

# *Lifecourse Transitions: Opportunities for Sustainable Lifestyles?*



15 July 2014 - 16 July 2014

Programme and abstracts

# Welcome

Welcome from the Organising Committee to this Institute of Advanced Studies supported workshop on Lifecourse Transitions: Opportunities for Sustainable Lifestyles? We hope that you will find the programme interesting, exciting and also challenging. The papers and posters presented at the workshop will be sharing empirical and theoretical work, as well as a range of methodological approaches, which explore the varying experiences of those going through lifecourse transitions. We are very pleased to have such a variety of international and national speakers and poster presenters from a wide range of disciplines and we have also made room in the programme for some interactive discussion sessions.

We are also delighted to welcome our keynote speakers, Bas Verplanken from the University of Bath, Bronwyn Hayward from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Dale Southerton from the University of Manchester. We are especially delighted that Professor Tim Jackson, Director of the Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group at the University of Surrey, will be introducing the workshop. We anticipate that the collaborative work initiated in this workshop will continue after it has finished in the form of continuing dialogues about our work, and in the publication of a journal special issue – so we will be in touch with all the presenters about these possibilities and opportunities.

We extend our grateful thanks to the Institute of Advanced Studies for sponsoring this event and to all those who have helped with the organisation. We do hope you enjoy the intellectual stimulation of the conference and look forward to meeting you all.

Please remember to follow us on twitter now and throughout the workshop!

 @SusLifeIAS

Kate Burningham and Susan Venn

Department of Sociology and Centre for Environmental Strategy and University of Surrey

# Lifecourse Transitions: Opportunities for Sustainable Lifestyles?

## Organising Committee

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# Programme

**VENUE: Oak Suite, University of Surrey**

## **DAY 1**

**09.30 – 10.00 Registration and Coffee**

**10.00 – 10.10 Introduction to the workshop**

Professor Tim Jackson, *Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey*

**10.10 – 11.00 Keynote Speaker: Professor Bas Verplanken, University of Bath**

*On the Yin and Yang of Habits: The Power of Repetitive Action and Thinking*

**11.00 – 12.10 Paper Session 1: Habits**

1.1 Ines Thronicker: *"Weakened mobility habits due to moving home? A quasi-experimental field study on the effectiveness of a communication-based mobility intervention for movers"*

1.2 Birgitta Gatersleben, Kate Burningham, Susan Venn, Ian Christie and Tim Jackson: *"Lifestyles in transition - exploring changes in values, identities and behaviours among new parents and retirees"*

1.3 Neil Jennings: *"Encouraging pro-environmental behaviours amongst students - tapping into moments of change"*

**12.10 – 13.15 Lunch and Posters**

**13.15 – 14.00 Paper Session 2: Methods**

2.1 Kiron Chatterjee: *"How Lifecourse Transitions Influence Mobility Behaviours: New Insights from the UK Household Longitudinal Study"*

2.2 Rachel Howell: *"Are graphical representations of practices over an individual's lifecourse a useful methodological tool in researching the impact of lifecourse transitions on sustainability?"*

**14.00 – 14.50 Keynote Speaker: Dr Bronwyn Hayward**

*University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand*

*The Political Context of Youth Transitions: The struggle for a more democratic and sustainable future*

**14.50 – 15.10 Tea and Posters**

**15.10 – 16:20 Paper Session 3: Families and Households**

3.1 Kevin Burchell, and Ruth Rettie: *"Low energy lifestyles?: working with families and a primary school"*

3.2 Thomas Roberts, Tina Balke, Maria Xenitidou and Nigel Gilbert: *"Changes in household energy consumption in relation to the age of children"*

3.3 Kate Burningham, Susan Venn, Birgitta Gatersleben, Ian Christie and Tim Jackson: *"Lifecourse transitions as moments of change for sustainability? : Reflections from longitudinal qualitative research"*

**16.20 – 17.15 Roundtable discussion**

**17:30 Wine Reception – venue tbc**

**19:00 Meet to walk to Guildford for conference dinner: 7.30 pm at Olivio's, 53 Quarry Street, Guildford, GU1 3UA**

**VENUE: Oak Suite, University of Surrey**

**DAY 2**

09.00 – 09.30 **Registration / Coffee**

09.30 – 10.20 **Keynote Speaker: Professor Dale Southerton**

*University of Manchester*

*“‘Lifecourse’ as a socio-cultural constraint: some sociological reflections on the implications for understanding trajectories of consumption.”*

10.20 – 12.00 **Paper Session 4: Consumption**

4.1 Monica Wilinska: *“Retiring ways- space, emotion and identity in late life”*

4.2 Bérangère Véron: *“Lifecourse transitions in old age and sustainable food practices”*

4.3 Juneda Sarfraz: *“‘We have the butter strength’; Food and eating practices of the elderly migrant generation living in multigenerational, Pakistani, Muslim families in Scotland”*

12.00 – 12.45 **Lunch and Posters**

12.45 – 14.20 **Paper Session 5: Narratives**

5.1 Mary Greene: *“Tales of Stability and change - Careers of domestic consumption over the lifecourse”*

5.2 Barbara Ratzenboeck: *“Artistic life course transitions: Becoming a writer”*

5.3 Emily Towers: *“Creating enduring narratives with our clothes through the practice of mending and its affect on the domestic consumption of fashion products”*

5.4 Chris Groves, Catherine Butler, Karen Henwood, Karen Parkhill, Nick Pidgeon, Fiona Shirani: *“Energy Biographies: liminality, narratives of care and transforming practices”*

14.20 – 14.40 **Tea**

14.40 – 15.40 **Small group discussion (led by audience commentaries)**

15.40 – 16.00 **Conclusions, next steps and close**

# Keynote Speakers

## Dr Bronwyn Hayward

University of Canterbury New Zealand

The Political Context of Youth Transitions: The struggle for a more democratic and sustainable future.

### Abstract

Young citizens today are growing up in a world that is very different from their parents and grandparents. It's a world in which they are confronted by four difficult and intersecting challenges: dangerous environmental change, growing social inequality, unsustainable economies, and weakening democracies as local communities try to hold global power to account. These complex challenges also underpin significant moments of transition in the lives of young citizens. In this paper I discuss why it is crucial we rethink the political context of contemporary youth transitions to support a more democratic and sustainable future for a new generation.



### Biography

Bronwyn is a Senior lecturer in political science and Director of the Arts scholars programme at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She is also co-researcher at the University of Oslo on the Voices of the Future project. Between 2008-2011 Bronwyn's work with the Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group team at the University of Surrey began when she was based in the UK on a 3 year special study leave as visiting fellow with the RESOLVE centre for research on sustainable lifestyles, Values and Environment at Surrey and the Tyndall Centre for climate change research, University of East Anglia.

Today's 1.2 billion teenagers are growing up in a world very different from their parents and their grandparents. Bronwyn's research focuses on understanding children and young people's political aspirations, participation and experiences in a rapidly changing physical and socio-economic environment.

## Professor Dale Southerton

University of Manchester

"Lifecourse" as a socio-cultural constraint: some sociological reflections on the implications for understanding trajectories of consumption.'

### Biography

Dale Southerton is Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester and the Director of the Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI). Previously he was Director of the ESRC co-funded 'Sustainable Practices Research Group' (SPRG). Dale's expertise is in the study of consumption. He edited the three volume 'Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture' (2011), and has published a number of books and peer-reviewed journal articles on the relevance of consumption with respect to: sustainability; theories of social change; time use and the temporal organisation of everyday life; technologies and innovation; taste, belonging and social distinction.



## Professor Bas Verplanken

University of Bath

“On the Yin and Yang of Habits: The Power of Repetitive Action and Thinking”

### Biography

*Bas Verplanken is professor of social psychology at the University of Bath and leads the SLRG HABITs project. He studied, graduated and did his PhD (1989) at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. From 1990 to 1998 he was an assistant and associated professor at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, and from 1998 to 2006 full professor of social psychology at the University of Tromsø, Norway.*



### Bas's research interests are:

- Habits; behavioural habits; mental habits
- Attitudes; attitude-behaviour relations
- Values; values and the self
- Health behaviour; (un)healthy eating; exercising
- Body image
- Consumer behaviour; impulsive buying
- Environmental behaviour; traffic mode choice; environmental values



# Abstracts: Paper Sessions

## Day 1: Tuesday 15th July 2014

### Paper Session 1: Habits

#### 1.1 Weakened mobility habits due to moving home? A quasi-experimental field study on the effectiveness of a communication-based mobility intervention for movers

Ines Thronicke, *Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ*

The lifecourse transition of moving home is considered to be an optimal window of opportunity for communication-based Travel Demand Management (TDM) interventions. The change within the spatiotemporal mobility structure of movers is expected to demand conscious rethinking. Hereby, mobility habits are supposed to be weakened and the effectiveness of TDM measures is probably enhanced. In a field experiment, the effect of an information-and-incentive instrument to promote the use of more sustainable mobility options was investigated. In a complete control group design, movers (N=90) and habitants (N=290) were either given an intervention or not. Pre-post measurements with a pre-measurement for movers before their move showed that habit strength did not change intra-individually. At the same time, habit strength was negatively correlated and the interest of the participants in the intervention was positively correlated with the number of current life changes in different life domains, independently from moving house or not. The results let assume that it is not a residential relocation per se but the individually perceived relevance of that change that pave the way for interventions. Hereby, the congruence of the life domain of the transition and the life domain of the intervention seems to be significant for the effectiveness of the intervention. Finally, the development of a habit measure that addresses anticipation and temporal deferrals of behavior seems worthwhile.

#### 1.2 Lifestyles in transition - exploring changes in values, identities and behaviours among new parents and retirees

Birgitta Gatersleben, Kate Burningham, Tim Jackson, Ian Christie, Sue Venn, *University of Surrey*

Retiring or having a first child involves significant lifestyle changes. This research examines how such transitions relate to changes in (the salience of) important values, identities and behaviours with an aim of exploring opportunities for promoting more sustainable behaviours.

There is increasing evidence that values and identities are related to pro-environmental behaviours (e.g., De Groot and Steg, 2008; Gatersleben et al., 2012; Murtagh, et al. 2012; Richins, 2004; Schultz and Zelezny, 1999; Van derWerff et al, 2013; Whitmarsh, et al., 2010). Much of this research is correlational and does not study change. Although values and identities are presumed to be stable, major life transitions are likely to affect them and their salience (e.g., Stryker, 1994; Evans et al. 2012; Verplanken et al., 2008).

This research examines changes in values, identities and behaviours among new parents and retirees. We analysed survey data from a longitudinal field study with 80 households who completed two surveys one shortly before the transition and another approximately 2.5 years later. Amongst others the questionnaires asked people to report their values (Schwartz, 2012), describe their lifestyles and identities (Kuh & McPartland, 1954), and report their consumer and pro-environmental behaviours.

The analyses unveiled a complex pattern of changes in behaviours, values and identities, some pointing into more sustainable directions others in the opposite direction. The findings suggest that understanding sustainable lifestyles is complex and involves an understanding of many different sometimes conflicting values, identities and behaviours.



### 1.3 Encouraging pro-environmental behaviours amongst students - tapping into moments of change

Neil Jennings, *National Union of Students*

This paper presents the findings of research and an associated behaviour change project run by the National Union of Students in the UK. The Defra-funded research element looks at the effectiveness of five different approaches to encouraging behaviour change amongst students living in halls of residence - an information campaign, peer-to-peer encouragement, raising awareness of the energy efficiency of the built environment, comparisons with others' or with past behaviour and financial incentives. The research finds that the interventions tend to maintain pre-existing energy saving habits, which otherwise may have been lost due to prevailing disincentives to save energy in halls of residence. These interventions do not seem to be enough on their own to (notably) increase habit formation during a moment of change but we suggest that a combination of interventions is likely to work best to influence students' energy behaviour due to the range of motivations and barriers to behaviour change. With these findings in mind, NUS runs a campaign called the Student Switch Off at 54 UK universities which incorporates energy-saving competitions between halls of residence, peer-to-peer encouragement, prize incentives and practical energy-saving information. The project aims to encourage students to get into good energy-saving habits from the moment they move into halls of residence and achieves an average of a 6% reduction in electricity usage (measured using utility meters).

## Paper Session 2: Methods

### 2.1 How Lifecourse Transitions Influence Mobility Behaviours: New Insights from the UK Household Longitudinal Study

Kiron Chatterjee, *University of West England*

Although it seems intuitive that people are more likely to change mobility behaviour at the time of a lifecourse event, there has been very little evidence to date of the number of people across the population that experience different lifecourse events and change behaviour from year to year. This is because large scale longitudinal surveys which track the same individuals over time are rare, but Understanding Society, the new UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), which began in 2009, made this possible and we presents findings from an ESRC funded research project that has investigated this topic. We introduce a theoretical framework that makes the proposition that lifecourse events create 'transport stressors', which entail discrepancies between current mobility behavior and that which is desired, and which can lead to behavioural change. We present results from an analysis of UKHLS waves 1 and 2 data which focuses on the effects of lifecourse events on car ownership and commuting mode. We discuss the role of residential relocations, employment changes and changes to family composition. Transition tables demonstrate that behavior changes are much more prevalent for those people who experience lifecourse events and regression models are used to identify the circumstances which increase the likelihood of lifecourse events effecting change. The results show that life stage, environmental attitudes and spatial context are important factors in understanding how lifecourse events shape mobility behavior. This provides contextual understanding to inform policy makers and practitioners on how interventions can be targeted to specific population groups and geographical contexts to encourage uptake of sustainable mobility behaviours.

## 2.2 Are graphical representations of practices over an individual's lifecourse a useful methodological tool in researching the impact of lifecourse transitions on sustainability?

Rachel Howell, *Aberystwyth University*

One method of investigating practices is to ask people to create graphical representations of how their habits have changed over their lifetime (e.g. charting the number of baths and showers taken per week; see examples on the 'Transitions in Practice' website, [www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/shove/exhibits/showerv2.pdf](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/shove/exhibits/showerv2.pdf)). In theory, carefully-designed surveys offering clear examples of what is being requested could collect 'life graphs' (or other pictorial representations) of changes in everyday practices over time drawn by many more participants than it is generally possible to include in interview-based research. If participants are asked to annotate the graphs with further details such as the times/places the practices were carried out, associated facilities and technologies available to them, and reasons for performing practices, the data can be used to explore the impact of lifecourse transitions on practices, and the implications for sustainability. Conceivably, such data might suggest ways to encourage more sustainable practices.

This paper will present 'car-use life graphs' drawn by 16 participants in one study, and 'travel mode life graphs' drawn by eight people in another study, in order to discuss issues of the richness and utility of the data generated, whether and how bundles of practices can be investigated in this way, and whether such a method could indeed be scaled up to much larger samples. It is hoped that this will be a participatory and discursive session using the exemplar data offered (and possibly generating some of our own), rather than solely a presentation offering answers followed by questions from the audience.

## Paper Session 3: Families and Households

### 3.1 Low energy lifestyles?: working with families and a primary school

Kevin Burchell and Ruth Rettie, *Kingston University*

The 'lifecourse transitions' discourse tends to regard parents as actors and children as context. The objective of this paper is to examine the synergistic potential of working on low energy lifestyles with families and a primary school concurrently; thus, parents, children and school staff are understood as actors in 'lifecourse transitions'. Smart Communities was a two year action research project on energy consumption reduction. Linked activities were implemented at a primary school and with the households of the school children (as well as other participating households). Analysis relies upon informal research during the project action, fifty interviews and a questionnaire survey. Analysis suggests: project recruitment through a primary school is extremely effective; it is possible to create a 'buzz' among the school gate community; and, parents' commitment to low energy lifestyles deepens when they think about their children and when they hear about activity in school. Ironically, results also suggest that parents' participation in project activities and engagement with energy consumption is often constrained by the time and financial pressures associated with having young children. The project indicates that, after a short time, it is possible for energy to become an integral part of all aspects of school life, for pupils and staff alike. However, since energy is not explicitly part of the national curriculum, this is highly dependent upon the commitment of the head teacher, and is vulnerable to changes at the top. In addition, even with a highly supportive head teacher, it is extremely difficult for school staff to accommodate the necessary additional work within their already busy schedules.

### 3.2 Changes in household energy consumption in relation to the age of children

Tom Roberts, Tina Balke, Maria Xenitidou and Nigel Gilbert, *University of Surrey*

This paper explores the impact of household demography on energy consuming social practices. It considers how energy practices evolve as children transit from infants (0–1 year) to toddlers (ages 1–4 years), school-aged children (ages 4–13 years) and adolescents (ages 13–19 years). It also examines the differences in practices between households with children and those without. To date, the majority of research into domestic energy consumption has focused on physical features of the buildings and the type and number of appliances owned and the way in which people use them. The limited amount of research that has been undertaken on the impact of demographic characteristics has focused exclusively on economic factors. Based on the findings from thirteen walking interviews in households with children and seven without, this paper takes an alternative approach by adopting a social practice framework to examine four energy consuming practices routinely undertaken in households: heating, laundry, cooking and using the internet. The results show that the presence (or absence) of children, and their ages, represents an important framework within which the respondents described their energy use. The results also highlight the complex nature of the links between domestic energy practices. For example, having access to a high speed internet connection can impact the way in which parents split child care roles and consequently heat their homes.

### 3.3 Lifecourse transitions as moments of change for sustainability? Reflections from longitudinal qualitative research

Kate Burningham, Sue Venn, Ian Christie, Birgitta Gatersleben, Tim Jackson, *University of Surrey*

Recently interest has turned to the opportunities offered by life transitions for the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles. In this paper we reflect on findings from qualitative longitudinal research carried out in the ELiCiT project which problematise easy assumptions about the opportunities offered by such transitions. Our research involved in depth interviews on three occasions with 80 participants who were either retiring or having their first child. Interviews focused on aspects of everyday practice and explored areas of change and continuity; sustainability was not mentioned until the final interview. Thus rather than providing snapshots of aspirations to live sustainably, this methodology enabled us to explore participants' ideas and aspirations about change and their later reflection on what had actually changed. In addition by backgrounding the topic of sustainability we avoided only recruiting environmentally committed participants. Our findings suggest that transitions are drawn out, concurrent and consecutive and that while changes do occur in practices which have implications for sustainability (e.g. shopping, transport, energy use) positive changes are often counterbalanced by negative changes and may be transient. Further while participants are actively reflecting on their lives at these points, the scale of change they are experiencing means that immediate concerns (for example with their child's wellbeing, with finance or health) often 'squeeze out' considerations of sustainability even for those who position themselves as environmentally concerned. We suggest that rather than attempting to target people at these points with explicitly 'sustainability' initiatives it is essential to work with valued identities and issues which have purchase.

## Day 2: Wednesday 16th July 2014

### Paper Session 4: Consumption

#### 4.1 Retiring ways - space, emotion and identity in late life

Monica Wilinska, *University of Stirling*

The prevalent view of retirement as opposed to work is based on a rigid distinction between different life stages and types of activities performed at these various ages. The aim of this paper is to join the ongoing debates that challenge such assumptions. Therefore, we talk about retiring ways to emphasise that. The idea of retiring ways brings forward the issue of difference. This reflects the fact that diverse life courses are created at the intersection of individual histories intertwined with structures of age, gender, ethnicity and social class. This in turn, has implications on the creation of spaces of retiring and their placement in individual lives and how these affect the identity projects of people in the retirement age. Hence, an inquiry into the social practices involved in the production and conceptualisation of different spaces as well as the lived experience of such spaces is articulated. Emotions that accompany these processes are of a particular interest here. Much of the public debates on retirement issues and pensions is filled with various emotions aiming either at encouraging or forcing people into given lifestyles; similarly, individual decisions about everyday lives and creating or withdrawing from certain spaces are underpinned by different emotions. The idea of retiring ways focuses then on the interplay between the structure and the individual illuminating ways in which social expectations and norms are negotiated at the level of everyday experiences and practices. Such an approach is vital for emphasising the agency of people in the retirement age.

#### 4.2 Lifecourse transitions in old age and sustainable food practices

Bérangère Véron, *INRA*

This presentation aims at analyzing to what extent lifecourse transitions in old age may lead to more sustainable food practices. Indeed, the departure of the children from the family home, retirement, a health problem or the birth of a grand-child can be opportunities to change—voluntarily or not—one's provisioning and consumption practices, in particular the frequency and location of provisioning, the choice and amount of food products, and culinary practices themselves. However, the inflexions of everyday life routines towards more sustainable food practices, such as the recourse to short food supply chains or the purchase of organic, labelled, local and/or seasonal products, have been little explored. Yet, our empirical data reveal that health problems or the presence of a young grandchild can lead to a higher consumption of organic foodstuffs, although their supposed benefits are health-oriented rather than environmental ones. Furthermore, lifecourse transitions in old age lead to readjustments within the couple regarding shopping practices, meal preparation, etc. The spouses may not pay the same attention to the seasonality, origin and labels of food products. In this perspective, this paper will tackle the possible tensions resulting from a differentiated environmental concern. These research questions will be investigated using in-depth and repeated interviews with around 15 French men and women aged between 59 and 73 years, on their shopping and cooking practices.

#### 4.3 “We have the butter strength”; Food and eating practices of the elderly migrant generation living in multigenerational, Pakistani, Muslim families in Scotland

Juneda Sarfraz, *University of Edinburgh*

People of Pakistani origin, the largest minority ethnic group in Scotland, are at high risk of developing complex, chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Poor diet following migration and settlement has been implicated in increased disease susceptibility. A sizeable proportion lives in multigenerational households, either under the same roof or in close proximity. My PhD research focuses on the food and eating practices of multigenerational Pakistani families living in Scotland with the purpose of informing culturally sensitive dietary interventions and promoting healthy eating within this minority ethnic group. For this paper, I will describe the foodways (defined as the study of procurement, preparation and consumption of food which conveys what different people eat and why they eat it) of the first and oldest generation. The meanings and understandings that they attach to various types of food, and the different ways in which being a member of multigenerational family influences, informs and impacts their everyday eating practices will also be explored, using butter consumption as an illustrative example to highlight the complexity of decision-making around everyday food. This qualitative study involving purposively selected multigenerational, Pakistani Muslim families (n=8), used case study approach. In depth one-to-one interviews were conducted with several adult members belonging to the same household (n= 26 interviews in total). Constant comparison approach was used to identify emergent themes within and between families. Main themes include nostalgia, valuing commensality and frugality, familial/ gender roles, continuities and change, shades of adaptation and perceived links between food and health.

## Paper Session 5: Narratives

### 5.1 Tales of Stability and change - Careers of domestic consumption over the lifecourse

**Mary Greene**, *NUI Galway*

Understandings of the dynamics of everyday life are essential for developments in sustainability research and practice. With regards to realising sustainable consumption, questions concerning the dynamics of ordinary consumption and everyday life are central for informing the development of interventions that aim to support pro-environmental behaviour. However, empirical understanding of processes of stability and change in everyday, routine consumption practice remains patchy and inadequate. In this paper I argue that a biographical approach to sustainable consumption research offers huge potential in terms of capturing both short- and long-term transitions in human behaviour. The value of this perspective in advancing understanding of the dynamics of consumption practice is demonstrated through discussion of an applied research study exploring domestic energy biographies in Ireland. Adopting a qualitative, biographical approach to exploring individuals' narrations and imaginings of energy pasts and futures, this research is exploring stability and change in consumption practice over the life-course through an in-depth, contextual and experience-centred approach. A mixed method approach comprising verbal and visual biographical and lifecourse methods is being used to explore the consumption biographies of people at different ages and stages of the life-course. Biographical exploration of people's careers of domestic practice in the domains of food, mobility, space heating and laundry reveals experiential insight into the dynamics of everyday life over the life-course. This paper presents reflections on the theoretical and methodological developments emerging from this work.

### 5.2 Artistic life course transitions: Becoming a writer

**Barbara Ratzenboeck**, *University of Graz*

In a qualitative empirical study conducted on the work of literary writers, Austrian authors were interviewed about various aspects of their work, including strategies and processes with regards to becoming established in the literary field. What does it take to become "a writer", and what does this transformation in identity and biography imply for work structuring strategies and the acquisition as well as the use of social resources, such as economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu)? This paper focusses on empirical findings of the study which indicate that writers employ a variety of strategies to structure their work process and to manage social resources available to them. These include among others conscious time management (e.g. defining "core hours" for writing or writing "in between times"), risk minimizing strategies with regards to often challenging financial and status-related insecurities writers can face, and the establishing of literary support systems. In this context, the research conducted indicates that experiences in the early phases of writing such as encouragement and discouragement through mentors and other significant social actors can have lasting, and in some cases also surprising effects on literary "careers". Drawing on empirical examples from the study, the paper thus analyzes interrelations of artistic life course transitions and social contextualities.

### 5.3 Creating enduring narratives with our clothes through the practice of mending and its affect on the domestic consumption of fashion products

Emily Towers, *London College of Fashion*

In contemporary consumerist cultures our engagement with fashion is often dominated by short-term, consumption-based relationships with garments. This research intends to provide alternative methods to our current system of fashion acquisition by encouraging the extension of clothes' useful lives, focusing on the practice of mending garments. Can clothing relationships evolve to incorporate fashion experiences other than shopping, such as mending? Could the desire for 'new' be reduced, to a 'less is more' approach?

The research is determining how mending practices can enable garments to retain relevance as well as function and durability. Questioning whether the act of mending a garment can affect our attitudes towards clothing. Discovering whether it is possible to develop more meaningful narratives with our clothes, through the mending and alteration of garments to extend their working lives. The aim is to affect consumption habits as evidenced by reduced levels of garment purchases; uncovering how the wearers are caring for other pieces in the wardrobe and how the reworked pieces are used. This is being studied by interviewing volunteers within their wardrobe environment before and after the mending interventions are practiced within workshops.

I contend that if we can find methods that can encourage people to change their habits, to help them to learn new skills and to encourage them to reconnect to their belongings rather than just something seen as an acquisition then this method could be scalable, and could help reduce the amount of clothing waste and our valuable resources being used each year.

### 5.4 Energy Biographies: liminality, narratives of care and transforming practices

Christopher Groves, Catherine Butler, Karen Henwood, Karen Parkhill, Nick Pidgeon, Fiona Shirani, *Cardiff University*

Lifecourse transitions, it has been suggested, may represent 'transformative moments' that can 'provoke self-reflection and "unlocking" of habits' (Hards, 2012) and lead to the remodelling of practices. There has thus been significant interest in the potential of such moments for catalysing shifts from unsustainable to more sustainable lifestyles. Yet what makes some transitions produce successful transformations in practice whilst others fail? In response to this question, results are presented from the qualitative longitudinal Energy Biographies project at Cardiff University, which uses narrative interviews with participants from four research sites in the UK to explore how energy demand reduction initiatives interact with people's personal biographies. Using a psycho-social analytical framework, interviewees' accounts of biographical transitions are analysed using the concept of 'liminality' (Turner, 1974) to identify transitions that constitute shifts from one social status to another during the lifecourse and which, while they are in progress, suspend individuals in a state of 'in-betweenness' before being succeeded by a process of normative re-integration in which individuals take on, to a greater or lesser extent, new identities. The extent to which such transitions are experienced as transformative by interviewees depends on what are identified as 'narratives of care', accounts of the extent to which re-integration involves the successful management of disruption to emotional attachments that may be to a range of different 'objects' including people, places, material objects, institutions and/or ideals (Marris, 1996). Without this successful management, lasting disruption to attachment may undermine the possibility of reflection on and transformation of practice.



# Abstracts: Poster Presentations

## **What makes you care about environment? Investigating impacts of life experiences on the pro-ecological commitment**

**Raquel Diniz**, *Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte*

This research assumes that the formation of pro-ecological commitment (PEC) is procedural and interdependent to socio-environmental contexts. My main objective was to research how significant life experiences impacts on PEC, considering such human individual and situational aspects. Therefore, I conducted two concurrent studies that focused on narratives as representatives of experience. In the first, I analysed biographical reports of researchers of people-environment relations area as well as four biographical reports of internationally recognized environmentalists. In the second, I conducted 29 interviews with people from different Brazilian states socially evaluated as pro-environmentally committed and who manifest lifestyles oriented for sustainability (inclusion criteria). The interview covered: the perception about formation of PEC and experiences pointed as important in the formation of their own PEC. To explore the data I used an inductive and interpretative content analysis. As results, in the first study, the life experiences identified corroborate the influences pointed out on the literature, such as direct contact with nature, educational training, labour, social justice, social networks and loss of beloved place. Some new experiences were identified, like engagement in environmental interventions, political activism, pacifism and yet experiences of leadership and abnegation. In the second study, in sum of the already known experiences, it was found experiences related to permaculture and agroecology, arts, spirituality (e.x. shamanism), travels and contact with different cultures. Investigating these experiences fostered an approximation with people's own point of view about their PEC and new possibilities of understanding what makes people care about environment.

## **Changes and Continuities in Everyday Travel: the role of Familiarity**

**Paul Haggar**, *Cardiff University*

Persistent habits have been identified as barriers to successfully changing unwanted behaviour. One solution to this problem may be to utilise life changes as opportunities for behaviour change, since habits may be weaker at these times. While empirical evidence for this possibility is accumulating, little has yet been done to understand the role of habits within particular behavioural contexts at times of life change. To address this need, an exploration of everyday travel habits at times of change was made both because regular travel is considered to be habitual by many and because travel choices can have significant negative impacts on the natural environment. Accounts of everyday travel and its change were collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 residents of Cardiff and its surrounding settlements. Relevant concepts were developed through a grounded theory analysis of these accounts. Familiarity was identified as a central concept for understanding accounts of transitional change and sudden change in day-to-day travel as well as for understanding the mind-sets, travel routines and automatic choices that characterised accounts of unchanging travel over time. This analysis provides some insights into the way in which habits might be involved in maintaining behaviour in everyday travel when people's lives are changing.

## Postponing the Retirement transition – lifecourse factors in the decision

Karen Hanley, *University of Brighton*

The paper will identify current theoretical research, methodology and practical methods for a PhD focused on two international case studies - Denmark and the UK. The Aim is: To explore how the decisions about later life working are influenced by the working life course and to investigate the enablers and hindrances to older workers staying in work after age 65. The underpinning theory for this research is the lifecourse approach as identified by Glen Elder (Elder Jr. et al. 2006); and Karl Mayer (Mayer 2009). Five principles are highlighted:

- Life Span development - the long term view of people's lives, and linked lives
- Linked lives – interconnectedness
- Time and place – how lives are shaped by the social and historical context
- Timing - life transitions, events and subsequent consequences
- Agency – individuals recognised as being active agents in their choices about their lives

This research reviews a number of factors: Income in later life, pensions (State and employers), state benefits, flexicurity (Klammer 2004), and sustainable working lives. The methodology will include:

- Biographical Research – life story
- Life Line – biographical information about life events

The practical methods

- Semi-structured Interviews
- Using 'Clean language

## Possible Conclusions

There are still hindrances affecting the employment of older workers, which bias the work/retirement decision. The impact of pensions systems on older workers encouraging/discouraging their staying in work.

# Abstracts: Poster Presentations

## Daily disruption: A different opportunity for sustainable lifestyles?

Nadine Page, *Ashridge Business School*

Lifecourse transitions such as having a child or moving home offer a significant opportunity to change a variety of aspects of everyday life, including the degree to which one's lifestyle is sustainable. However, such lifecourse transitions are likely to occur several times throughout an individual's life at most, and probably during a fixed time period when these transitions naturally occur. Therefore, they present limited opportunities for 'moments of change' where people might be encouraged to live more sustainably, and to a relatively homogeneous demographic. In consideration to the powerful role of habit in supporting and constraining lifestyle preferences and the efficiency of everyday life through behavioural preferences and fixed routines, we suggest that regular disruption to daily patterns of behaviour might offer a feasible alternative to support individuals to reconsider their current lifestyle practices for improved sustainability.

In this paper we discuss the potential of an approach based on the regular disruption to daily routines and behavioural preferences: an approach that focuses on daily disruptors for the purpose of habit reversal and habit rehearsal. The approach encourages people to experiment with new behaviours, to try new and different or adapted ways of behaving in order to become more flexible. We suggest that by experimenting with new behaviours, individuals might weaken their existing habits and also encounter new experiences, which might challenge thinking and present opportunities for 'moments of change' for the practicing of pro-environmental behaviours and development of sustainable lifestyles.

## Cultural Narratives, Processes and Strategies in Urban and Regional Representations of Age and Aging

Barbara Ratzenboeck, *University of Graz*

The empirical research project to be presented focusses on the interconnectedness of aging and rituals. How can processes and strategies of identity construction over the life course be identified in regard to rituals and how do they influence both collective and individual cultural narratives? Which methodologies can be developed for interdisciplinary and intersectional research in this context? These questions will be addressed by conducting and analyzing qualitative interviews with people of a certain cohort identity (retirement age) and experts on aging in Austria. Interpretations of rituals within a life course narrative will focus on continuities and discontinuities regarding processes of identity formation. In this context, rituals are being conceptualized as performances (Schechner; Turner) and thus as acts of communication and creation of meaning. The poster presentation will include the finalized empirical research design of this project supported by funds of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Anniversary Fund, project number: 15849), as well as references to interdisciplinary theoretical concepts, such as "anocriticism" (Maierhofer).

## Working Later in UK and Germany

Dave Wright, *University of Brighton*

Extending working life offers many benefits, providing individuals with income and social engagement, enabling employers to retain a skilled and committed workforce and helping nations increase the number of economically active workers while reducing the welfare bill. For most of the 20th century, the age at which retirement pensions were payable produced a 'cliff edge' transition from work to economic inactivity. The end of the century saw the average retirement age drop significantly in response to the policy of early retirement. Concerns over its financial sustainability led to a policy reversal with the state pension ages rising in many European nations. The sharpness of the 'cliff-edge' has been replaced by more flexible working

arrangements such as gradual retirement, part time working and self-employment. However, recent Labour Force Survey data shows significant differences between European nations in the rate at which later working is taking place. In particular, Germany appears to have seen a greater change than UK which was not predicted by earlier theories of pathways out of work. This PhD project started October 2013 to understand these changes in more detail by comparing employment transitions in UK and Germany. This will involve quantitative analysis of large scale panel surveys (Understanding Society, Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, German Socio-Economic Panel and English Longitudinal Survey of Ageing) looking at socio-economic and occupational factors. Some preliminary results should be available for discussion at the workshop in July.

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## Notes

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