

Identities in Transition Seminar

Friday 14th October 2011

Charles Wilson Building, 4th Floor, Garendon Room, University of Leicester



The seminar, part of the ESRC Seminar Series “*Sustainability Transitions: rethinking everyday practices, identities and livelihoods*”, starts from the premise that many of the identities that individuals claim for themselves today in the Global North have been shaped by consumption practices fuelled by the high carbon economy. We also know that there are links between poverty, racism and gender inequalities and the people most likely to experience the most detrimental impacts of climate change and resource scarcity. This workshop explores the role of the high carbon economy in shaping these social identities and questions how they might be reconfigured through the process of transition to a sustainable, low carbon future. It focuses on three interlinked themes:

- How contemporary identities have been shaped by the high carbon economy
- How those identities might change and be reconfigured through the process of transition to a sustainable, low carbon future
- What it means to identify with (movements for) sustainability transitions.

Organisers: Gavin Brown and Jenny Pickerill, University of Leicester

Programme

09.30	Registration and coffee
10.00	Identities in Transition: some observations and questions Speakers: Gavin Brown and Jenny Pickerill
10.15	Introductions and goals <i>What do you want out of today?</i>
10.30	Managing trade-offs in ‘ecotopia’: becoming green at the Centre for Alternative Technology. Speaker: Jon Anderson <i>Questions</i>
11.30	Panel discussion: Addressing diverse identities in climate change activism and advocacy Speakers: Michelle Bastian and Shumaisa Khan <i>Questions and discussion</i>
12.30	Lunch <i>An opportunity for informal discussion</i>
13.30	Workshop: “Permaculture” and the escape into Whiteness: Sustainable Transition and Racialism Speaker: Joseph De Lappe <i>Discussion</i>
14.30	The Footpaths project: facilitating low carbon lifestyles Speakers: Jill Fisher and Emily Hodgkinson <i>Questions and discussion</i>
15.30	Coffee
15.45	Transitioning to Lower-carbon Identities: Three Tales from the ‘Everyday’ Speaker: Robyn Dowling <i>Questions</i>
16.45	Closing discussion
17.00	Finish

For those staying in Leicester after the seminar, or not rushing home, we are planning to go for a cheap meal after the seminar. Please join us.

Further details about speakers

Jon Anderson is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the School of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University. His research interests focus on the relations between identity, culture, and place, in particular the actions, practices and politics that such relations produce. An outline of his research interests can be found on www.spatialmanifesto.com

Michelle Bastian has been working with Transition Liverpool since 2009. She was previously the coordinator of a peace organisation in Australia, International Volunteers for Peace (a partner of SCI - Civil Service International). She is particularly interested in how idealisations of community and identity (as unified and harmonious) affect assumptions about the appropriate methods for and manifestations of successful community work.

Gavin Brown is a Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Leicester. Gavin is a social and cultural geographer, with a broad range of research interests examining the spatiality of contemporary life in cities. He is particularly interested in processes of social change and transformation and the relationships between these and changes in urban life and the built environment. Gavin is best known for his work on sexual geographies and co-edited the (2007) collection *Geographies of Sexualities*.

Joseph De Lappe is a secondary school teacher currently completing a MA in Education, Culture & Language at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research interests include: critical race theory applied to constructions of Irish identities in Britain, particularly in the classroom and the National Curriculum; Whiteness Studies; and, the challenges facing sexual minority youth in comprehensive education.

Robyn Dowling is an urban cultural geographer at Macquarie University, Australia. Her research focuses on the 'suburban everyday' - the homes and neighbourhoods, practices and identities, of the suburbs, and the planning practices that guide them. She has recently turned to understanding the sustainability dimensions of these practices and identities, especially in relation to carbon reduction.

Jill Fisher is currently undertaking PhD research at the Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development at De Montfort University investigating how group-based interventions may facilitate a shift to low carbon lifestyles. Jill is conducting a case study of the Transition Leicester Footpaths programme, a group-based carbon reduction project (<http://transitionleicester.wordpress.com/projects/footpaths/footpaths-groups/>). Her research evaluates whether participants in the Footpaths programme reduce their energy use and carbon emissions in both the short and long term. Her research is using a longitudinal mixed-method approach to understand how participating in the Footpaths programme promotes change. This allows both quantitative measurement of change over time, and qualitative in-depth exploration of participants' experience of the programme. Jill completed a post-graduate certificate in Sustainable Development and Climate Change at IESD in September 2009. Before that she worked co-ordinating volunteers and developing resources for the Living Witness Project, a Quaker charity promoting sustainable lifestyles. In her previous life Jill worked as an archaeologist, a telecommunications researcher, and as an expert in home education law and practice.

Emily Hodgkinson PhD, Dip POP, UKCP is a co-creator and trainer for Transition Leicester's 'Footpaths' project on Community Carbon Reduction. She is a trainer, facilitator and psychotherapist specialising in eco-psychology, diversity training and work with sexual and gender minorities. She supports organisations to build an understanding of diversity, eco-psychology and deep democracy into their practical work through for example conflict

facilitation training, psychology workshops for activists, or coaching academic staff teams to embed diversity into their curricula. Contact: mlyhodgkinson@yahoo.co.uk.

Shumaisa Khan is a volunteer with Wisdom in Nature (WIN), a process-oriented ecological and social activism group that draws on Islamic principles. She is also completing her doctoral degree in environment and natural resources with a concentration in environmental justice. Both as an activist and a scholar, she is particularly interested in ways of bringing diverse groups together to work toward greater sustainability and social justice.

Jenny Pickerill is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at the University of Leicester. Jenny's research focuses on how we understand, value and (ab)use the environment. She is particularly interested in inspiring grassroots solutions to environmental problems and in hopeful and positive ways in which we can change social practices. This work includes a concern for justice; recognising that the broader context of environmental problems is often inequality, colonialism, racism and neo-liberalism. As a geographer Jenny is interested in how these different issues connect, relate and entangle at different scales and in diverse places. She has conducted research in Britain, Australia, USA, Spain, Thailand and Argentina. She has completed an open-access collaborative book on *Low Impact Development* with environmental activists in Britain.

Seminar participants

Name	Affiliation	Email
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David Chapman	Royal Holloway, University of London	
Dimitris Papadopoulos	University of Leicester	
Ed Holden	University of Liverpool	
Eelin Loo	Pick Everard	
Emily Hodgkinson	Transition Leicester	
Eugenia Aguilar Nova	SPRU, University of Sussex	
Gavin Brown	University of Leicester	gpb10@le.ac.uk
Hannah Roberson	SOAS, University of London	
Jad Baaklini	University of Edinburgh	
James Cox	Lutterworth College	
Jenny Pickerill	University of Leicester	j.pickerill@le.ac.uk
Jill Fisher	De Montfort University	
Jon Anderson	Cardiff University	
Jonathan C. Cooper	University of Central Lancashire	
Jonny Harbord	Lutterworth College	
Joseph De Lappe	Goldsmiths, University of London	
Justin Pollard	University of Exeter	
Kelvin Mason	Centre for Alternative Technology	kelvin.mason@cat.org.uk
Kye Askins	University of Northumbria	
Leen Gorissen	VITO - Transition, Energy and Environment; Belgium	
Lise Andreassen	Royal Holloway, University of London	
Maria Puig de la Bellacasa	University of Leicester	
Michael Bradshaw	University of Leicester	
Michelle Bastian	Transition Liverpool	
Misha Velthuis	Eindhoven University of Technology	
Peter Kraftl	University of Leicester	
Peter North	University of Liverpool	p.j.north@liverpool.ac.uk
Rebecca Collins	University College London	
Robyn Dowling	Macquarie University	
Sarah Hards	Keele University	
Sarah Mills	University of Leicester	
Shumaisa Khan	Wisdom in Nature	
Sophie Wynne-Jones	University of Aberystwyth	
Susannah Fisher	London School of Economics	
Zamzam Pg Hassan	University of Leicester	
Zeinab Rezaee Ardestani	University of Leicester	