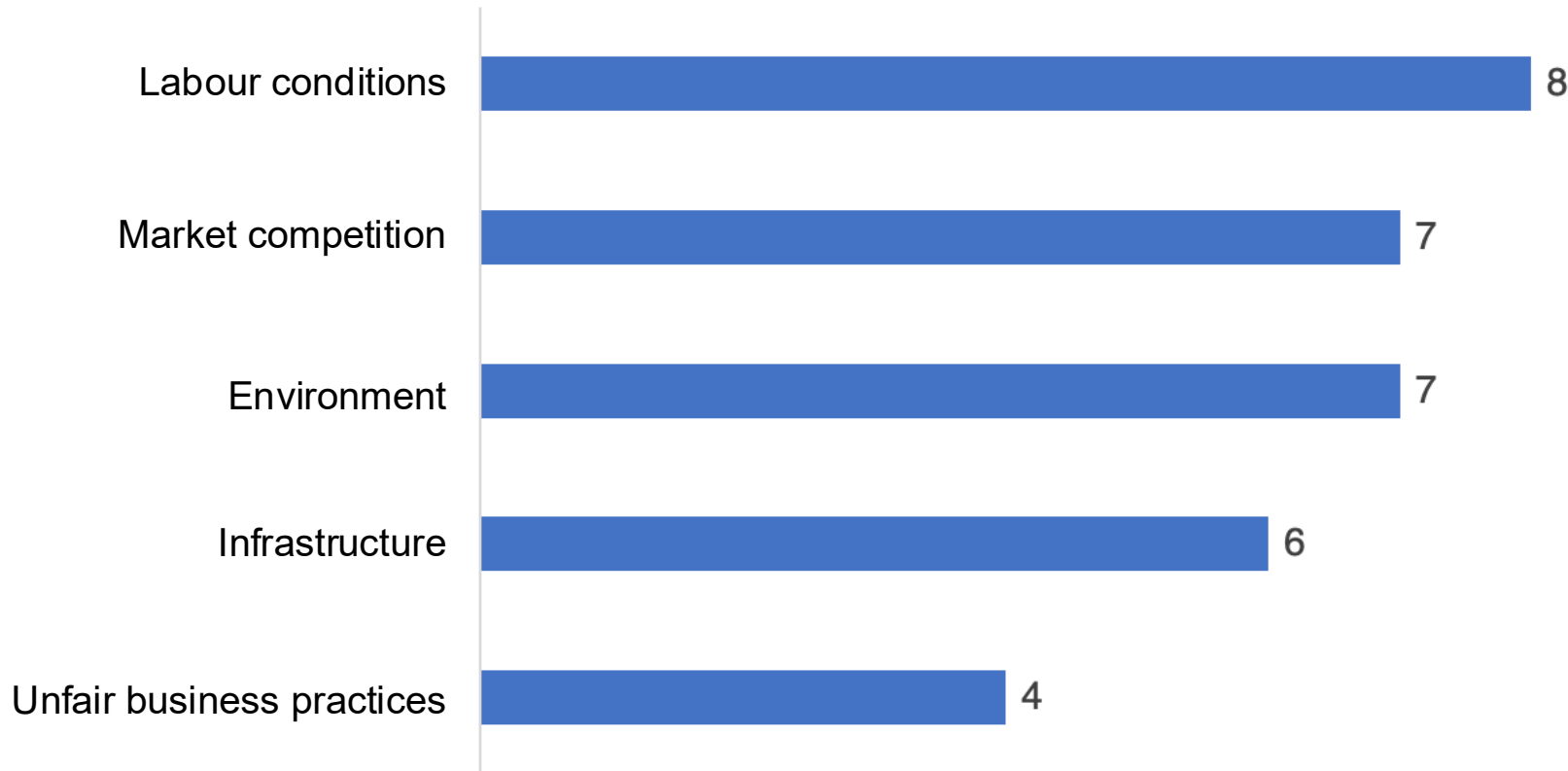
That's why I would use Deliveroo, and that does tend to happen quite often, especially just after we separated and I was on my own, and **I wasn't in such a routine of doing the shopping and everything**, and then I often found myself with no food and really exhausted. And you know it was like ohh... Just treat myself... I put the kids to bed or put them in the bath and then **I can just order it there while they're in the bath.**

-Stephanie, F, 37

# A self-propelling cycle?



# Social and environmental concerns



Strategies to alleviate concern: bulk buying, grouping deliveries

I'm not so keen on deliveries by motorbike because I think they drive quite badly and it's actually quite **dangerous**. And if you're getting somebody coming over on a petrol bike, it's quite a lot of **pollution** for what it is. These people don't really have a base, they just kind of hang around in different shops and then cycle somewhere and it's not probably a very fair way of being treated. I expect **they don't earn much money**.

Caroline, F, 45

# Moral economy of the household

- Households use on-demand digital services in nuanced and complex ways based on their moral economy
- A countervailing force to the acceleration
- Potential reversal of the normalisation of on-demand

There was, I think, a little time after we stopped having Prime and I was like, oh, **this is annoying now that I have to wait this long.** I got this thing, I got too used to it. But you know again that recognition is like, **wow, nobody needs this product in a day's time.** Like, I just don't need anything that fast  
-Heather, F, 34

# Conclusion

- Speed and temporal flexibility are essential but often forgotten dimensions of consumption
- Self-propelling cycle of acceleration reflecting the mutual dynamic between households and digital services
- Moral economy of the households as a countervailing force to the acceleration

# Thank you!

**Felippa Amanta**

PhD Student

Environmental Change Institute

School of Geography and the Environment

University of Oxford, UK

[felippa.amanta@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:felippa.amanta@ouce.ox.ac.uk)



<https://linktr.ee/idoddle>



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