

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (20897) - PARENTHOOD AND RETIREMENT AS WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE CHANGES IN THE TIME OF COVID19: SOME QUALITATIVE, CROSS-CULTURAL INSIGHTS

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Background and objectives

A significant body of research supports the theory that major life transitions can catalyse a range of lifestyle changes germane to environmental sustainability. However, the evidence is mixed, with studies emerging from a range of disciplines, each with its own underlying assumptions, methodological approaches and analytic techniques. Moreover, few studies from within the life course change literature have attempted to interrogate the conventions and assumptions underpinning relationships between 'moments of change' and environmentally relevant behaviour. Recent work has been directed towards the complex subjective nature of these relationships, grounded in the ongoing flux of social and cultural life. Therefore, acknowledging the wider complex nature of these events is crucial to understanding prospects for environmentally sustainable lifestyle changes.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Our presentation offers a range of novel insights from longitudinal qualitative research examining two types of life event; first-time parenthood and retirement. Three sets of individual interviews were conducted over an eight-month period with 20 new parents and 20 retirees in four countries (Canada, Lithuania, Nigeria, UK). Using a narrative approach, we examined continuity and change across a range of lifestyle dimensions of relevance to environmental sustainability, including diet, travel, consumption and leisure.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The study findings provide evidence that parenthood and retirement lead to significant lifestyle changes, including impacts of relevance to environmental sustainability. Against a backdrop of COVID19, we show how significant life events converge and shape the ways that individuals negotiate transitions, and the consequences for policies and interventions targeting sustainable lifestyle change.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

We conclude that the pathways and processes governing life change are complex, contingent, and culturally divergent. Existing conventions and assumptions underpinning life transitions and behaviour cannot adequately accommodate lived experience and behaviour change, and we outline prospects for novel pro-sustainable lifestyle interventions within an expanded theoretical framework.

Palavras-chave : retirement, parenthood, sustainable lifestyles, moments of change, life transitions