Aims and objectives

After the classical anthropological studies on rites de passage, transitions in the life course have been constantly on the research agenda since the 1980s. Flexibilisation of work, limitations of welfare states, changes of family structures and gender roles as well as longer life have contributed to a de-standardisation of the institutionalised life course. In consequence, transitions between life stages have become more uncertain and risky. For a long time, primarily transitions between youth and adulthood have been addressed. Increasingly, however, transitions from early childhood to very old age and with regard to diverse situations, institutions and spheres of life are in the focus.

Transition research has developed and diversified across different disciplines, epistemological interests and approaches as well as research methodologies. These developments have resulted in a research scenery which is difficult to be overlooked while there seems to be a theoretical deficit. Research seems to operate with different understandings of transitions which are rarely made explicit. In fact, the meaning of transitions seems to be so self-evident that theoretical clarification appears to be dispensable.

The aim of this conference is taking stock of concepts and controversies, findings and insights, perspectives and paradigms of transition research across the life course in the last three decades and to find common ground for theorising transitions. Key notes reflect on and present experiences from life course research, biographical analysis, developmental studies and from different disciplines, especially sociology, psychology and educational science. Cross-cutting to these overarching perspectives, recent research agendas on transitions in the distinct life stages childhood, youth, adulthood and old age will be reviewed and discussed.

The conference is part of the programme of the Research Training Group ‘Doing Transitions’ funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG; see www.doingtransitions.org). It focuses on the question how transitions in the life course emerge from social practices of formation and production on the levels of discourse, institutions and individuals. With this international conference, ‘Doing Transitions’ goes public. It invites researchers from different disciplines and gives young researchers the opportunity to build networks in the field.
Programme

Wednesday, 26th of April

Welcome
14:00 Enrico Schleiff
   Vice President, Goethe University Frankfurt
   Isabell Diehm
   Dean of Faculty of Education

Introduction
14:20 Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen
   Andreas Walther, Goethe University Frankfurt

Keynotes 1 & 2
15:00 Richard A. Settersten, State University Oregon: Flux: What science tells us about making transitions across the life course
16:00 Coffee break
16:30 Karen Evans, Institute of Education, London: Researching youth and working life transitions in changing social landscapes
18:00 City walk and dinner for invited speakers

Thursday, 27th of April

Keynote 3
9:30 Daniela Jopp, University of Lausanne: Developmental continuities and discontinuities across the life span
10:30 Coffee break

Parallel forums
11:00 Forum 1: Transitions in Childhood
   Pia Schober, University of Tübingen: Transitions into kindergarten
   Nadia Kutscher, University of Vechta: Transitions into primary school
   Chaired by Sabine Andresen & Birgit Becker, Goethe University Frankfurt

Keynote 3
9:30 Daniela Jopp, University of Lausanne: Developmental continuities and discontinuities across the life span
10:30 Coffee break
11:00 Parallel forums
   Forum 3: Transitions in Youth and Young Adulthood
   Nora Gaupp, German Youth Institute Munich: Young people facing school-to-work-transitions
   Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen, Barbara Frieberthäuser, Goethe University Frankfurt: Youth transitions - rituals and practices in youth cultures
   Chaired by Andreas Walther, Goethe University Frankfurt

Friday, 28th of April

Keynote 4
9:00 Ingrid Schoon, Institute of Education, London: Conceptualising transitions within a life-course framework. The role of structure, agency, and time
10:00 Coffee break
10:30 Panel Discussion
   Lessons of transitions research – questions of and for ‘Doing Transitions’
   Ingrid Schoon, Institute of Education, London, Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, University of Tübingen, Birgit Becker, Frank Oswald, Andreas Walther, Goethe University Frankfurt
   Chaired by Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen, Sabine Andresen, Goethe University Frankfurt

Wrap-Up and Looking Ahead
12:30 Petra Bauer, Markus Rieger-Ladich, University of Tübingen