



Call for Papers

Situating Transitions: New Horizons in Research of Life Course Transitions

6 - 8 October 2025, University of Tübingen, Germany

Life courses have undergone profound changes in recent decades. Transitions across life phases have become a matter of public and political discourse, social welfare policies and the subject of growing body of research. Transition research now spans various fields, including childhood and youth studies, adult life and aging studies. It encompasses diverse disciplines such as anthropology, educational sciences, demography, economics, psychology, public policy, sociology and social work. This broad range of perspectives calls for reflexivity regarding the implications and consequences of studying transitions.

Transitions are situated—and transition research itself is a situated practice. The perspective of *Doing Transitions* implies, therefore, not only asking what transitions are, how they emerge and what they mean in individual life trajectories. We are also asking how they are constituted, and therefore are addressing the conditions of scientific knowledge production, revealing taken-for-granted assumptions in epistemic practices. This includes accounting for disciplinary, geographical, historical, theoretical, methodological and other dimensions of situatedness.

The conference provides a platform for joint reflection as to how transition research is situated and what consequences this has concerning its practices, empirical and conceptual efforts, and achievements. The conference will evolve around three thematic areas:

1) *Global dialogue*: The conference addresses the field's predominant focus on the global North questioning the relevance of institutionalized life courses (e.g., emphasis on linear educational and career pathways) within non-Western settings. It seeks to challenge and expand existing theoretical frameworks and to examine the role of localized contexts in shaping life course transitions, for example, with regard to community support systems, extended family structures, and alternative rites of passage. By explicitly inviting contributions that explore these areas, the conference aims to redefine the discourse on life course transitions, making it a global dialogue that respects and reflects the intricacies of varied life experiences.

2) *Situatedness of the empirical and conceptual efforts of the "Doing Transitions" approach*: We intend to discuss how transitions in life courses are intertwined with historical changes in knowledge, gender dynamics, power structures and welfare regimes. For example, the shifting role of women in the workforce, changes in family structures and evolving social welfare policies have significantly affected life course transitions in different ways across the globe. Here, we seek to examine the capacity of the "Doing Transitions" approach, which has mainly drawn on theories of practice and which is emphasizing relationality, temporality and materiality, to investigate social change or transformation. However, we are also interested in discussing how analytical approaches aimed at deconstructing transitions can be reconciled with more normative approaches in social theory.

3) *Contributions cutting across transition research, academic disciplines and research fields*: Advances in transition research need to be contextualized with regard to disciplinary perspectives and cross-cutting research areas. Transitions reflect differentiation as much as linkages between different life ages, life

domains, and institutions addressed in different research fields and from different disciplinary perspectives. Thus, studying transitions is necessarily interdisciplinary and useful for opening the horizons towards transdisciplinary research. At the conference, we wish to explore the reciprocal contributions between transition research and neighboring research fields such as childhood, youth, and aging studies, gender and queer studies, labor market and educational studies, health, and care studies.

Keynotes will be delivered by

- Prof. Dr. Raka Ray (Berkeley)
- Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Shove (Lancaster)
- Prof. Dr. Felipe Torres (Santiago de Chile)

The conference is the final event of the research training group “Doing Transitions,” which has contributed to empirical investigation and theoretical reflection on life course transitions since its beginning in 2017. Jointly crafting a common 'legacy', we invite you to take a retrospective as well as forward-looking perspective. We want to bundle the vast empirical insights that have been gained from a Doing Transitions approach and reflect on their theoretical and methodological implications.

Presentations may address the following questions and thematic dimensions:

- What are possible contributions of a reflexive perspective on situated life course transitions for other research areas?
- How can an approach of reflexive transition research be fruitfully connected to diagnoses of living conditions in late modern capitalist societies?
- How do theories developed in non-Western contexts challenge and enrich our understanding of life course transitions traditionally studied within Western frameworks?
- How do globally diverse socio-economic and cultural patterns inform specific transitions at various life stages, and what global lessons can be learned from diverse empirical findings on life course transitions?
- How are theoretical and methodological assumptions regarding temporality, materiality, and relationality situated in historical and geographical contexts?
- How can research on life course transitions inform the way in which educational or professionalization processes are created, organized and accompanied?

The conference will bring together research fellows of the Research Training Group Doing Transition with other scholars to share their key research findings. We particularly encourage submissions from scholars based in or studying non-Western contexts. A limited number of travel grants will be available.

Please apply by submitting an abstract of 300 words max. to Doingtransitions@listserv.uni-tuebingen.de by **February 1st, 2025**. **The abstract should be** in pdf-format (file name should contain your last name and one key term of your abstract title).

Notification on acceptance of abstracts will be sent by the end of March 2025.

The conference organizers plan to compile one or more publications based on the contributions. If you are interested in contributing, please indicate this when submitting your abstract.

Organisers: Christiane Hof, Juliane Kirchner, Lena Mazurkiewicz, Ursula Offenberger, Frederika Schulte, Rahat Shah, Barbara Stauber, Kevin Stützel, Sibylle Walter, Andreas Walther.

Location: Institute of Education, Münzgasse 22-30, 72070 Tübingen.

More information: <http://www.doingtransitions.org/>

Contact for the Organising Team: Prof. Dr. Barbara Stauber & Sibylle Walter (Doingtransitions@listserv.uni-tuebingen.de)

The conference is part of the Cooperative Research Training Group of Goethe University Frankfurt am Main and University Tübingen funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).