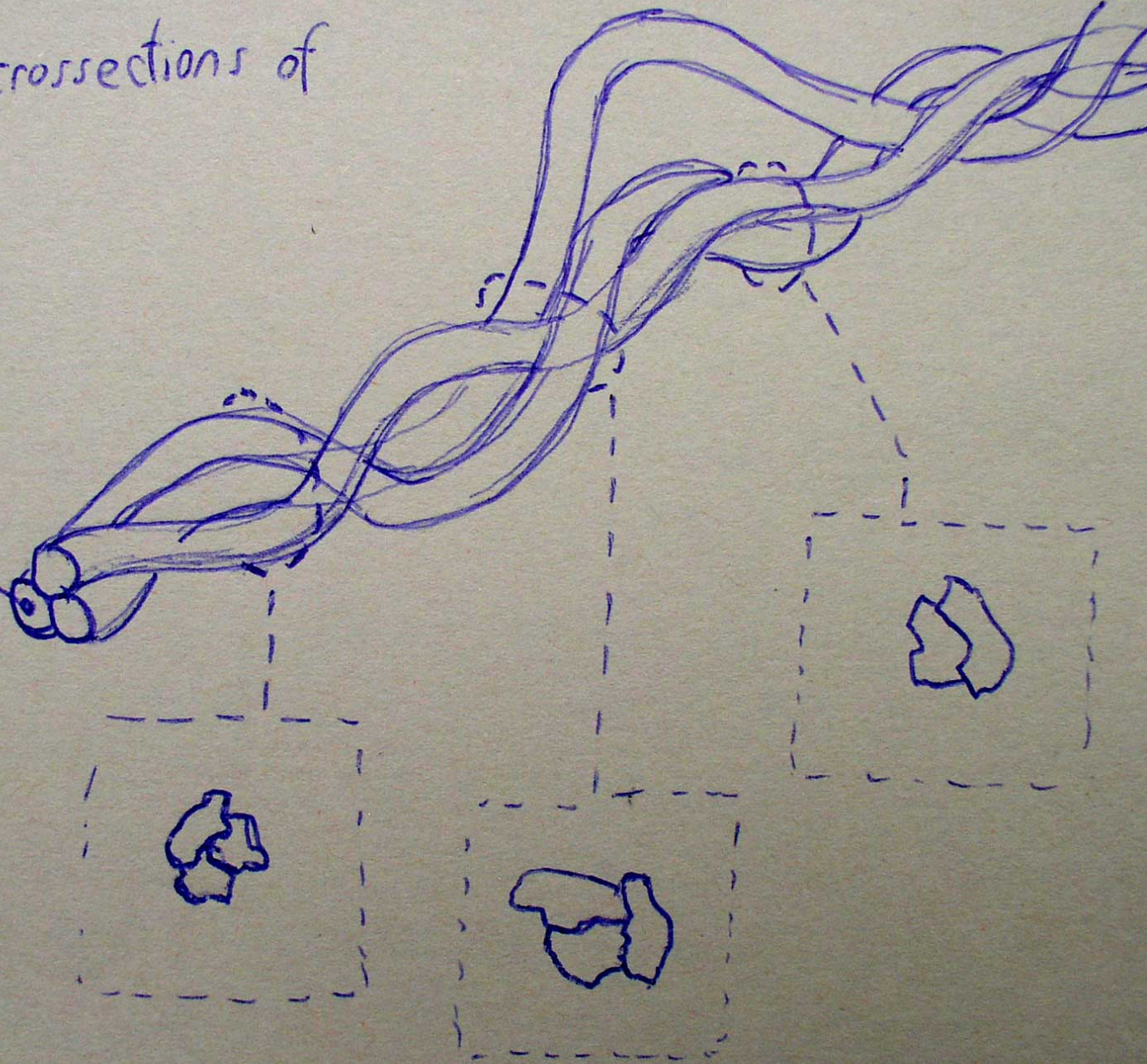Paths and crossections of practice

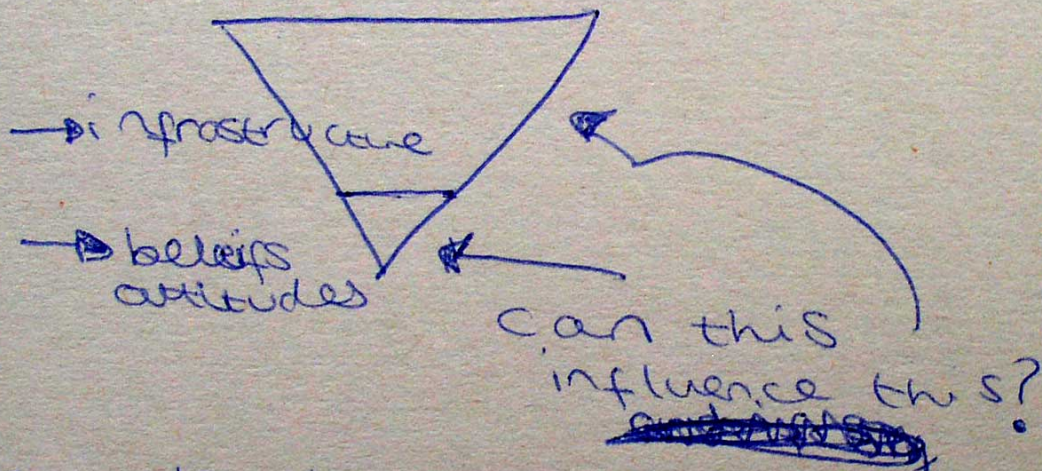elements of practice

McHardy

Dear SCCC working party members.

Can the triangle be inverted?

→ infrastructure

→ beliefs attitudes

can this influence this?

Is this the wrong or right question to ask?
So, are we looking at the wrong things? Is there 'quick wins' in ABC that can move the 'iceberg' along too?

social change climate change working party
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/shove/transitionsinpractice/tip.htm

SCCC working party members

Claire.

Showering appears to be a very interesting practice to study as we have demonstrated throughout this working party. However, is this practice not a too nice case to study? What other practices, also important for sustainable development could be analysed within the practice theory perspective?

We have noticed a range of motivation for showering – cleaning, relaxation, waking up – could you integrate this diversity of motivation into your experiments…?
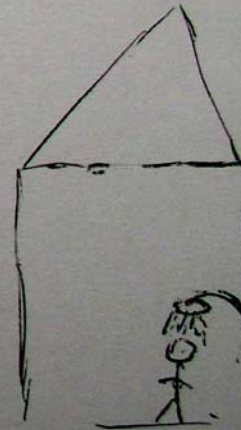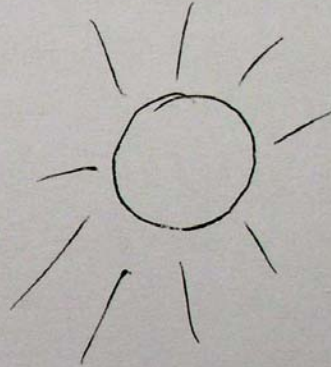
From Greg to Lenneke

Do you remember to have said to me in London in 1993 that having a shower per day is normal? I have the opportunity to talk about showering in England again, not for practical reasons (it is sunny, thank you), but for more theoretical ones. One of our questions is to explore why this normal practice has not always been like this and how it could change.
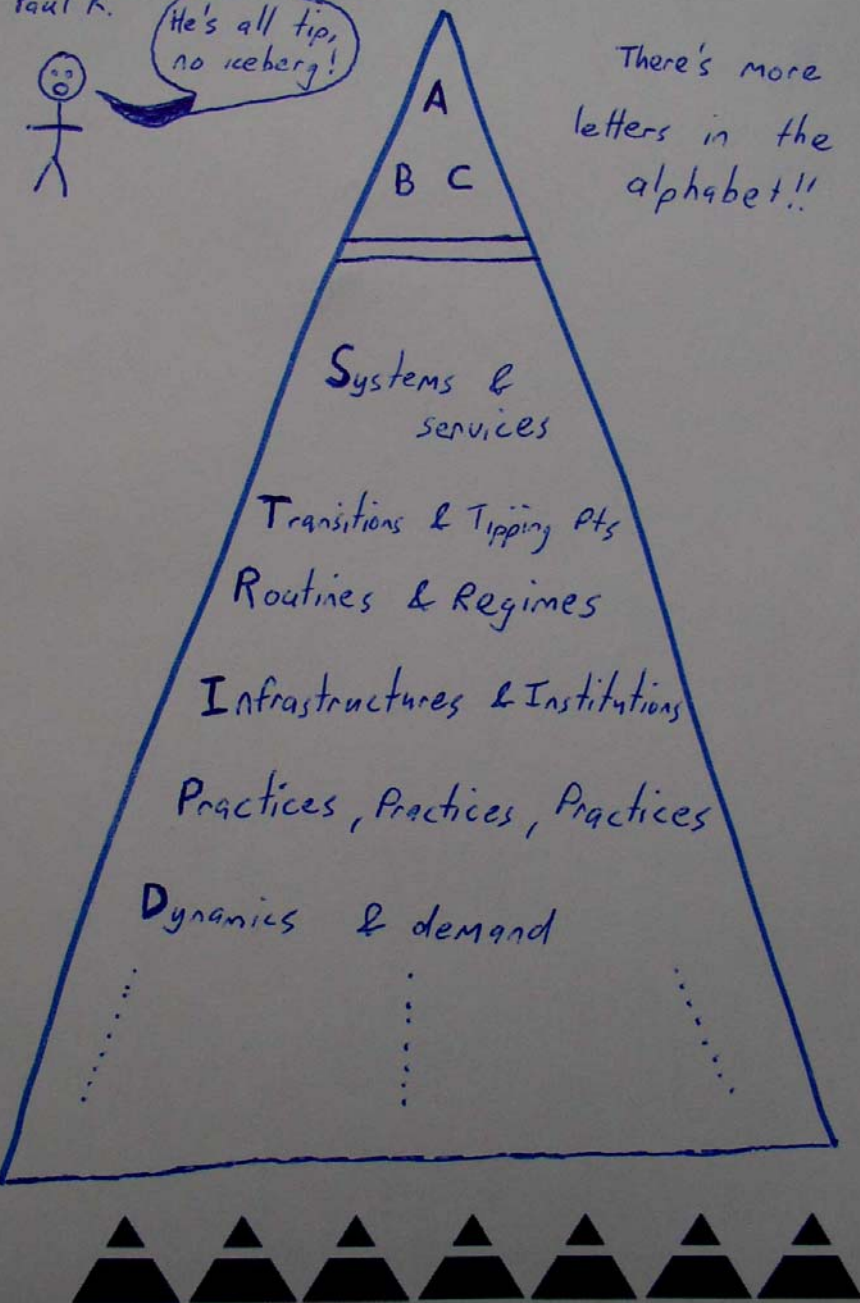
Paul K.

"He's all tip, no iceberg!"

There's more letters in the alphabet!!

A
B C

Systems & services

Transitions & Tipping Pts

Routines & Regimes

Infrastructures & Institutions

Practices, Practices, Practices

Dynamics & demand

After introducing ourselves via photographs of our bathrooms, we interviewed each other about our daily path and life bath of getting wet – very interesting exercise!

Those of you who saw Elizabeth's round table at ISF will know about her iceberg analogy – how research needs to move beyond ABC to find out about the rest of what goes into practices..

Stay tuned!

This morning I didn't have coffee until 11am. But the great ideas kept me wide awake. There were some very interesting, useful and powerful conceptual schemes – a few books to add to the reading list.

But I'm still waiting to have some more workable ideas on how to push this forward and make something out of new connections.

I'm wondering how can I think of Geels' dynamic multi level perspective on system innovations in relation to creative environments without falling into the 'creative industries sustainable innovations' mode of thought.

Pred is a bit easier in that sense, but also a bit more vague.
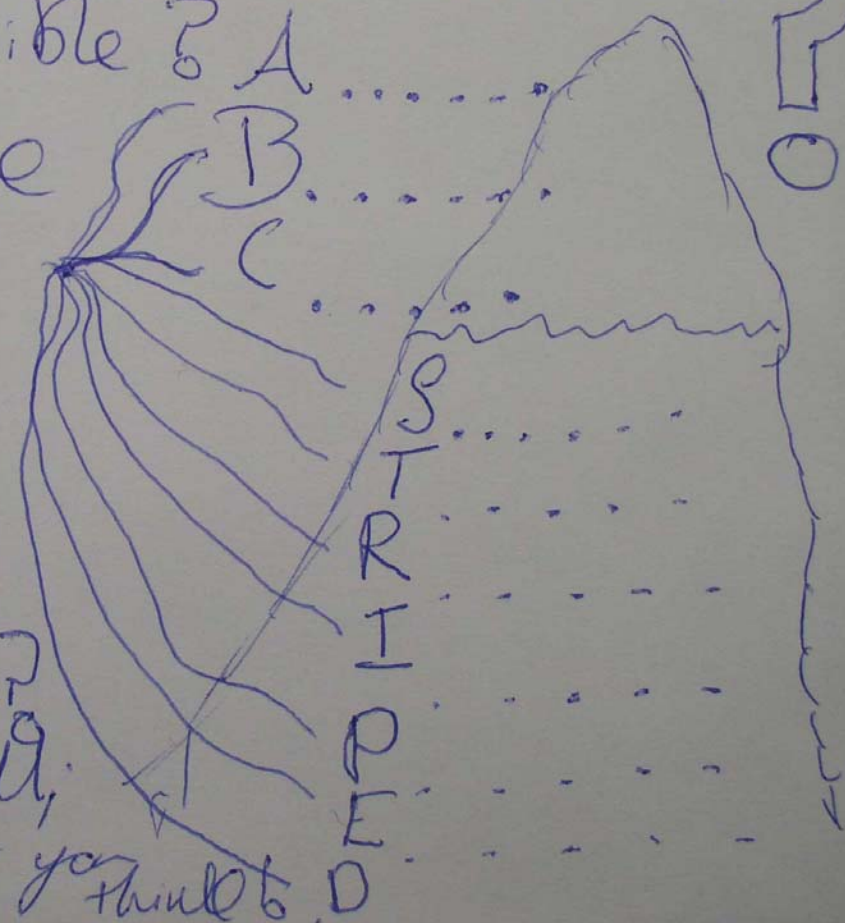
From Sergio
To Sergio

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ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Why are some factors behind practises invisible ? A........➤?
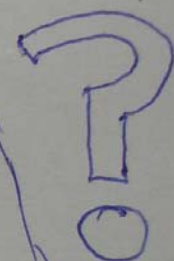
What are {B......➤
C......

these factors

How are these
related to
Social-Change
climate - change?
Hope you're well;
let me know what you think: D

S........
T......
R......
I......
P......
E......
D.......

What are the invisible factors behind practices?

Is it more important to learn and research the visible or the invisible?
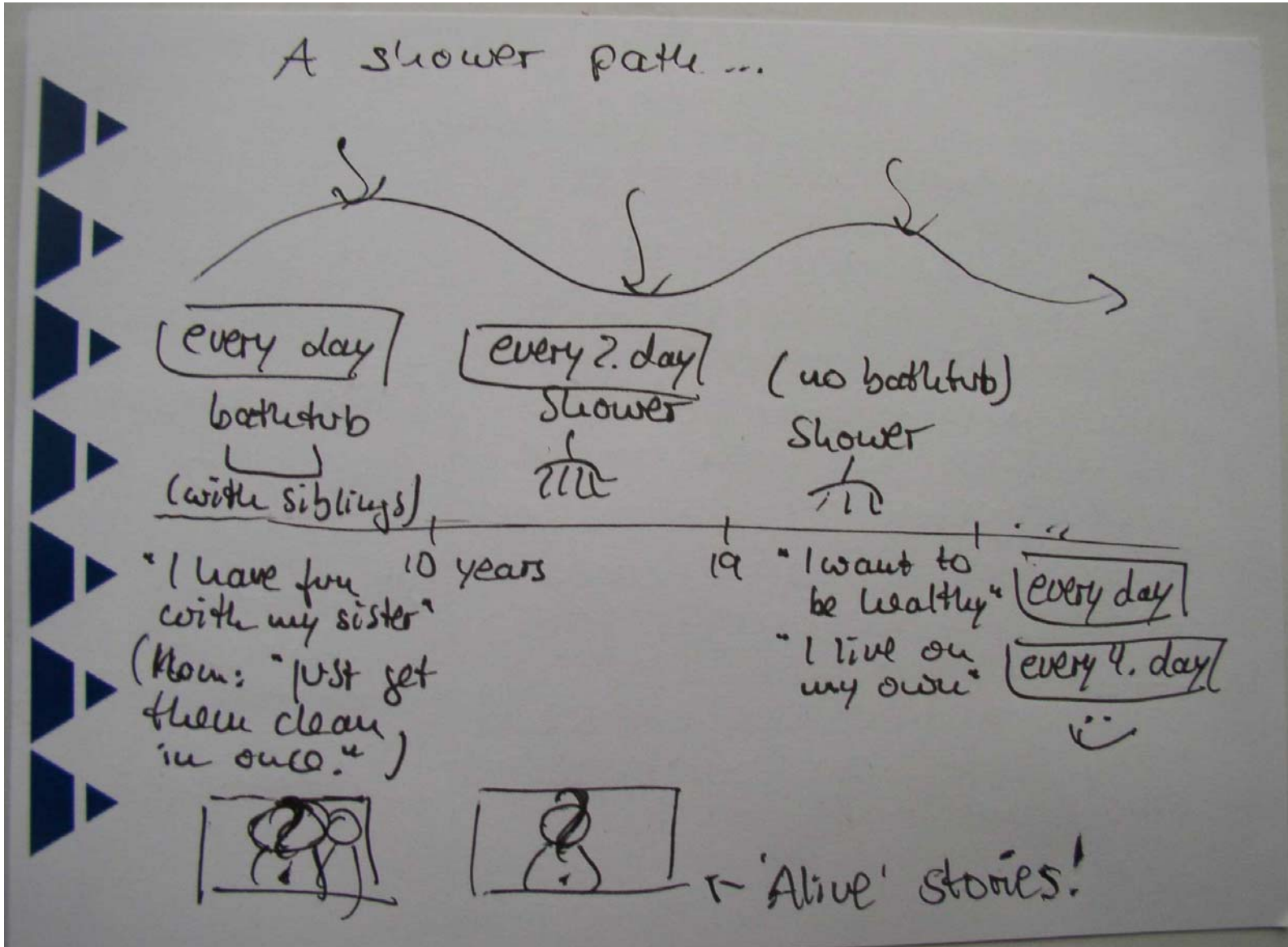
And what is the relationship between the two?

Who defines what researchers and theorists deem as factors of practice?

I'd really like to keep in touch between meetings – v interested in your work on Transition towns and would like to hear more about your methodology, theoretical framework, and also possibly swap references.
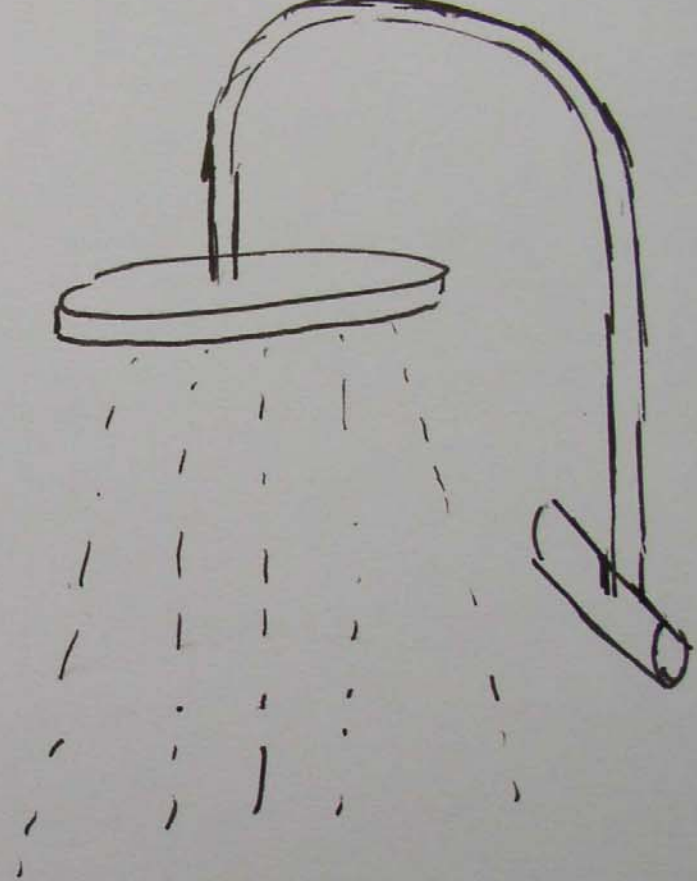
From Rachel
To Alexia

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We took the example of showering to discover how different the experience is and how much it depends on your life history/path and eg. infrastructure provided to you.

It becomes difficult to make a change if these practices are not looked at. I and others would really profit from your view.

A shower path...

every day
bathtub
(with siblings)

every 2. day
shower

(no bathtub)
shower

10 years   19

"I have fun with my sister"
(Mom: "just get them clean in once.")

"I want to be wealthy"   every day
"I live on my own"   every 4. day

— 'Alive' stories!

ownership

frequency

volume

All children are bathed by their parents: when do they start to shower and why? Is there anything to learn from different generations? Does showering become less attractive with age or is the current cohort of over 70s simply a group that never got the habit?

Practice may be interesting to think – how do people learn/acquire involuntary practices – things they have to learn because of some unchangeable event in their life history.
No choice, maybe even 'negative' attitudes such as the use of medical self treatment at home (Dialysis etc.).

People do become skilled very quickly, have to become to live further (Kilbourne 2009 PhD thesis, SPIRE)
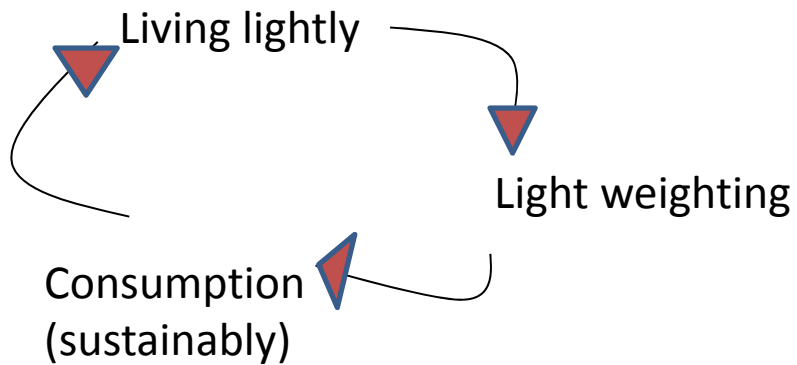
Can we learn from mechanisms at play in that case – a quick direct transition, change?
What is practice? in itself complex where is the boundary from simple performance to skill?

From Svenja
To Svenja

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"In his master's steps he trod . . . "

Thought Glimpse No. 2. re producing, manufacturing demand.

Living lightly

Light weighting

Consumption
(sustainably)

We've just been looking at Allen Pred's theory of social reproduction and the time geography of everyday life. His ideas amongst others at the conference really made me think about inter-related realms of practice and how careers of practices evolve and disappear but seem to also have connections.

Have you thought about/used these concepts/theories in your work?
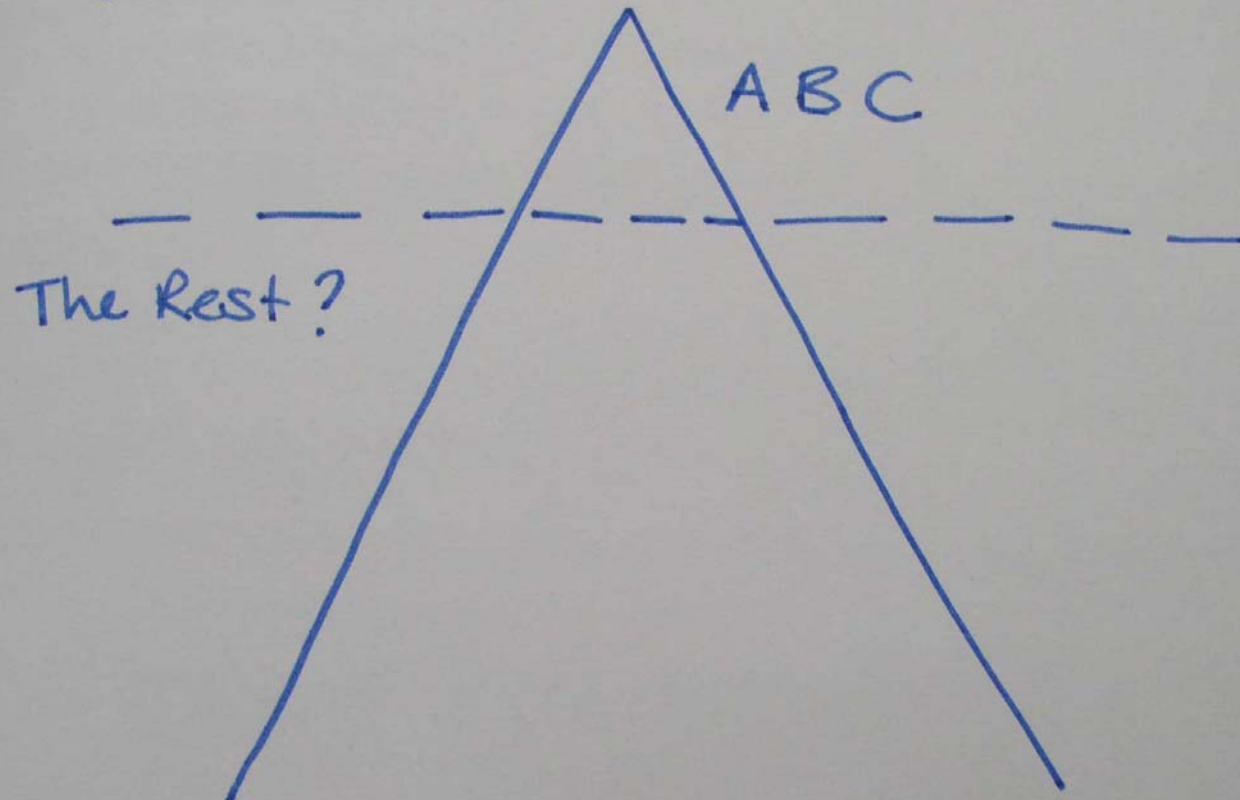
From Martin
To Mark

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I think there may be some interesting thoughts for the transitions movement. The focus has been and will be to draw on social theory to go beyond the 'ABC' of attitudes, behaviour and choice that currently dominate approaches to climate change through a focus on 'social practices'.

POLICY

ABC

The Rest ?
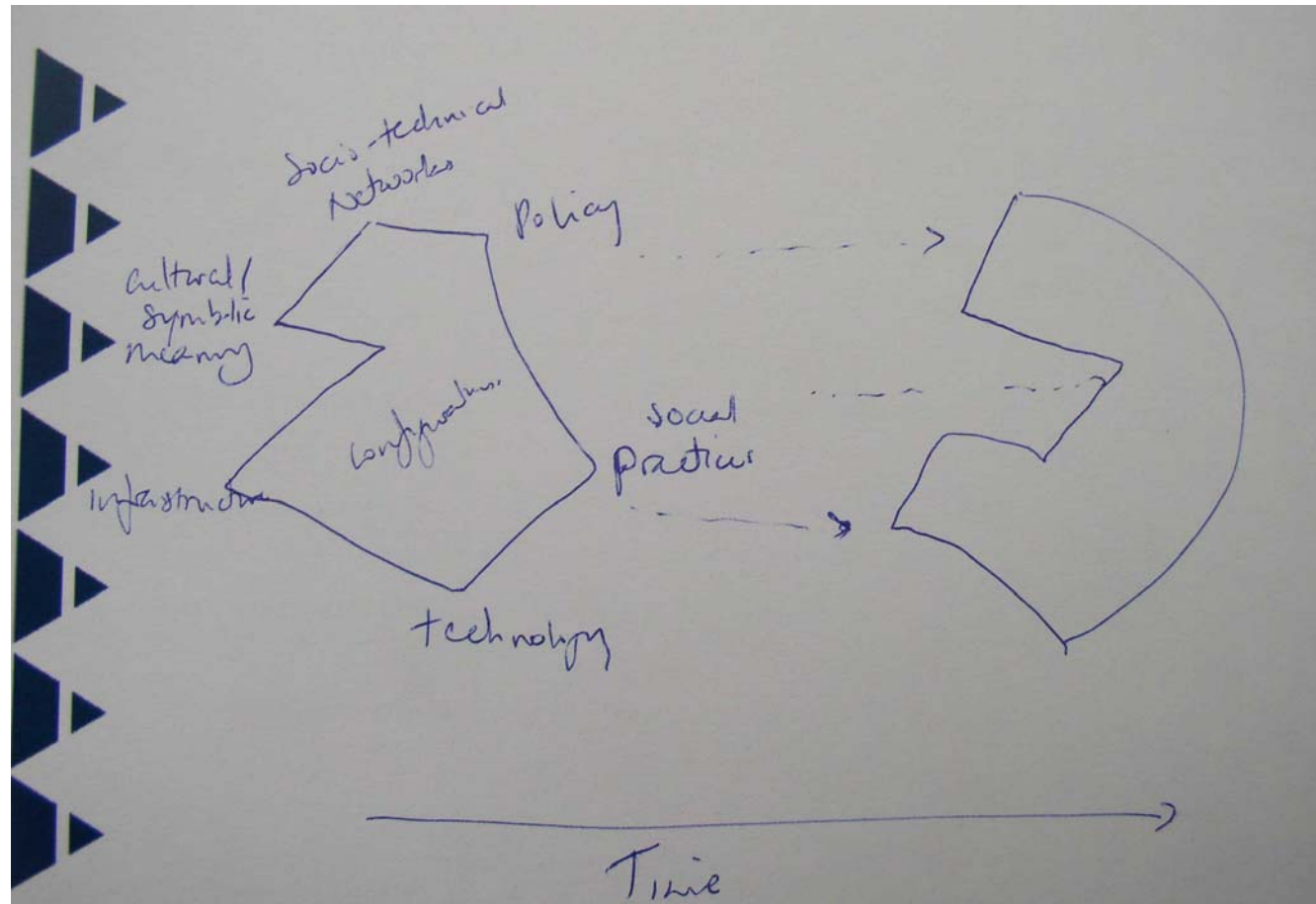
= _ i c _ o t _ m _ ?

Protestant ethic of sustainability,
Endogenous drivers vs external drivers.

Incompleteness of knowledge assumes there is a completeness of knowledge.
Meso/Pihg paper – how do hierarchical models deal with articulation?

Having a great time here with you all. I think it is fascinating to understand how our practices have evolved, the history and how and why we do what we do, BUT I'm missing the link as to how this can change practices in a more sustainable direction. In practice, how does understanding how we got here help change where we are headed, QUICKLY?

To the SCCC Working party

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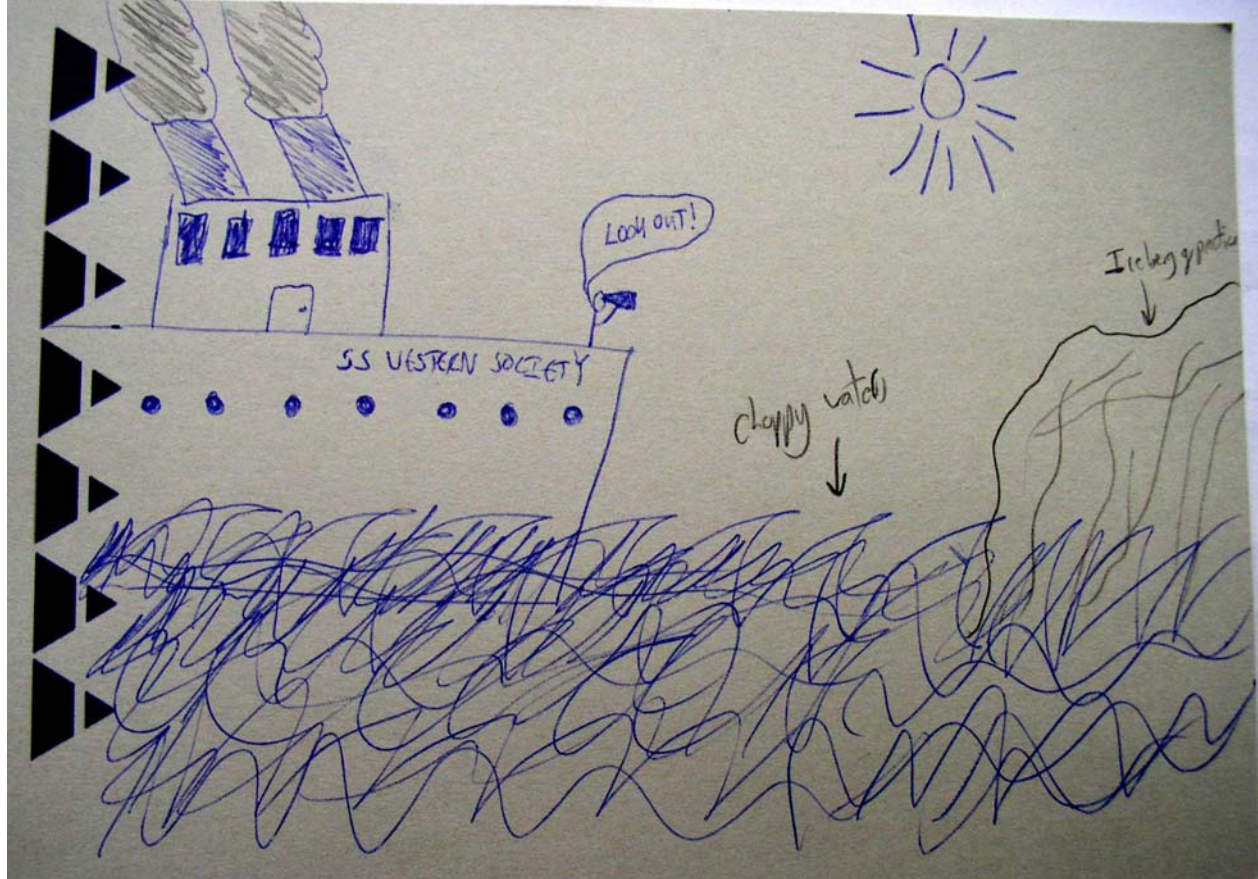
This morning we were presented with the idea that policy on behaviour change is premised on the rather narrow idea that somehow what we do is driven by Attitudes, which cause Behaviours over which we may exercise Choice (ABC). Instead the suggestion has been to use more than just the first three letters of the alphabet. To recognise that what we do is based around sociotechnical systems, transitions, routines, infrastructures and institutions, practice, and the dynamics of all these. Basically the message is that policy is addressing the tip of the iceberg and much more thought is needed when trying to reorient society towards sustainability. Interesting, eh? But I guess I'm writing to you to ask how we can move the whole iceberg before it melts into globally warmed oceans.

bundles bundles of practices entangle to make a lifepath

practice path/carrier

moment in a life path

practice dries out
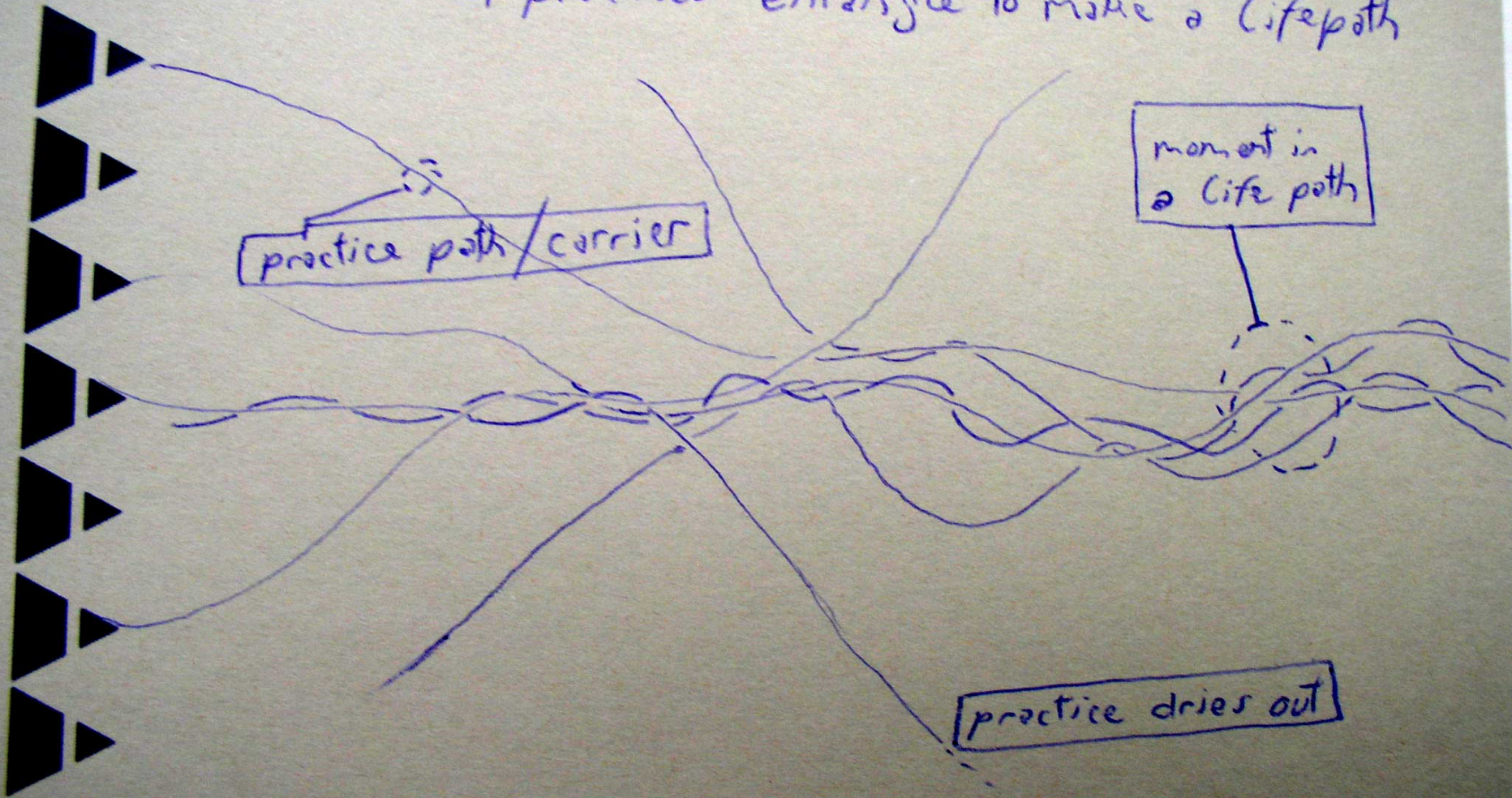
McHardy

ABC ..

Are indiviudals just specific entanglements of practice?

But what about institutions and power

C...

This leadership fellowship on climate change is raising a lot of questions about the relation between different social theories/paradigms and climate change policy.

Where could the role of social science be more widely discussed?

And how to work with and around the pervasive dominance of the ABC model, i.e. the focus on attitudes, behaviour and choice?

Why so much emphasis on the tip of the iceberg?

Have other social sciences failed? And if so, does this matter for the ESRC?

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From Elizabeth
To Paul

I am now fairly fed up with showering habits in practice and would rather look at models that can be reapplied valuably.

Another reason for thinking of you was that I'm reading Clay Shirky 'Here comes everybody: how change happens when people come together', which was prompted by the working party, and have become very interested in technology and coevolution - hope you read it and what do you think?.

From Berry
To Ruth
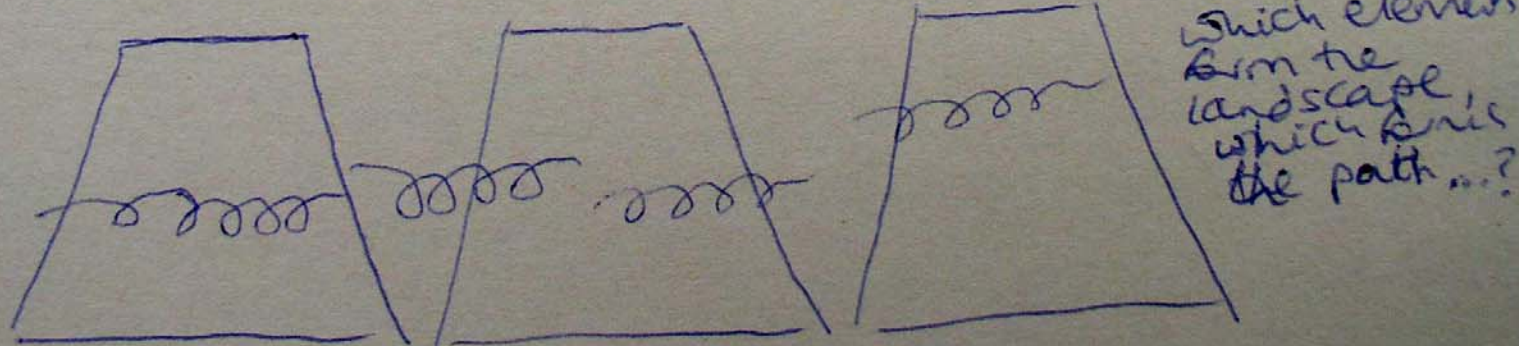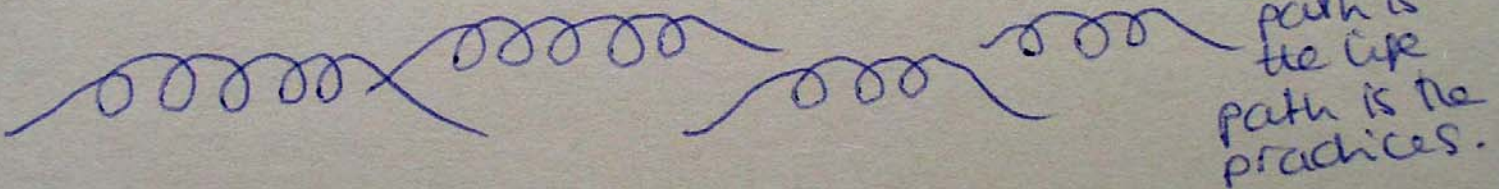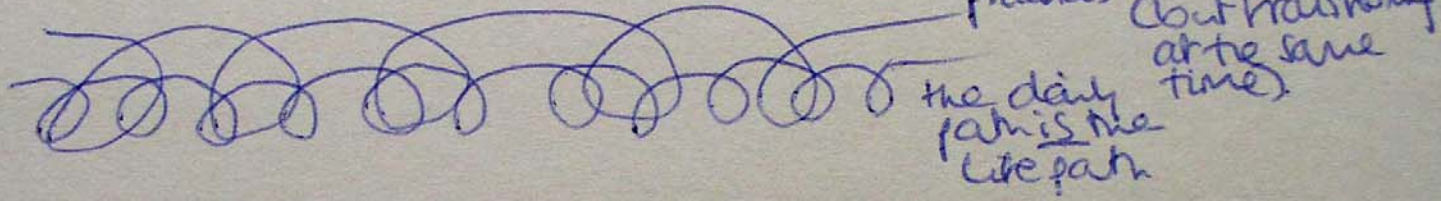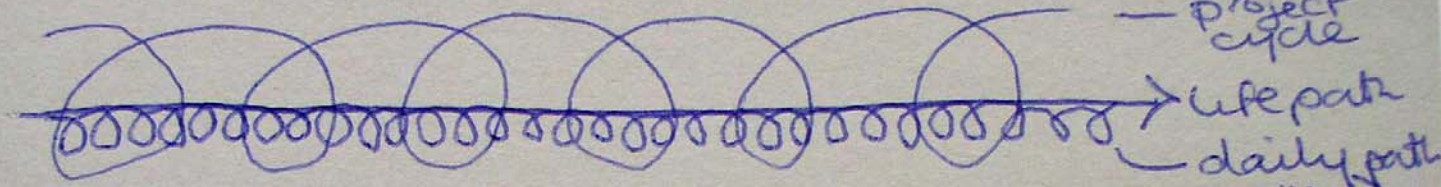
Can we have a model that is all path and is it any use?
Which elements from the landscape, which forms the path and what happens when we play around with these.
Where is the politics and the power in these models? Bye for now.

Can you tell me anything about the practice of showering and bathing amongst downshifters. Is this different since they downshifted?
This may seem strange but trust me, there is a point to all this.

We've been talking about social change – the possibilities of – in terms of the time space paths of individuals and how a particular practice may fall into or drop out of the life path depending on particular time-space trajectories.

From Jess
To Dave

Some of these do continue ←

A → B → C → D
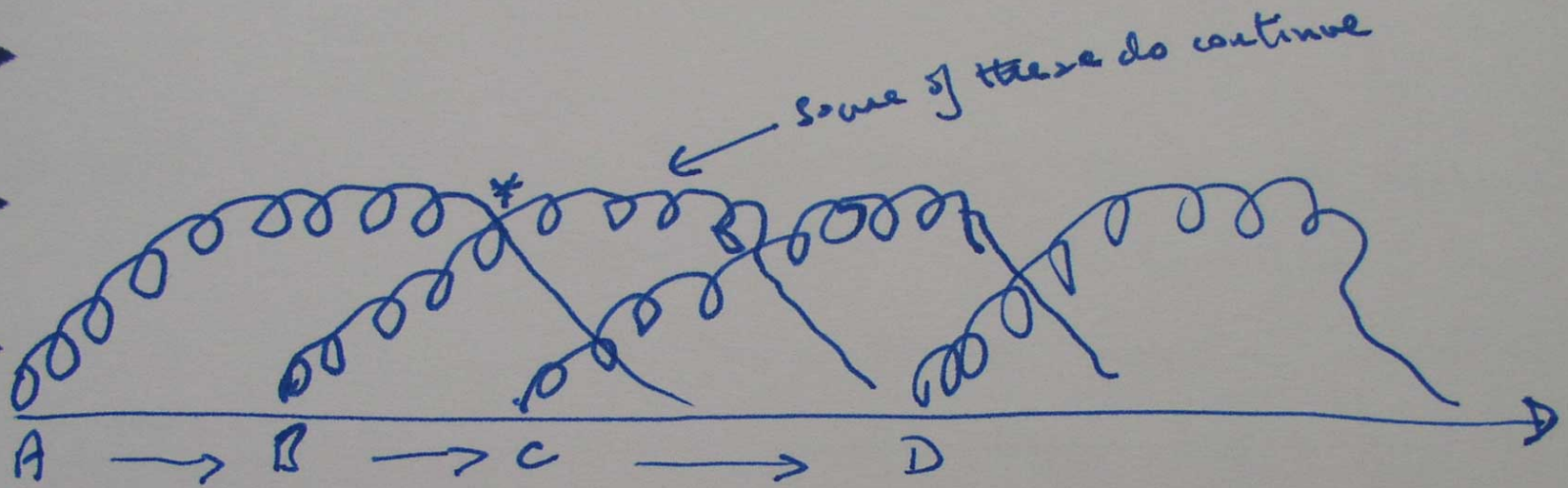
Works for life in every area: regular things we do from eating @ same time, getting up, shopping etc

*Don't notice fall-off as something else takes it's place – works through small increments not big revolutions.

Remind me to tell you about this workshop. Its got things we could use in what we do but it also has wider applications/implications. Key words to kick with me are: habits, practices, choices at the individual level, changing behaviour by understanding the bottom of the iceberg. BIG question for me is we can create the conditions but how do we make people move?

Dear Gordon

I've been interested to think about how Pred has suggested that over a lifecourse practices can be picked up and shed as people come into contact with different institutions. How much of practices is then the result of different institutional powers and rhythms collecting in the same lifecourse?

Are daily practices largely the result of contested resources such as time being drawn upon by different institutions?

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From ?
To Gordon
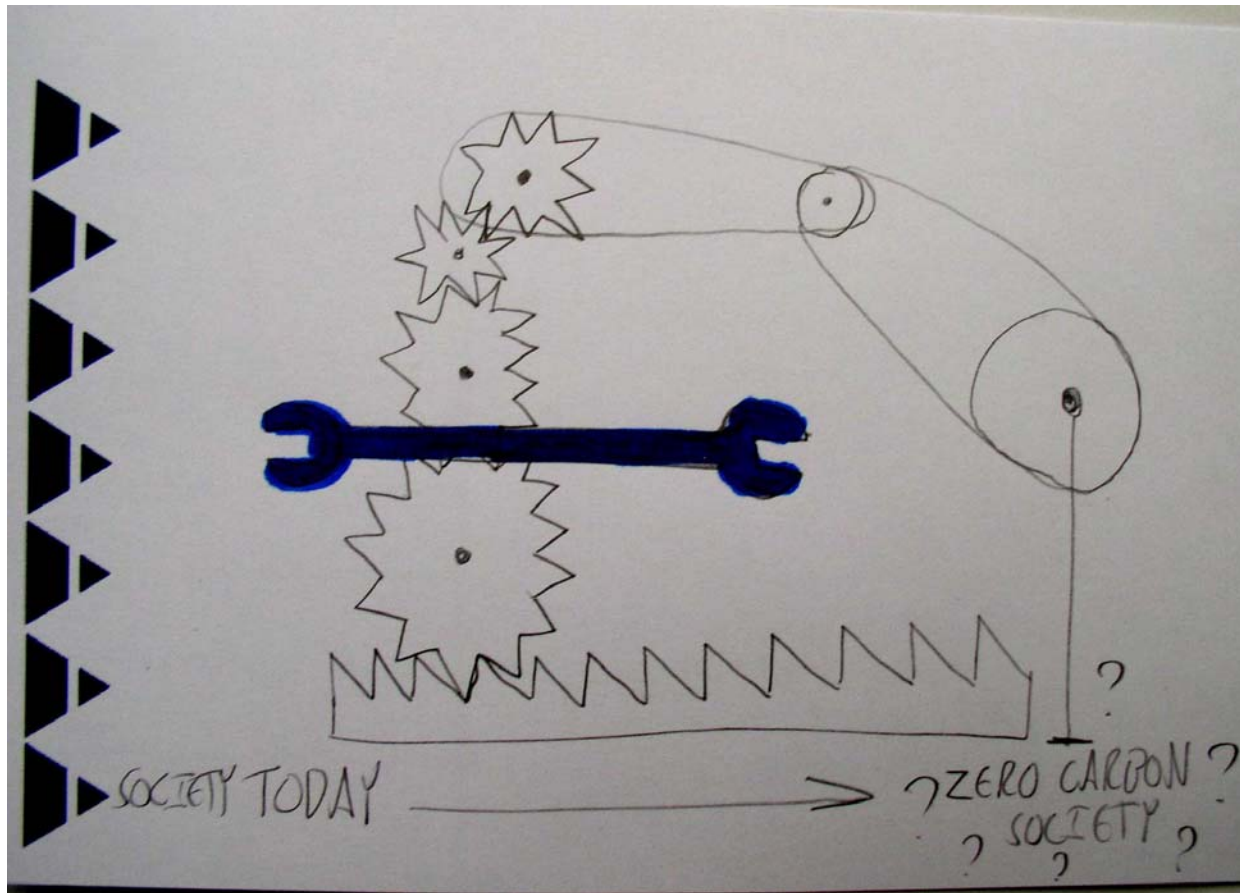
This morning we heard some great ideas about how technologies, ideas/discourses and different kinds of routines and skills are linked together and co-evolve in the course of social change. We've also been thinking about how what I do today is at least in part who I have been with, where I've lived etc. It makes me want to ask you how these sorts of ideas figure in your work, and particularly in relation to how behaviours can be changed in response to climate change. Any chance you could share your thoughts on how social change happens?
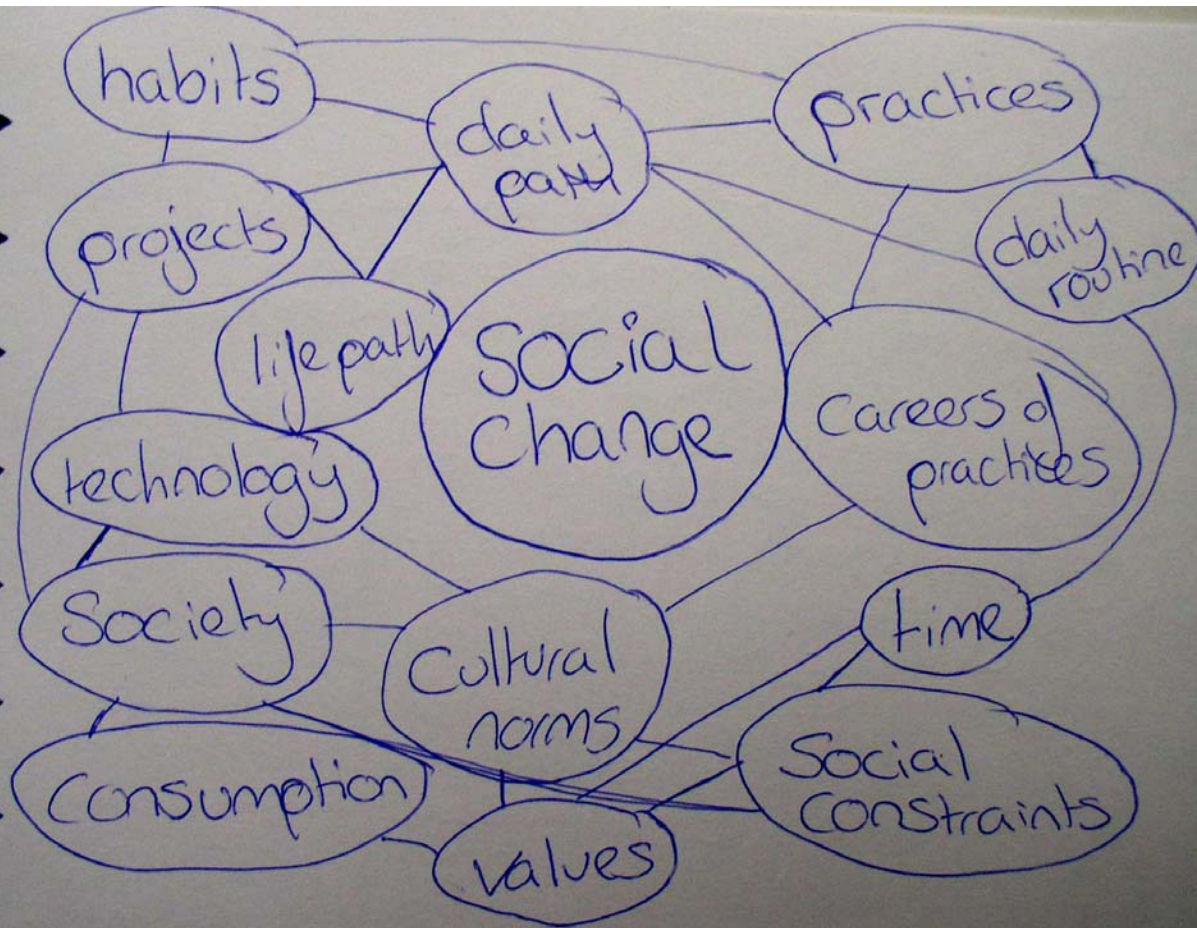
Working party 'Thought Glimpse' No. 1

From Andrew
To Rachel

Behaviours are conceptualised as new each time they are performed.

Practices have a continuous path of their own; we reconstruct them based on how they have been performed in the past, and that performance shapes how they can be reconstructed in the future.

Habit may offer a rapprochement.

Dear reader,

I am currently in a state of confusion and would very much appreciate your thoughts on any of the topics mentioned on this card. In particular I am struggling to grasp ideas regarding the co-evolution of society and technology. Surely technology creates social change. However it also seems changes in cultural norms and discourses seem to produce new technologies. Where do habits, practices and social change fit in? Any help you could give would be gratefully received.

A quick reference, Pred, A. 1981, Social reproduction and the time-geography of everyday life, 63B (1): 5-21.
Two paths: daily path, life path
Practices 'carry' particular paths but are reflexive and prone to change
Practices always occur in some institutional framework
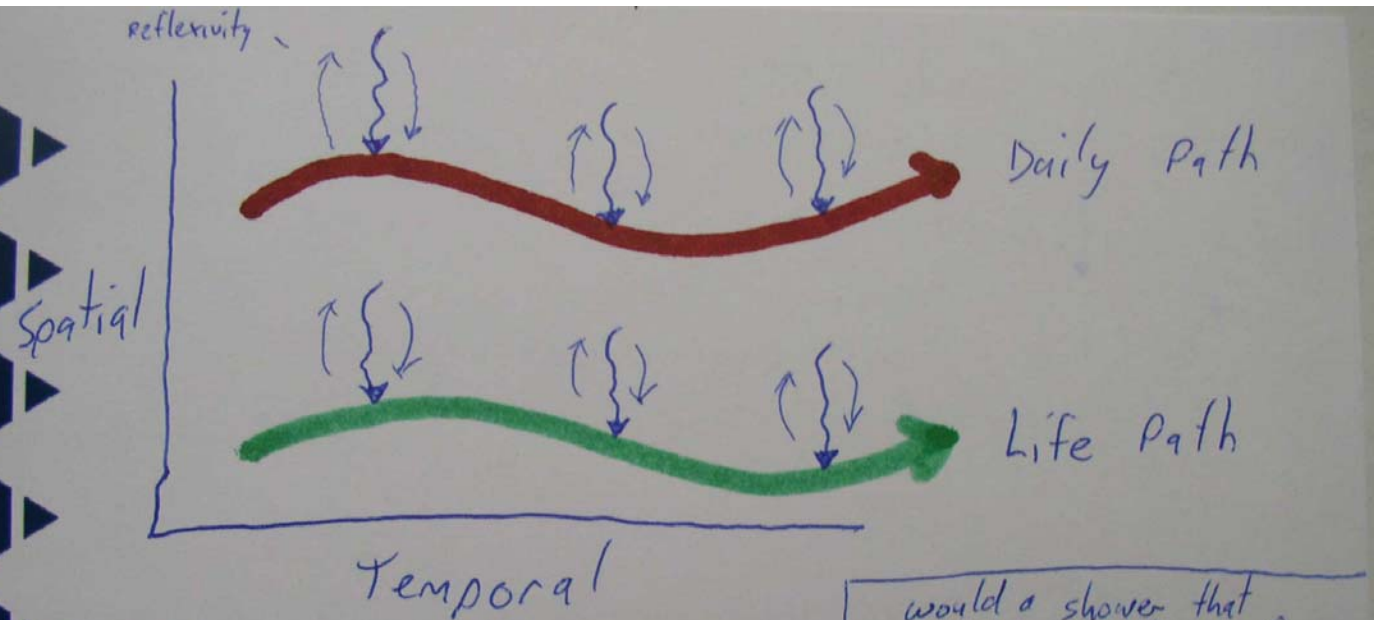
Hi again Dave

Here is your next instalment from
the social change group. We've
been thinking about how social
change might happen.

What do you think?.. Can change
be governed? How do you imagine
the social changes and ambitions
of downshifting becoming more
mainstream?

Is there a role for theory in
bringing about social change?

From Jess
To Dave

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e.g. of a bath shower path

Alexia's articulation described a psychological model of change re environmental behaviour that took the individual and communities through a 12 step process of change. But this suggests the problem lies with individuals and communities. The bath shower paths and bath diaries show things to be more complex than this. Our practices of showering depend on the material resources available, other practices with which showering intersects, and the intersection of individual and institutional projects with these everyday … all standard Pred stuff. The bath shower paths also showed that cohort has an effect. Childhood-teenager-adult-parenthood; changing priorities and work routines. The ideas of bathing/showering at different stages also have an effect and suggest that showering has a strong moral career, also reflected in the vunerability/embarrassment felt by some that their showering practice might not be 'normal' or might not meet others moral standards.
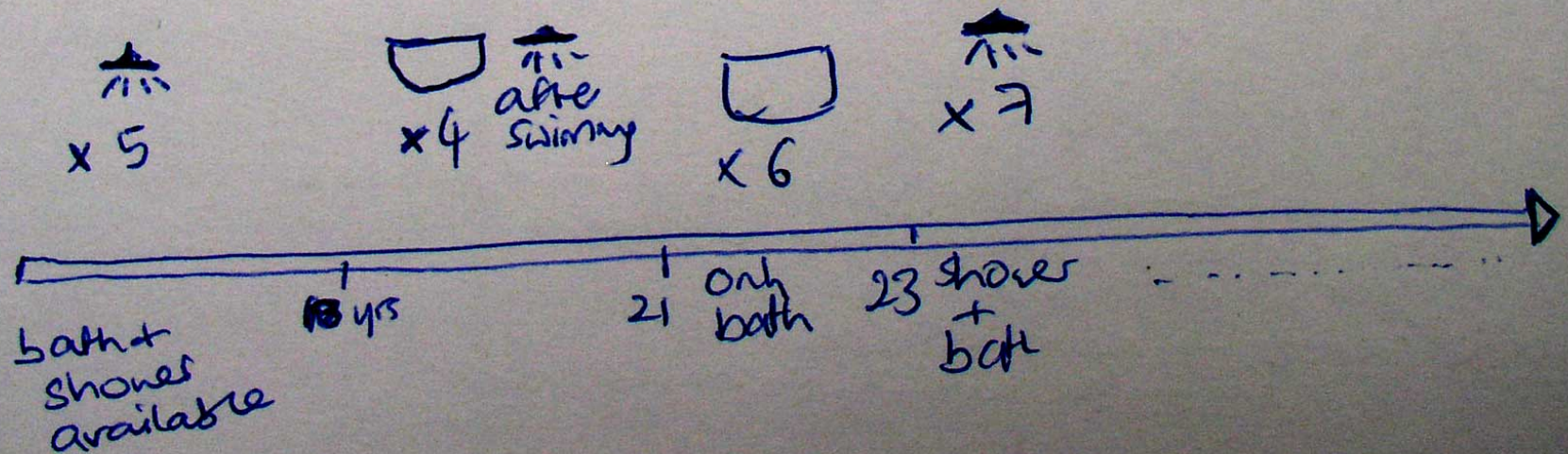
WHAT IS PART OF THE LANDSCAPE / WHAT HAS A PATH

Practice

ROLE

daily path

Life path

PROJECT
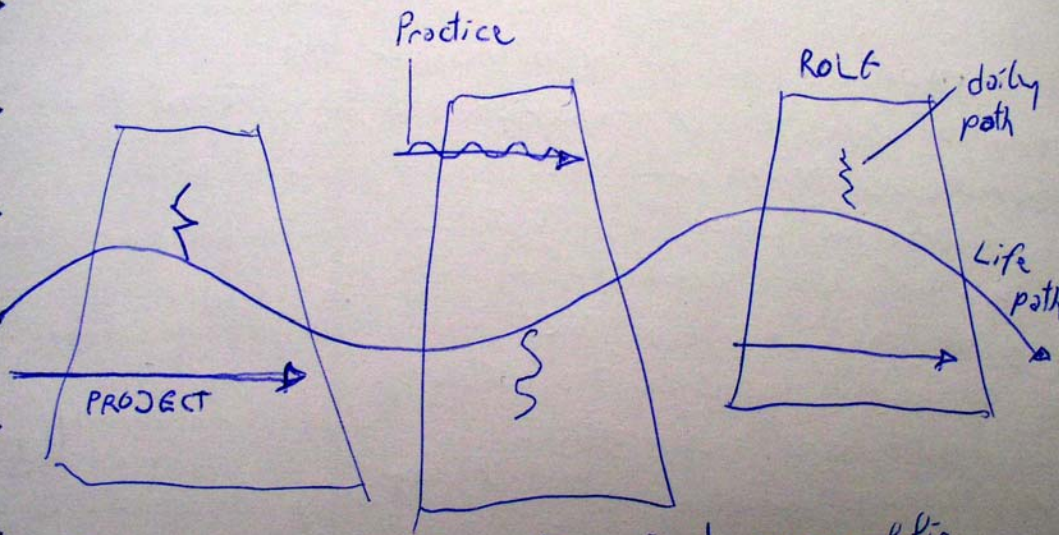
Do we need a three dimensional representation to show spatial relation of different elements and to show practices-path + individual life path and how the intersegut

---

Dear practitioner
It is very nice here.

Centre stage takes the idea of a lifepath through space time that hold together in a nice clean manner, the chaos of life that is conceptualised as different kinds of landscapes through which the lifepath is structured and which it gives structure to. The landscape consists of directed projects and institutional roles that are in turn shaped by the pathways of practitioners and practices.

What remains puzzling to me is why projects and roles are conceptualised as stable because surely everything has a lifepath of its own.

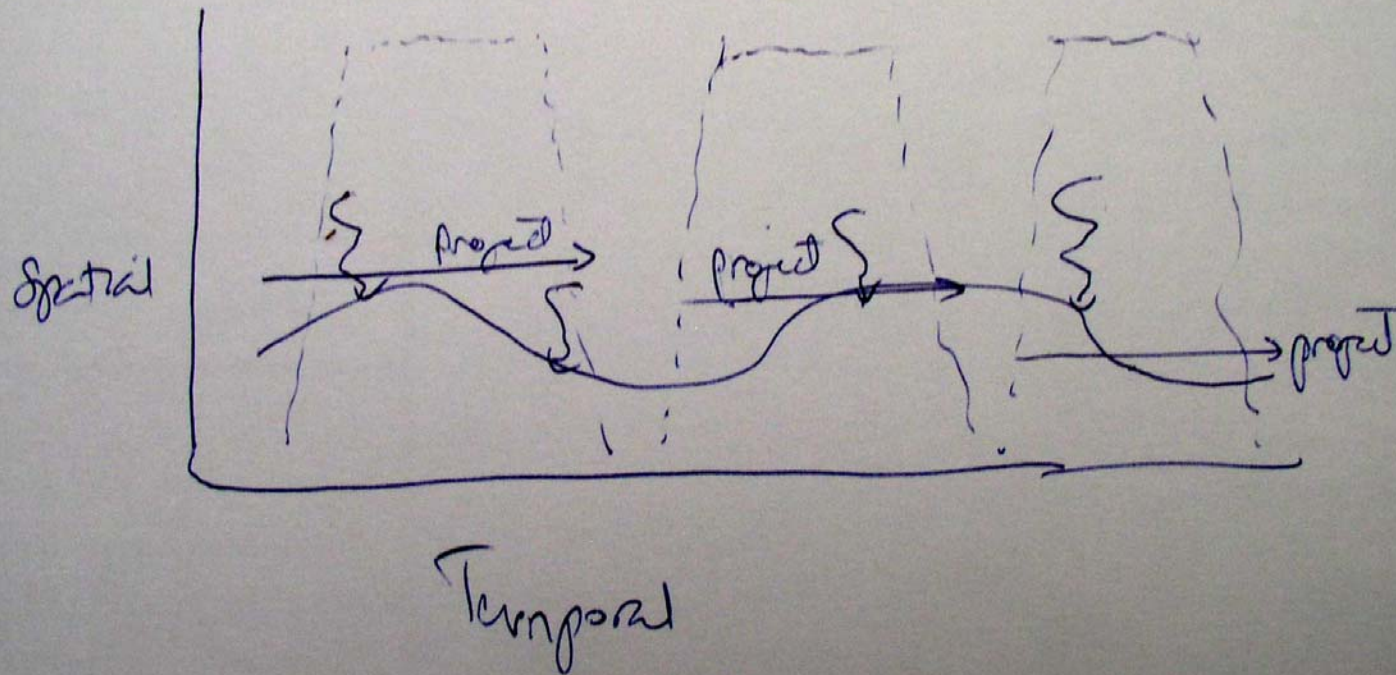I used to think that my habit of taking deep, hot baths wallowing in them with tea, chocolate and a book – quite regularly, was my naughty, high-carbon treat (and justify it as my last high-carbon treat since I've given up flying, don't drive, etc.). I'm heartened to discover that taking a bath every 2-3 days is less bad than taking a power shower every few days or an electric shower every day.

On the other hand I have two friends who, because of their ethical concerns only ever have strip washes. So compared to them then I'm not doing well.

From ?
To someone who couldn't come

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Time / space paths of individuals

Spatial

Project   Project   project

Temporal

We were just discussing some unpublished work into the practice of cycling and how this changes over a life course depending on personal/contextual circumstances.

I was wondering whether your research throws any light on this?

We are doing some very interesting work up here looking at time-geography and the paths of activities. We should talk about this in the context of behaviour change and how attitudes may be related to it.
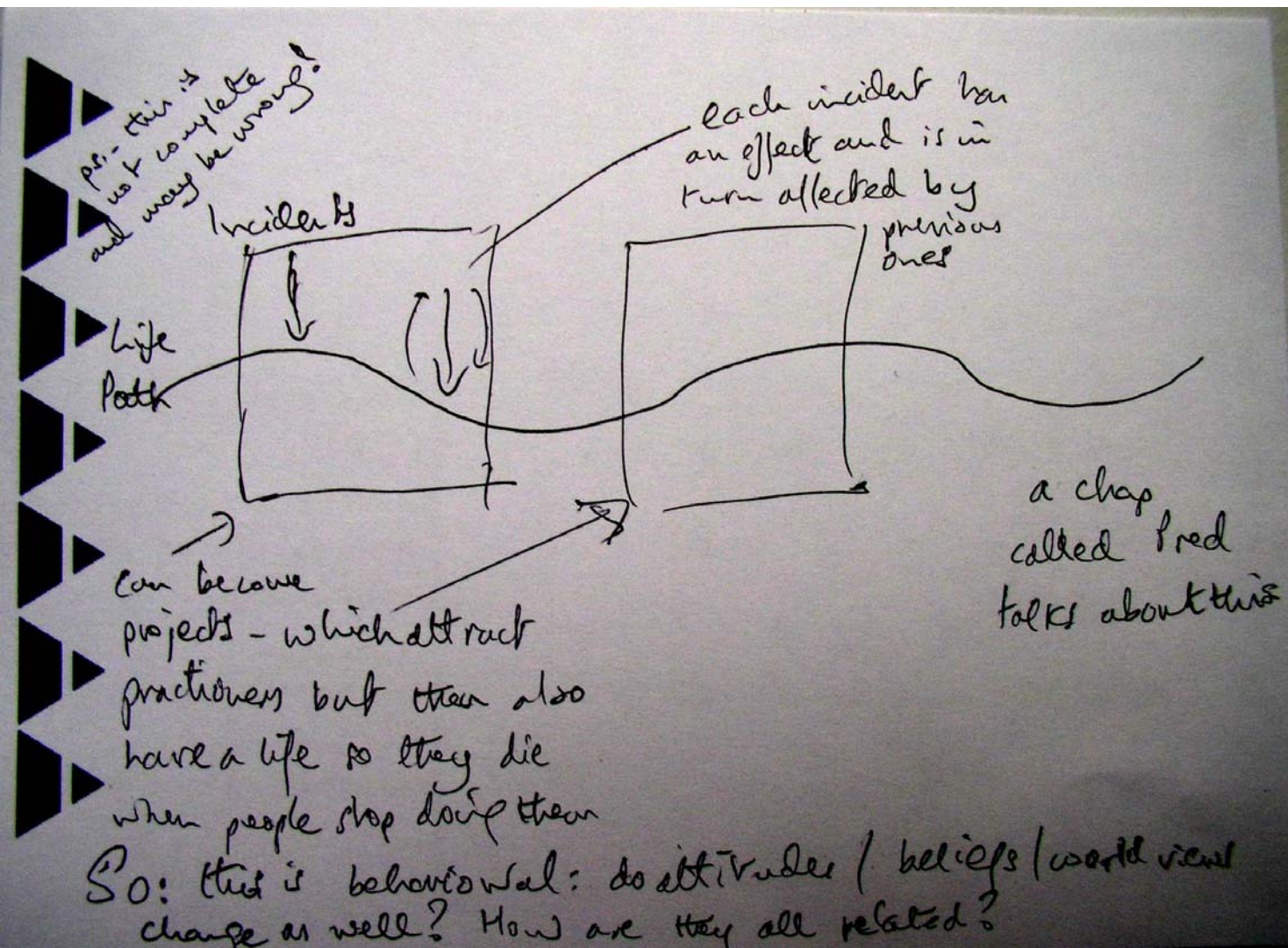
Dear Martin

Wish you were here. 21 people have explored patterns of showering. This exercise raised all sorts of questions of overlapping temporalities e.g. careers over a life path, over a week, over centuries.

We never thought about this or about the temporal rhythm of the practice. Do you have any thoughts or references on these issues of intersecting temporal scale and how this might constitute a form of 'path dependence' in its own right?

Answers on a postcard please.

Next paper: explaining showering careers?
The life path under water?

From Elizabeth
To Martin

	AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY	SOCIETY VIEW	INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS
	No Cars	Local Life	Walk only
	Horses + Cars for rich	Poor Local Rich Travel	walk, omnibus cycle rare Car
	All Cars	Car dependant locations	Always drive

"PROGRESS"

If the combination of availability of electric showers, the social attitude away from Henry 8th's bath once a year and the individual pressure to 'grab a quick shower' are influences on water use, then can we use this style of sociological analysis to influence car use?
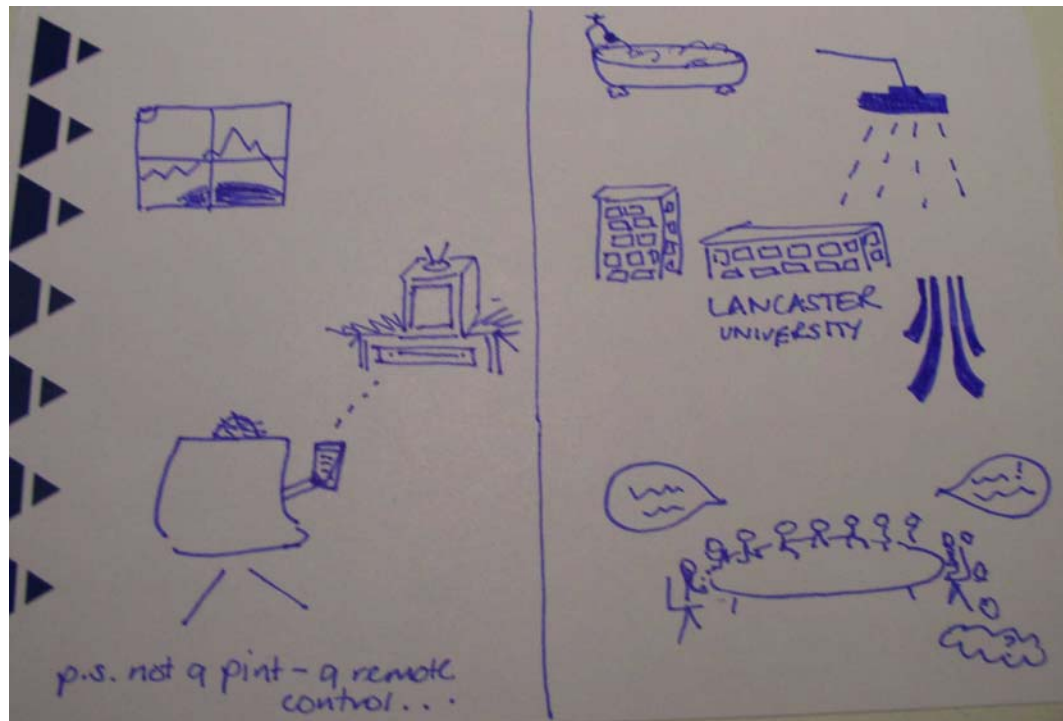
1. The nature of the questions we ask is REALLY important, and who we ask
2. Will we ever understand what is normal and should we?
3. Are 'behaviours' too narrow a definition
4. Why do I always or typically drive to work but will no longer take environmentally damaging flights?

I have only recently realised how my most important life projects have been influenced, if not determined at times, by the (seemingly) unrelated projects of socially dominant institutions.

What I did not know, until today, as how mapping my life long showering practices was so revealing of my projects and, to some extent, the influence of those institutions and their projects.

So if, as Pred says, 'social transformation and altered structural relations can only occur through the introduction, disappearance or modification of institutional projects' (1981: 17) I shall pay more attention to my showering as it reveals, everyday, the originality or predictability of my life projects.

Hoping you are well projected and showered.

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From Sergio
To ?