



# Events, Activities and News from the SCI...

**Dale Southerton** (SCI Director), **Andrew McMeekin** (SCI Research Director)

At this time of year SCI researchers are returning from, or preparing for, the many international conferences at which our research is presented. This summer we have organized a panel debate (Boundaries of the circular economy) at the Global Research Forum conference on Sustainable Consumption and Production, and had a substantial presence at the British Sociological Association's annual conference.

SCI researchers also made a significant contribution to the International Sustainability Transitions conference, a conference that we will organise and host in 2018. In May we hosted an International Workshop on Sustainable Innovation, the outcome of which will be published next year in a new Handbook of Sustainable Innovation Research. At the end of the summer was the European Sociological Association's biannual conference at which six SCI researchers presented research and two were involved in the organisation of conference activities.

SCI staff have been involved in various events and activities with policy and business groups. These include Frank

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“*...our researchers have worked hard to submit nine new research proposals including leading roles in four large international consortiums.*”

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Geels' work with the Carbon Trust, Helen Holmes' contribution to the John Frieda Haircare workshop, and Dale Southerton's engagements with Unilever's science strategy group and invitation to speak at Rightmove's Board Meeting. We have also organised a number of stakeholder events, including a workshop focused on Sustainability in Greater Manchester (Mike Hodson & Sherilyn MacGregor) and Helen Holmes' Make do and Mend public event.

We are delighted to announce the publication of Sherilyn MacGregor's much-anticipated new edited book – The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment. This book defines the core topics and debates related to gender and the environment and will set the agenda for future research in this

neglected field of study. On top of this we have seen a whopping 15 journal articles and eight book chapters published! This is partly a result of many SCI research projects reaching their final stages. To ensure we keep on our toes, our researchers have worked hard to submit nine new research proposals including leading roles in four large international consortiums.

We end this introduction with the sad news that Jessica Paddock and Cameron Roberts will be leaving the SCI in the next few months to take up positions at the Universities of Bristol and Leeds. Both have made a huge contribution to SCI research, and will continue to do so as no one escapes that easily! On a more positive note, we look forward to welcoming Professor Terhi-Anna Wilska – an internationally renowned consumption scholar – Dr Liu Fei, and Dr Jordi Lopez-Sintas who will all be joining us as Visiting Academics in the coming months.

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## (De)synchronisation of people and practices in working households:

# The relationship between the temporal organisation of employment and eating in the UK

“Lack of time” is an often cited reason as to why people don’t adopt more pro-environmental or pro-healthy behaviours. But ‘time poverty’ is not simply about shortage of time but about timing and the lack of synchronicity of time schedules.

Jennifer Whillans, Research Fellow at the SCI, has been awarded funding by the British Academy (2017-2020), under their Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme ([www.britac.ac.uk/british-academy-postdoctoral-fellowships](http://www.britac.ac.uk/british-academy-postdoctoral-fellowships)), to carry out sociological research into the timing of activities across the day and week and the (de)synchronisation of people and practices that occurs in daily life. Specifically she will examine the activities of eating and employment and seek to understand the relationship between the two.

The project is in the initial stages of planning and data collection/collation. The research will take a mixed method, comparative design. Advanced quantitative analysis will be conducted with sequence data from the UK Time Use Surveys (1975, 2000, 2015 (<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8128&type=data%20catalogue>)), which empirically evidence the systematic



and structured nature of daily uses of time and its change over time. Alongside this, qualitative one-day diary material collected by Mass Observation Project (<http://www.massobs.org.uk/the-mass-observation-project-1981-ongoing>) (from 1995, 2010, and a commissioned Directive due Winter 2017) and in-depth interviews conducted with people from working households (2016) will be analysed to ensure that individuals’ understandings and experiences of the organisation of time are captured.

By way of illustration, one interview participant, Charlotte (29) said,

*“I try to take in lunches [to work]. My husband takes in ready meals for his lunches, which I think are terrible for you,*

*but he doesn’t. Our daughter gets cooked for by her childminder. And then it’s just me, I try to take in lunches, however, very often, I end up eating cake in the office and eating rubbish sandwiches [from the shop]”*

She also mentioned her single and childless friends who have “glamorous jobs” who,

*“do clean eating and very healthy eating, and put it all over Instagram, and I’m not one of those people! I don’t manage it..., I think time? Probably lack of knowledge? Yeah. Time and juggling a toddler around. And work. I’m sure if I had more energy in the evenings I could sort stuff out. I tend not to”*

The experience of lack of time and the challenge of fitting everything into a day is very real when attempting to coordinate multiple schedules in working households. This research seeks to make a modest contribution to ongoing debates about the ‘decline of the family meal’ but aims to ignite sociological interest in eating at work and workday lunchtimes.

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# Reshaping the Domestic Nexus



It's been a busy year for the 'Domestic Nexus' team. The first phase of the project across 2016 involved a series of four academic and non-academic workshops on the themes of the Nexus of Water-Energy-Food in homes. Following on from this, the next phase of the project (2016-ongoing) has been much more explicitly focused on 'Engaging policy understandings of kitchen practices and how they change'. In this project we wanted to develop new ways of understanding how householders' routine activities end up demanding resources, including energy, food and water. The purpose of the project is to make that understanding useful for informing actual policy processes with our non-academic partners.

So this project was not just an academic endeavour! Instead we wanted to take the latest research around social practice theory into co-produced working with our four policy stakeholders: Defra, BEIS (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy), FSA (Food Standards Agency) and the water NGO Waterwise. In collaboration meetings, each of the project partners identified one key challenge around the WEF nexus and the kitchen that related to their current policy gaps or needs. The project team then produced four key policy briefing documents that summarised what a social practices

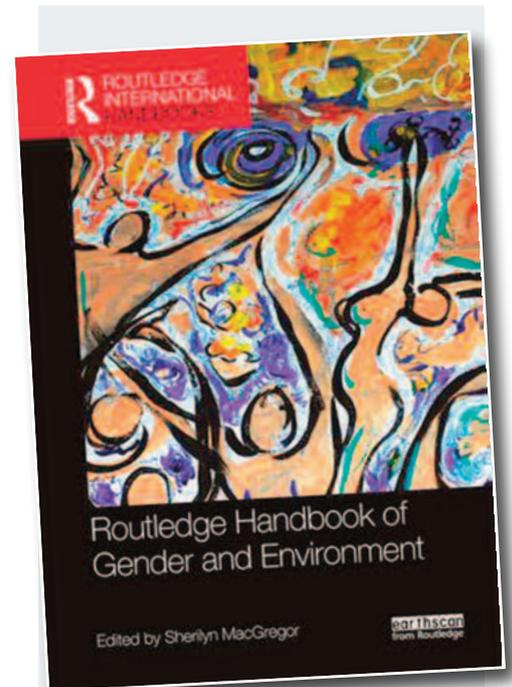
approach could do to reframe each of these policy problems and identify wider possible processes of change and pathways to intervention. These draft reports were fed back to stakeholders across a series of meetings in London in June 2017.

Given the focus on transdisciplinary research the 'Domestic Nexus' project continues to have strong non-academic impact. The project featured prominently in the Sustainability in Turbulent Times Report which accompanied the conference of the same name at one of the final ESRC Nexus Network events in London in March 2017. The Report can be found at <http://www.thenexusnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/sustainability-in-turbulent-times.pdf>.

Following on from engagements within the project, the team has also been asked to contribute a section on 'practice theory approaches to WEF' within the Waterwise 'Behaviour Change Handbook'. This will be launched in January 2018 with the express aim of advocating a shift in the ways that everyday life and processes of change are conceptualised and implemented within the water sector.

For any further details on the project please email Manchester PI Alison Browne at [alison.browne@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alison.browne@manchester.ac.uk). The two stages of the 'Domestic Nexus' project have been funded by the ESRC Nexus Network and represents an on-going collaboration between the SCI (Browne) and University of Sheffield (Mike Watson, David Evans, Liz Sharp and Mike Foden).

**Website:** [www.nexusathome.wordpress.com/](http://www.nexusathome.wordpress.com/)  
**Twitter:** explore #nexusathome



## Publication:

We are delighted to announce the publication of *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, edited by the SCI's Sherilyn MacGregor. Other members of the SCI, namely Susan Cassini, Katrina Farrugia and Anna Wienhues, were involved in assisting its production in the final stages.

The Handbook is a major accomplishment. It was 4 years in the making and is a state-of-the-art survey of an important field of environmental scholarship. It is comprised of 34 chapters on a diverse range of challenging topics by world leading academics working in many different humanities and social science disciplines.

More information at: [www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Gender-and-Environment/MacGregor/p/book/9780415707749](http://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Gender-and-Environment/MacGregor/p/book/9780415707749)



# Re-making Greater Manchester Sustainably: From individual projects to collective transformation - What needs to happen?



'Re-making Greater Manchester Sustainably: From individual projects to collective transformation - what needs to happen?' was the title of a workshop organised in April 2017 by the Sustainable Consumption Institute's Mike Hodson and Sherilyn MacGregor. The workshop brought together 25 policy, community and academic participants from across Greater Manchester. The aim was to create a forum where people with different perspectives could discuss the challenges and possibilities for re-making Greater Manchester in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable ways.

The premise of the workshop was that, in recent years, there have been a large number of innovative trials, small-scale projects and demonstrations in the

energy, transport, food and waste sectors. While these have tried, in a variety of ways, to make Greater Manchester more sustainable and, in many cases, have produced significant amounts of learning, what all this activity collectively adds up to is poorly understood. With this in mind, the workshop was organised to build better understanding of what, if any, transformative effects these many initiatives have had, and of their successes, and shortcomings. The participants also discussed what potential future effects they could have – individually and collectively - in the context of political devolution.

The workshop was organised in two parts. The first part was built around five short, experience-based provocations

from Mark Atherton (Low Carbon Hub, Greater Manchester Combined Authority); James Evans (Manchester Urban Institute); Debbie Ellen (Good Food Greater Manchester Partnership); Walter Menzies (Canal and River Trust); and Karel Williams (Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change). The second part of the workshop was based on small group discussion and report back; this enabled an interactive process for sharing insights and generating better understanding of these issues.

Participants discussed how greater sustainability could be achieved through a more collective approach to transformation rather than a siloed or a project-based focus. There was also an interesting debate on the merits and problems of 'upscaling' small projects to city and regional levels.

A report of the workshop's findings was produced and if you would like a copy please contact us at [sci@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sci@manchester.ac.uk).

Read Joe Blakey's blog post here <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/urban/2017/05/re-making-greater-manchester-sustainably/>

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# Sustainable Innovation Workshop

On 23-25 May the Sustainable Consumption Institute organised a workshop on Sustainable Innovation. The academic research on this topic takes place across a variety of academic communities, including researchers working on the economics of innovation, environmental economics, the study of sociotechnical systems and societal transitions, responsible innovation, and environmental sociology. As part of a larger project to develop a Handbook for Edward Elgar Publishers, SCI Professors Frank Boons and Andrew McMeekin hosted a group of twenty leading scholars, together representing major lineages of research within each of these communities.

The Handbook project was initiated because of our recognition that much could be gained if a resource would be

available that brought together the variegated approaches that have emerged since the 1970s. Given the fact that these researchers, while sharing a research topic, often operate in distinct academic venues, the workshop actively sought to explore connections among distinct views, such as perspectives which focus on socio-technical systems such as energy provision with those that seek to explain the antecedents and consequences of environmental innovations developed by individual firms. The dialogue during the workshop also allowed us to explore commonalities and differences in defining core concepts and methodological approaches.

Furthermore, we discussed initial chapters, embedded in a discussion on the way in

which academic research on sustainable innovation has evolved from its various origins. The workshop also revealed how different communities have made different choices in how to define what constitutes a sustainable innovation, and how such innovations differ from ones not oriented towards the creation of ecological and/or social value. In all, participants were very appreciative of this initiative, which will allow the group of authors to produce a handbook that presents not only distinct perspectives, but also a shared view on how these might be combined in future research.

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# Make do & Mend Expo

On the 8 June Dr Helen Holmes, Hallsworth Fellow at the SCI, held The Make

do and Mend Expo – an interactive one day event which brought together third sector organisations interested in alternative community-based forms of resource provision (clothing, food, household objects, skills etc) to discuss how their work is tackling both social inequalities and also promoting sustainable resource use.

The event was based on two years research by Dr Holmes, and her project Makers, Make do and Mend ([www.makersmakedoandmend.org/about-2/](http://www.makersmakedoandmend.org/about-2/)) which has explored the breadth of community and household activities devoted to thrifty forms of provision. A key conclusion from the study is that third sector community-based organisations are a fundamental building block to creating

community resilience during times of economic crisis. Furthermore, that they do so with a rigorous environmental focus; ensuring that the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' slogan is a continuous organisational mantra.

The Expo focused on bringing together a selection of these numerous organisations to discuss the work that they do, to network, showcase best practice and to create a dialogue regarding how future community resilience can be achieved and sustained.

Key conclusions from the event focused on the impact each of us can have on creating community resilience and tackling the challenges of social inequality and sustainable resource use. Keynote Jen Gale of *My Make Do and Mend Life* described how the small changes she had made in her life have a positive wider impact - from avoiding buying new to learning how to repair and reuse.

Workshops on clothing upcycling, seed sharing, financial capability and knitwear rescue emphasized how changing one's individual activities and skills set can have a wider impact on both social inequalities and sustainable resource use.

The importance of the social within third sector organisations was a key element of the afternoon kitchen table discussions. Suggestions such as providing a space to chat, to find a common ground, to learn new skills, to feel part of something were put forward by attendees. Respect, sensitivity and an emphasis on the individual were seen as vital for social inclusion.

Overall, what was paramount from the day was that community resilience cannot be the work of just one sector of society, but requires the involvement of all.

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# Conferences Digest: From Athens to Oslo (via Manchester)

The SCI was represented this year at conferences from Athens to Oslo, fielding delegations to the British Sociological Association (BSA), the European Sociological Association (ESA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), the Global Resource Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption (GRF), and the International Sustainability Transitions (IST) conferences, as well as to a number of smaller events. Space cannot do justice to the range of work presented, so here we present a brief digest of the big events and some more recent contributions. You can find more detailed reports on the BSA, ESA, GRF and IST conferences on the SCI blog at [www.sci.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/](http://www.sci.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/).

The British Sociological Association came to Manchester this April, with presentations from eight SCI researchers. In her Presidential address, Professor Lynn Jamieson spoke directly to the SCI's research ambit, stressing the need for sociology to delve deeper into both personal lives and non-human life, in order to better understand the challenges that environmentally unsustainable ways of life present to society. Taking research into the family domain, Tally Katz-Gerro's presentation (with Greenspan and Handy), explored the 'Intergenerational Transmission of Environmental Behaviours in Cross-National Comparison' across three generations in Israel and South Korea. Helen Holmes addressed 'Ordinary Provisioning: the challenges and possibilities of everyday third sector provisioning organisations', drawing on two UK case studies, of food and clothes.

Holmes argued that such everyday endeavours are positioned in an increasingly complex landscape of economic formations. Continuing the focus on the everyday, Alan Warde, Jessica Paddock and Jennifer Whillans reported on the SCI's major 'Eating Out' project, which explores change and continuity 20 years on from Warde and Martens' ground-breaking 1995 study. A major survey and follow up interviews across three UK cities explores the informalisation and normalisation of eating out, addressing debates about social distinction, cultural omnivorousness and cosmopolitanism. Jennifer and Jessica also presented on the project at the BSA Sociology of Food Study Group Conference 2017 'Food and Society' at the University of Westminster, London, reflecting on the logic of revisiting 'Eating Out' with both old and new concerns, such as sustainable consumption, and the prospects afforded by using food as a lens through which to explore social change.

Also at the BSA, Josephine Mylan's research followed up Eating Out survey participants in a qualitative study of people attempting to reduce their meat consumption. Reduction of meat consumption is increasingly promoted as a key aspect of sustainable diet, yet we know little about consumers' actual motivation: ideas around nutrition and bodily vitality, concerns about the conditions of production, personal relationships and routines all play a role. Alison Browne, Zhu Di and Josephine Mylan also presented their research on 'Meat Consumption in Everyday Urban China', drawing on qualitative and quantitative data. While overall meat

consumption is increasing—China consumes around one-third of the world's meat—reducing meat consumption has entered the Chinese culinary repertoire. Finally, Frank Geels' paper addressed a different scale, with a comparative analysis of the very different German and UK paths to transition to low carbon electricity generation from 1990-2015.

June saw SCI engagement with two social scientific sustainability conferences, the International Sustainability Transitions (IST) conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Consumption & Production (GRF) in Brighton, UK.



*"IST Conference 2018 to be hosted by the SCI in June next year"*

This was the eighth IST conference, and Frank Geels' introduction highlighted the growth of the Sustainability Transitions Research Network from less than 400 members six years ago to nearly 1400 today, producing 200 publications in the field annually. Mike Hodson and Andy McMeekin presented the results of their investigation of leadership at the urban level, drawing on a case study of a 20-year plan for transport infrastructure and the built environment in Manchester. Cameron Roberts and Frank Geels' paper flipped the normal framing of research on policy in transitions on its head, looking at how transitions influence policymakers rather than vice-versa. Using two historical case studies on British agriculture and transport, they showed that policymakers are only likely to deliberately accelerate a transition if they are presented with appealing new technological opportunities or major problems in the incumbent system. Josephine Mylan presented her work on the role of firms in leading transitions to sustainability, using a longitudinal case study of Proctor & Gamble's low-temperature laundry initiative. Frank Geels reviewed the role of agency in three literatures underpinning the Multi-Level



Perspective, a core analytical approach for the study of socio-technical transitions: the social construction of technology, evolutionary economics, and neo-institutional theory. The conference ended with the SCI's Research Director Andy McMeekin providing a preview of the 2018 IST conference, which will be hosted by the SCI in Manchester in June next year.

Also in Sweden in June, Joe Blakey presented doctoral research at the Nordic Geographers' Meeting in Stockholm, asking how 'smart cities', rather than simply de-politicising, might be used to preserve the political sphere. The presentation drew on research with the Triangulum project, where academics and industry partners have sought to demonstrate 'smart' solutions in the 'innovation district' of 'Corridor Manchester', where the SCI is located.

The GRF was launched at the Rio +20 conference to bring together global research on sustainable consumption and production and Sussex University hosted the GRF's third international conference, themed around the Circular Economy. The SCI organised a panel at the conference on 'Boundaries and Limits of the Circular Economy'. Moderated by Dan Welch, the SCI's Frank Boons, together with invited panellists Tim Foxon (SPRU, Sussex) and Kersty Hobson (Geography, Cardiff), critically addressed the economic, political, historical and conceptual aspects of the concept, provoking a lively debate amongst the large audience. SCI researchers also contributed with presentations. Harald Wieser contributed a paper entitled "Circular Economy is the Solution, but what is the Problem?" drawing on his research on the mobile phone industry to highlight the various ways the Circular Economy frame is mobilised in practice. Wouter Spekkink introduced an analytical framework that can be used to study how grassroots sustainability initiatives contribute to the translation of unsustainable practices into sustainable ones, drawing on research into the Repair Cafés movement. Dan Welch contributed to a session organised by the

Horizon 2020 ENERGISE project, discussing links between the project's ambition to move beyond existing sustainable consumption research by developing an innovative theoretical framework addressing cultural aspects of energy consumption with his own recent work.

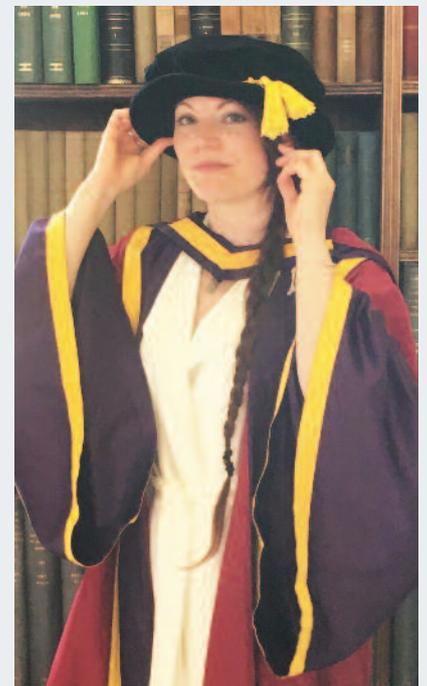
The European Sociological Association took SCI researchers to Athens at the end of the summer. Tally Katz-Gerro showcased her work on intergeneration transmission of environmental behaviours, Josephine Mylan presented her work on consumers reducing their meat consumption and Dan Welch made a theoretical contribution to the role of emotion in consumption and consumer culture. Luke Yates discussed how social movements shape, and are shaped by, competing visions of the future. Doctoral researcher Ulrike Ehgartner presented an analysis of grocery trade media articles to show how framings of 'the sustainable consumer' in the discourse around sustainable food have changed over time, from retailers' preoccupation with educating consumers about sustainability, to their current concerns with balancing consumers' demands for sustainability with price and quality.

Most recently, this September, Sherilyn MacGregor was Chair of the Environmental Politics and Policy stream at the European Consortium for Political Research conference in Oslo, where she chaired a panel 'Engendering Climate Change Politics/Policy: European Feminist Perspectives' in which SCI Doctoral researcher Joanna Wilson presented a paper based on her research on the gendered discourses shaping UK climate change policy. The session brought together academics from around Europe, as well as a few from North America and Africa, to discuss strategies for filling the significant gender gap in the literature on climate change politics in the affluent global north.

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## Congratulations to Dr Samantha Outhwaite



**Congratulations to Dr Samantha Outhwaite, who successfully defended her PhD thesis on 30 November 2016. Sam's thesis is an ethnographic study of British Organic Biodynamic wheat that traces its 'social life' from seed to final consumption.**

The analysis draws on Actor-Network Theory to explore the ways in which alternative food networks seek to purify multiple and often incommensurable versions of wheat. The thesis was supervised by Nick Crossley and David Evans, and it was examined by Alan Warde and Professor Mara Miele (Cardiff). Congratulations again Sam!



# International Visitors to the SCI

We've been very fortunate in the last twelve months to welcome visitors from many parts of the globe to the SCI. This includes expanding upon our on-going China strategy, including exchanges with academics from CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) Institute of Sociology - which is the leading sociology research institute in the People's Republic of China - including Associate Prof Zhu Di.

A little closer to home, we've also welcomed visitors from Finland (Mia Tammelin, University of Jyväskylä), Sweden (Tullia Jack, Lund University and Nicklas Neuman, Uppsala University) and the Netherlands (Lidewij Tummers, TU Delft) during the 2016-2017 academic year. These international colleagues, at all career stages, have come to the SCI to collaborate with our research staff and PhD students on the world's many and varied sustainability challenges.

Traffic to the SCI has not only been one way however, as our staff have also travelled to engage, and at times form collaborations with, academic colleagues from as far afield as the US (eg Tally Katz-Gerro's project looking at the Intergenerational Transmission of Environmental Behaviors in the US and Israel), Europe (eg Frank Geels' successful application, in consortium, to the European Environment Agency to provide expert assistance on forward-looking analysis, sustainability assessments and systemic transitions) and in Asia (eg Alison Browne's on-going collaborations with colleagues from the Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE) and CASS (Beijing), Shanghai and Nanjing Universities). This has led to several Visiting Lecturerships including Alison Browne (CUFE) and Jessica Paddock (Oveido, Spain). In addition, SCI staff have continued to act as invited members of four Research Council commissioning panels in the UK, Norway and Sweden and staff members participate in seven

international research project advisory boards.

These expanding engagement activities have also led to a significant number of internationally funded bids being submitted to the EU under programme headings including H2020, Norface and the Open Research Area partnering with colleagues from Brazil, Belgium, Germany, France and Japan.

Of course, these fruitful encounters not only benefit our individual researchers' career development, but also form part of the SCI's wider internationalisation strategy as we - as well as many other research institutes in HE worldwide - recognise the political, economic, academic and socio-cultural benefits that such international exchanges bring.

In the next few months we'll be welcoming even more visitors from across the globe and we've many visiting applications in the pipeline for 2018. Those due to arrive imminently include ...

## Dr. Jordi López-Sintas, Visiting Professor



Jordi López-Sintas is a Professor of Social Sciences at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where he holds a professorship position in consumer research and marketing. His research interests include sustainable consumption, consumption studies, consumer research, sociology of arts and culture, leisure studies, and qualitative methods. He is the current president of Espacual (Qualitative Research Spanish Association) and the organizer of the 2017 Summer School of Qualitative Methods

(<http://escuelaverano.espacual.es>).

For more information:  
<http://jlopezsi.github.io>.

Jordi will be visiting the SCI from 1 September to 31 December 2017.

## Dr Fei Liu, Visiting Researcher



Fei Liu is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Central China Normal University. He received his MA and PhD from Zhong Shan University. His

main areas of research focus on sociology of consumption, sociology of food, and economic sociology. He has published 10 papers in the Journal of Chinese Dietary Culture and other peer-reviewed journals. Fei will be joins us from the end of August 2017 for 12 months.

To keep up-to-date with our latest research whether it's investigating 'meat consumption in urban China' (team: Alison Browne, Jo Mylan, Zhu Di - CASS); the 'environmental impact of consumption in Mexico' (Paddock, Land2Coast project) or, more closer to home, the sustainability opportunities that Manchester's devolution project may bring please visit our website at [www.sci.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.sci.manchester.ac.uk).

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