

New Starters, New Projects, Recognition and Invitations...

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

We start this newsletter with yet more welcomes to new starters at the SCI. Tally Katz-Gerro, joined us in September as Reader in Sociology (see page 7) and Bruno Turnheim joined us in January 2017 as a Research Associate (see page 8). We have three new PhD students: Cecilia Alda Vidal, Harriet Larrington-Spencer and Joanna Wilson (see page 6). Simon Blyth and Craig Bennett also join us as Honorary Fellow and Honorary Professor respectively. Simon is founder of consumer insight consultancy, Actant, with a background working for Unilever and IDEO; Craig is current Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth UK.

The SCI's research agenda continues to evolve, not least with the conclusion of some projects and the start of new initiatives. The EU FP7 funded PATHWAYS project finished in November. Full details of all reports can be found at [www.pathways-project.eu]. We are now busy translating these findings into academic outputs. The "Eating Out" project is also drawing to a close, with all data collection complete – see page 4 for details. We saw three new projects starting in the last period: Ali Browne is working with Sheffield University

colleagues on a new ESRC project, "Reshaping the domestic nexus: Engaging policy understandings of kitchen practices and how they change" (see www.nexusathome.wordpress.com/ for details). Mike Hodson and Andy McMeekin started work on their new AMBS funded project, "Making Devolution work Differently: Housing and Transport in Greater Manchester" (see page 2). Jen Whillans' British Academy Fellowship started in January, researching the temporal organization of employment and eating in UK households.

We continue to receive recognition and invitations for our work. PhD student Harald Weiser's paper in the journal GAIA has been shortlisted for paper of the year; Niki Hutson was awarded best PhD paper at the 12th Corporate Responsibility Research Conference for her article on the institutional work of trade associations. Frank Geels has been selected to join the European Environment Agency's Scientific Committee, following the EEAs interest in transition scholarship and connections to the PATHWAYS project. Meanwhile, Dale Southerton and Ali Browne visited

...SCI will host the 2018 International Sustainability Transition conference to be held in the week beginning 11th June 2018.

Shanghai where they each gave a number of talks on the development of sustainable consumption research in the context of Chinese society.

We will all soon be making plans for which conferences to attend this summer, but to finish this introduction, and looking further ahead, we are delighted to announce that the SCI will host the 2018 International Sustainability Transitions Conference to be held in week beginning 11 June 2018.

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How do we deliver a more sustainable future without compromising our quality of life?

Making the Future of Greater Manchester

On 3rd November 2014 the then UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, agreed a deal with the leaders of 10 Greater Manchester local authorities to transfer powers (including transport, planning, housing, skills and economic development) to the Greater Manchester city-region. The deal, characterised as 'Devo Manc', has produced a slew of positive symbolism but there remains much uncertainty as to what its tangible, long-term implications will be. Its dominant representation sees a future Greater Manchester at the centre of a 'Northern Powerhouse' of connected northern metropolitan areas. The stated aim is to address the UK's economic imbalance towards London and the South-East of England and to create a second growth pole able to compete with global economic powerhouses.

Fundamental to Devo Manc have been proposals to reconfigure spatial boundaries, governance frameworks and transport infrastructure connections in Greater Manchester. But how this is done and who is shaping it remain critically under-researched issues. One rationale for Devo Manc is that it is about transferring power from the national state and creating the conditions for more autonomous decision-making in Greater Manchester. But there is also a rationale that suggests that Greater Manchester can't act effectively autonomously and needs to be connected to the wider North of England as the entry cost to global urban economic competition. This contradiction informs UK state strategy, re-positioning Greater Manchester. It raises the question: what sort of Greater Manchester – in terms of its society, economy and ecology - will this produce and who will be shaping this?



The Long-Term Remaking of Greater Manchester...Starting Now

Initial analysis suggests that there are purposive efforts to reformat the built environment and material infrastructures in Greater Manchester with the aim of accelerating economic growth. Central to this vision is the production, for the first time since 1981, of a metropolitan-level spatial plan, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). The Framework represents a purposive and ambitious attempt to reformat the city-region over a 20 year period that builds into the material fabric of the city-region a set of power relations and assumptions.

Its implications are significant. Greater Manchester targets annual economic growth of 2.5% that is not only well beyond historic trends but also underplays the likely impact of future automation of

many areas of the economy. This growth is envisaged as spatially-selective and is likely to produce a geographically mosaic city-region of a prioritised, increasingly densified and extended city centre, 'city-edge zones' of logistical, warehousing and housing development, and peripheral spaces that characterise the remaining, majority areas of Greater Manchester. This is orientated through the ideology of agglomeration-based growth and the role of transport infrastructure in building connectivity. It is being governed through public institutions creating the conditions for (public-)private investment, creating opportunities for developers to remake selected parts of Greater Manchester.

Implications

Initial analysis suggests that there are three implications of this which we can briefly summarise.



1. Materialising the new Greater

Manchester: Realisation of this agenda appears to be patchy and, particularly as it is future-oriented, requires systematic research to assess its effects. An initial reading suggests that where there is realisation it produces two forms of selective infrastructural developments that underpin the ambitions set out above. The first appears to prioritise transport connections between Manchester city centre and the larger cities of the North such as Liverpool and Leeds, rather than small and medium-sized cities and towns. Second, within Greater Manchester, there is prioritisation of connections in to the city centre and to strategic sites, such as Manchester Airport. It remains to be systematically researched what happens in the non-emblematic parts of the metropolitan area.

2. Remaking through narrowly

constituted governance capacity: In Greater Manchester this often involves coalitions of metropolitan and national political elites mobilising a narrow agenda of how to 'entrepreneurially' use infrastructure to re-position Greater Manchester. This is done via an increasing decentralisation of responsibilities from central government, in a context of government austerity. This produces a responsibility on urban contexts to realise transition while also reducing the resources to do so.

3. Remaking is mediated by narrow

economic concerns: The GMSF and Devo Manc are overwhelmingly narratives of boosting economic growth, premised on building infrastructural 'connectivity' within selected parts of Greater Manchester and to the wider urban North of England, making it more amenable to foreign direct investment. Wider sustainability concerns that were apparent in the 1990s and which, in the 2000s in a UK context, promoted a low carbon agenda are being squeezed. Nor is it evident how the social welfare of GM citizens will be improved.

The Need for Better Understanding

There is a need for future inter-disciplinary research to better understand these and other dynamics of devolution in Greater Manchester and other English metropolitan areas. To address this, Dr Mike Hodson and Professor Andy McMeekin from the SCI, are collaborating with an inter-disciplinary team of six colleagues (Professor Julie Froud, Professor Mick Moran, Professor Anne Stafford, Professor Pam Stapleton, Ms Hua Wei and Professor Karel Williams) from across the Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS) on a new research project: Making devolution work differently: housing and transport in Greater Manchester after devolution.

The purpose of the project is to develop proposals for an improved understanding of urban devolution in the UK. The premise of the research is to examine what could be achieved if devolution redefined the current dominant view of urban devolution in the UK and the relations between local political elites, business interests, expertise and the ordinary citizens who are usually disempowered under current arrangements. The research, therefore, seeks to address two fundamental issues:

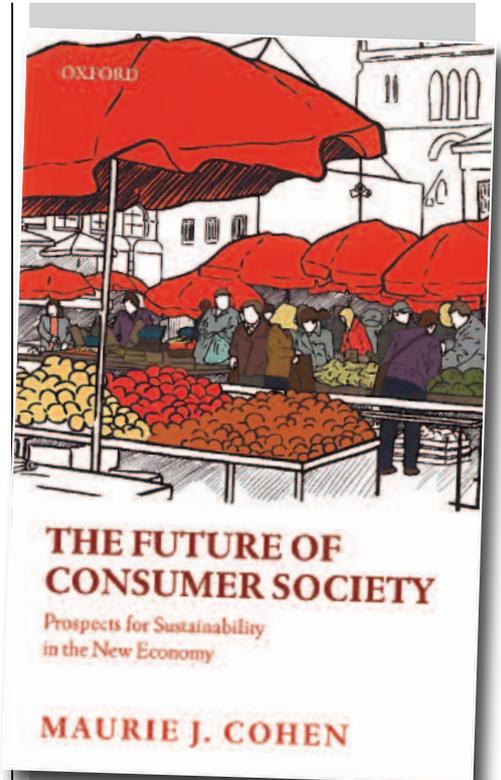
1. To understand the dynamics of how devolution is working, its strengths and weaknesses, and the processes of uneven development it produces and
2. To develop improvements to it setting out how devolution could work differently.

The project takes an empirical focus on Greater Manchester as an 'exemplar' of English urban devolution and addresses two foundational areas of everyday life - transport and housing. To do this, it synthesises governance, socio-technical and financial analyses of ongoing processes of urban devolution in Greater Manchester to understand the process and effects of devolution and how these can be enhanced. The project commenced in September 2016 for 27 months and is funded by AMBS.

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Publication:

**Future of Consumer Society
Prospects for Sustainability
in the New Economy**

Maurie J. Cohen

Consumer society in the United States and other countries is receding due to demographic ageing, rising income inequality, political paralysis, and resource scarcity. At the same time, steady jobs that compensate employees on a salaried or hourly basis are being replaced by freelancing and contingent work. The rise of the so-called sharing economy, the growth of do-it-yourself production, and the spreading popularity of economic localization are evidence that people are striving to find new ways to ensure livelihoods for themselves and their families in the face of profound change. Indications are that we are at the early stages of a transition away from a system of social organization predicated on consumerism.

How do we align our personal desire for a better life with a shared need for a better future?

Eating out in three English cities, 1995-2015

In 2015 and 2016, Professor Alan Warde, Dr Jessica Paddock and Dr Jennifer Whillans took what is a rare and exciting opportunity in the social sciences to revisit the study 'Eating Out in Britain', which was first conducted in April 1995 as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's 'The Nation's Diet' programme, as reported in Warde and Martens 'Eating Out: Social Differentiation, Consumption and Pleasure'.

This was an interdisciplinary social science programme designed to understand better the patterns of eating across the UK and their effect on health (eg nutrition and class differences), social relations (eg gender and division of labour in the home) among other topics, and was the first study on eating out as a social phenomenon. In this way, the 1995 and 2015 studies explore the meanings of eating out to diners, its relationship with domestic and institutional ways of providing meals as well as what this could say about the British diet and cultural tastes.

Returning to London, Preston and Bristol asking the same - albeit in some cases slightly modified - questions of 1,000 people aged 16-65 in the Spring of 2015 we expected some big changes since 1995 in terms of frequency, differentiation, composition of meals and types of venues visited. The survey is followed by 30 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with ten respondents in each city, where we get to grips with the meaning of eating out and its relationship with preparing and eating food at home, entertaining and being entertained with food at other people's homes. Understanding these arrangements, habits and routines in



some depth and from the point of view of the consumer tells us something about how food systems might be reconfigured in order to support more sustainable ways of feeding and eating in the future, alongside other key areas of policy interest such as (un)healthy eating, the growth of the convenience food industry, as well as moral anxiety around the perceived decline of the family meal as a point for socialisation and 'proper' eating.

The study has now gathered data about how frequently people make use of different modes of provision today – for example through market modes such as restaurants and eateries, institutional modes such as canteens, or domestic modes such as home-cooked meals. In other words, we now know what people are eating and who they are eating with and for what sorts of occasions when they eat a main meal outside the home. Our results show a more moderate increase in frequency of eating out than the market research suggests, but the meanings of seemingly small shifts have wider implications.

Findings so far

Casualization 'unpacked'

A main change in the last twenty years has been a growth in familiarity and knowledge of the practice of eating out among the population. In 1995 many older people had only recent experience, for until the 1970's it had been uncommon for anyone on a moderate or low income to eat out except on holiday or at mid-day in the working week. More people have greater experience than in 1995. Then the experience of eating out seemed special, for it was not yet taken-for-granted. Another twenty years of regular and normalised eating out has meant that almost everyone is familiar with the activity. The practice has matured along with the current population which has more or less a life-time of experience of eating meals out on commercial premises.

Comparison across survey years indicates some significant changes including informalisation and simplification of eating out in restaurants. Respondents tend not to dress up specially for the



occasion as much as they did 20 years ago. Neither are events planned as far in advance: there is a notable increase in deciding to eat out one hour before or on the day of the meal and a decline in deciding several weeks or more before the occasion. Meals are also simplified as one course meals became more common and three course meals much less common with fewer people having dessert and even fewer starters. Finally, more people reported eating out alone and fewer people reported eating in very large groups.

Changes in the reason for eating out offer some explanation of the identified shift toward informalisation and simplification, and the downgraded enjoyment of eating out. Between 1995 and 2015 the proportion of last meals in restaurants that were described as special occasions fell, the proportion described as 'convenience/quick' increased, while the proportion which are 'just social occasions' and 'business' remains largely unchanged. The shift in restaurant meals has been primarily from special occasions to convenience/quick events. This supports what market research points to as modest growth in the eating out market, with the number of people deeming eating out as 'important' showing a downward trend (Mintel, Eating Out Review UK, 2015). This, they suggest, along with a rise in number of fast-food/casual dining venues such as burger bars, pasta and pizza chains and heavy discounting by restaurants since the 2008 recession, contributes to what they call the 'casualization' of eating out. But it is not clear what those changes might mean for the general population, and this is where sociological research can shed further light.

While special meals conjure images of "memorable events", most of those described by interviewees are less exceptional. We have called these 'ordinary' meals out, for they are unremarkable and un-exceptional; fewer are planned in advance, they are tied to everyday activities and they are related to everyday responsibilities. They are more informal and also more affordable.



Nevertheless, they are central to repertoires of eating and sociability and widely considered very enjoyable. It is not an obligation to eat out, and routinisation does not detract from the pleasures derived. Crispin, a male interviewee from Bristol explains what he means by eating out being a 'treat', saying that "it's not like it's an amazing treat... it's just something nice".

'Ordinary' meals out

'Ordinary' meals falls into two distinct types; the impromptu and the regularised. The impromptu meal out is not planned in advance and is a response to particular circumstances or events. It is a form of 'ordinary consumption' which takes place as the result of other daily life demands and does not necessarily involve overt conspicuous display. For example, hunger might strike suddenly, or the inclination to cook might be absent, or there may be insufficient ingredients in the cupboard to make a satisfactory meal; in such circumstances the availability of meals in a nearby restaurant suggests an impromptu meal out. Pete, an interviewee from London spoke of eating out spontaneously if he is hungry and willing to give in to temptation, such as when he gave in to the smell of pie and mashed potato while shopping for a new pair of shoes. Jeff, from Preston, will eat at a local pub while out shopping with his wife on a Saturday afternoon. Mal, a Bristol based

interviewee reported that he uses digital technologies to locate a venue and make last-minute arrangements with dining companions. While we cannot comment on the nutritional aspects of these meals, last-minute impromptu meals are not necessarily characterised by convenience or junk foods. They are often full-and cooked 'proper' meals eaten at a commercial venue near to one's home. For example, Nicola (Bristol) explains that as she turns her mind to thinking about preparing the evening meal she will say to herself "I can't be bothered, so let's go out.' It's just easier." Similarly Lara (London), who suffers with an on-going illness, does not always feel well enough to cook and instead takes her family out to a 'carvery' restaurant, "making sure that the family gets together". Labour is also avoided when Cheryl's (Bristol) husband convinces her it is not worth the effort unless their grown-up children visit as planned.

By the time you go and buy a piece of beef that's 10 pound. By the time you go and get all the veg, then you've got to cook it, then you've got to wash all up and it's 3 o'clock in the afternoon before you've done all that. He says 'well, we'll go have a natter, a lunch'. He says it's no more expensive.

Replacing the home-cooked with an impromptu meal in a restaurant reduces effort, cost and waste.

How do we deliver a more sustainable future without compromising our quality of life?

Not all 'ordinary' meals out are best characterised as impromptu. Accounts are peppered with references to appointments made with family or friends. What we call regularised meals take place at intervals by agreement so that those living outside the household stay in touch with each other. For some, meals out in restaurants are central to maintaining female friendships. Miranda, from Bristol, recounts get-togethers with friends whom she calls her 'Thursday Girls'. These meetings tend to take place in restaurants, where one benefit is that she can taste cuisines her husband is reluctant to eat. The restaurant offers a space where women can relax (a word most commonly used by women describing same-sex eating out experiences), and where no-one has responsibility for hosting guests. It is an opportunity to spend time comfortably with each other without the routine domestic chores encroaching on time reserved for leisure, where their tastes can be indulged without reference to the tastes of their families and where the social world of their table cannot be so easily interrupted by anyone other than waiting staff.

While we describe these meals out as 'ordinary' eating events, great pleasure is nevertheless derived. Eating in a restaurant is an ordinary, everyday pleasure that has become part of the repertoire of means through which people feed themselves and others. But what has this got to do with sustainability?

Eating out for a sustainable food future?

If the restaurant is a site for more mundane and everyday eating, yet is still an event that is much enjoyed, we might usefully consider the implications for inculcating more sustainable eating practices.

Given that impromptu occasions – much less common in 1995 – pepper the accounts of all interviewees and account for a rise in the 'quick and convenient' occasions found in the survey data suggests a fruitful avenue for exploration. The emergence of the impromptu occasion might tell us something of people's flexibility and desire for novel solutions to problems of misalignment between the competing demands of

different everyday tasks and activities. Eating out is a solution to many everyday problems such as the failure to synchronise tasks, or even the inability to align with the rhythm of others with whom daily life is linked.

If done properly, the public eating place might play a significant role in shaping the everyday diet, not only in providing luxurious special meals but in shifting what is currently an individualised task for private households into the public domain to obtain economies of scale and resources. Restaurants have historically shaped food practices, and most recently have played a role in the casualization of eating out. However, if eating out continues to become more accessible and more frequent, restaurants may be able to play a role in promoting shifts towards more sustainable diets, for example in meat reduction.

Further lessons to be learned about the potential for societal transition towards less carbon intensive eating practices are being unravelled by researchers in the SCI who are leading satellite projects running alongside this replication study. Having approached survey respondents for further interview, Dr Josephine Mylan is exploring the role of meat and meat reduction in contemporary diets; Dr Helen Holmes is investigating the role of thriftiness in domestic food practices; Dr Jennifer Whillans, Dr Luke Yates and Professor Dale Southerton are seeking to understand how household composition, divisions of labour and time-use within the home affect eating practices inside and outside the domestic sphere. Dr Daniel Welch is adding a further perspective by examining the political economy of the UK restaurant industry. Together, these projects are exploring what an understanding of everyday life could mean for shifting practices in more sustainable directions. Watch this space!

See this special issue of Discover Society magazine for further information: www.discoversociety.org/2016/01/05/lets-eat-out-more-re-configuring-a-feminist-vision-for-a-sustainable-future/

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Welcome

Harriet Larrington- Spencer PhD Research at SCI



Harrie has recently moved back to the UK after an eventful 5 years studying and working abroad. Prior to starting her PhD, she was employed as a Research Associate at the Centre for Mountain Development in Kathmandu, Nepal exploring gender, equity and sustainability in the access, use and management of water resources.

Harrie's PhD "Practices on the move" investigates trajectories of water and energy consumption in China, aiming to develop critical understandings of everyday practices underpinning water and energy consumption and their place within economic, political and socio-spatial transformations of cities and urban household infrastructures. She is funded by an ESRC-Case Studentship and is a University of Manchester President's Doctoral Scholar Award recipient.



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From Haifa to Manchester - Welcome to Tally Katz-Gerro



Tally Katz-Gerro
joined the SCI in
September 2016.

Previously she was Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Haifa. she has a PhD in Sociology from the University of California at Berkeley (2000).

Tally's research addresses scholarship conducted at the crossroads of consumption, culture, environment, and inequality, with a strong emphasis on cross-national and cross-time comparisons. Recent projects with various colleagues include a study of the intergenerational transmission of environmental attitudes and behaviours and the

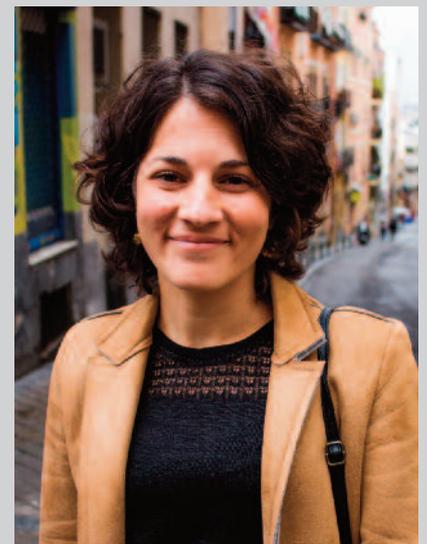
construction of an environmental habitus in Israel, the US, and South Korea; research on the way people use and perceive cultural services of their ecosystem and how this affects their wellbeing in the Arava region in Israel and the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland; an interest in patterns of consumption that are conditioned by specific circumstances, such as an economic crisis in southeastern Europe or an organizational change in transport companies in Lisbon; research on cultural consumption and social comparison, contributing to the literature on positional goods and subjective well-being by providing new evidence on how relative vs. absolute income, the intensity of social comparison, and the reference group for comparison, affect subjective well-being; budget analysis of funding of the performing arts in Israel starting in 1960 and until the present, demonstrating the priorities in public funding of culture and the way they are associated with the social makeup of Israeli society; and research on cultural cosmopolitanism with an emphasis on engagement with alterity and situated cosmopolitanism in divided societies.

Tally welcomes enquiries from colleagues and potential PhD students who are interested in the range of topics described above; you are welcome to contact her at tally.katz-gerro@manchester.ac.uk.

A full list of publications can be found in Tally's google scholar profile and researchgate profile.

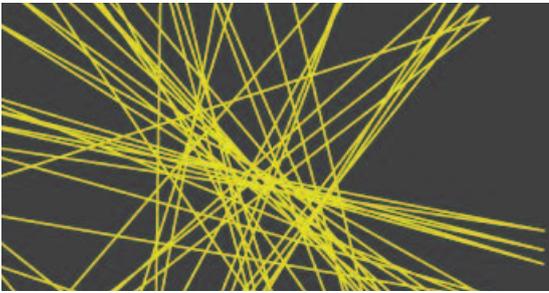
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Cecilia Alda Vidal PhD Research at SCI



Cecilia was awarded one of the SCI's 2016 PhD studentships and has recently started her doctoral studies. Her PhD research will investigate urban infrastructures from an everyday life perspective. In particular, she will focus on access to water and sanitation infrastructures and how these relate to everyday practices of sanitation and hygiene in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Before starting her PhD Cecilia worked with different organizations on issues related to water and sanitation in Africa and Latin America. She holds an MSc in Water Management, an MA in International Development and Cooperation, and a BSc in Environmental Sciences.



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Bruno Turnheim



Bruno has held various Research Associate positions, most recently at King's College London, where he retains a part-time position. He has a PhD in Science Policy

Research from SPRU (University of Sussex).

His research focuses on questions of sustainability and the role of innovation in addressing related challenges. He is particularly interested in policy-relevant research on sustainability transitions – the reorientation of socio-technical trajectories towards more societally desirable directions.

The study of transitions is a truly multi-disciplinary research area involving, among others, theoretical constructs borrowed from systems thinking, evolutionary theories of change, science and technology studies (STS), the history of technology and social practices. The main processes investigated are those of technological emergence and breakthrough, and the co-evolutionary processes of technological, economic,

social, political and cultural change involved in socio-technical transitions.

Sustainability transitions, however, present the additional difficulty of requiring the emergence and stabilisation of new normative ideals and criteria as guides for socio-technical change. Sustainable technologies, practices, and lifestyles struggle to develop into mainstream alternatives in their own right because they currently have no or little perceived tangible value, in addition to involving important trade-offs. The electricity from renewable sources, for instance, is no more powerful, convenient, or reliable than conventional electricity, and may present disadvantages such as higher cost, intermittency, and so on. A central difficulty for moving away from car-based mobility is the perceived relative inconvenience of other modes, and the difficulties of operating major lifestyle changes in the absence of other positive signals. The potential benefits of shifting to organic or local foods (eg health, decarbonisation, 'connection' with agriculture) are similarly not currently perceived as enough to contribute to substantial shifts in food consumption practices beyond affluent niches.

Transitions studies has established itself as a vibrant area of research. It is driven by a number of exciting research puzzles, a strong link to societal and policy problems, and supported by a growing community of

researchers worldwide - as evidenced by the membership of Sustainability Transitions Research Network (transitionsnetwork.org).

His contributions to this field include:

- Research on the destabilisation of established socio-technical regimes (ie the 'blood, sweat and tears') in transitions
- Exploring sustainability transitions pathways from different disciplinary perspectives
- Extensive empirical research on transitions in different domains (energy, mobility, agri-food)
- An interest in socio-technical experimentation, and the means of its wider embedding
- Engagement with decision-makers to explore how transitions concerns can lead to policy prescriptions

The main focus of his research at the SCI is a comparative study of the development and deployment of modern tramways and light rail systems in France and in the UK, 1980-present. This comparison of very different developmental trajectories offers significant opportunities to better understand transitions related to infrastructure.

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Joanna Wilson PhD Research at SCI

Joanna began her PhD, funded by the Sustainable Consumption Institute, in September 2016

after having gained her MSc Human Geography (cum laude) at the University of Amsterdam. Her specialisation throughout her Masters degree was in Environmental Geography with a particular focus on gender and climate

change. To this effect, her thesis project took a feminist look at the UK's climate change policy and presented an intersectional feminist tool for ensuring gendered considerations are considered more widely in climate change politics. Prior to studying in Amsterdam Joanna gained her undergraduate degree at the University of Aberdeen.

Joanna is continuing to research gender and climate change in her PhD and her thesis project is concerned with tracing 'gender'

throughout COP events beginning with the Paris Agreement 2015. Joanna will be researching the ways in which gender is, or is not, included in climate change politics with a particular focus on the process of how this happens. In other words, who or what holds the power in negotiations, how has this power been challenged what success such challenges have had and how can feminists continue to challenge this to ensure a feminist vision of climate change politics?