Introduction: Everyday Futures as an Area of Research

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Everyday Futures does not yet exist as an established field of research, but it is an area ripe for development. Envisioned futures of work, the home, transport and energy all make assumptions about, and have far reaching implications for everyday lives that are seldom explored (Timms et al., 2014, Strengers, 2013). Future everyday life is certain to be different from today, but how is it shaped in the present, how might such futures be made differently, and what theories and methods would be required to do this?

This Everyday Futures essay collection brings a range of concepts and methods to bear on these questions, exploring what everyday futures are, and how and why they might form the starting point for a new research agenda. The essays develop discussions initiated at the Everyday Futures Workshop held at the Institute for Social Futures, Lancaster University in July 2016. Connecting all the authors, including ourselves, is a commitment that future everyday lives should be foregrounded in futures work. The essays that follow reflect our initial conversations on this topic. They demonstrate that multiple conceptualisations of 'the everyday' and 'the future' exist. Moreover, it is through recognising and bringing together these concepts in different combinations for specific purposes that 'the future everyday' can be developed as a useful area of inquiry.

In one sense the everyday refers to the repetitive and routine. The future is already here in the present and attention is drawn to the social structures and practices which are perpetuated into the future, through everyday action. This is taken up in Chatterton and Newmarch's contribution. By looking at social, temporal and spatial inequalities they speculate on how futures may be made in ways that are beneficial to those who are often excluded from official narratives of change. Ebrey and Moussaoui offer their reflections on how ethnographic methods including biographical interviews, multi-sited ethnography, observations and diaries might reveal the processes through which future-oriented practices operate, and the possible futures of practices in everyday life. The piece by Harrison and Mackey also resonates with this approach. They reflect on their own search for manifestations of future sustainable and digitally enhanced clothing practices in the present.

In a second formulation, 'the everyday future' might refer to an imagined future state of affairs – akin to More's 'Utopia' (More, 1516), and the everyday lives which are implied, or made explicit in these models. Welch, Keller and Mandich illustrate the types of critique that social theory can offer to contemporary visions of the future produced by organisations, think tanks and Government. Their contribution looks in detail at the imagined workings of 'The Circular Economy' and explores whether and how everyday life is represented and implied. Using a similar approach, Marcore and Spurling's detailed case study of a planned community garden in Italy explores why such planner's models often have unintended consequences in practice.

In a third formulation, the everyday, rather than referring to the repetitive and routine, might instead draw attention to issues of temporal scale. The everyday – or diurnal cycle – is one such scale amongst others, all of which might usefully be brought to futures research. How we inhabit our homes and cities varies depending on hours of light and dark (Dunn, 2016), with the cycles of the seasons (Ingold, 2008, 2010), as well as the schedules and timetables of institutions like work and school (Walker, 2014). Such temporal variety does not appear in many future visions, which are often synchronic, fixed in (future) time. In this sense, the 'everyday' invites the study of such

variations in everyday life in different countries and cultures, and in urban, suburban and rural environments. Such more fine-grained analysis has implications for which futures are possible, plausible and preferable (Urry, 2016) in different places.

Finally, everyday futures can capture how people's everyday actions take place in temporal structures of past-present-future (Luhmann, 1976). Here the focus might be on how time horizons vary between generations, societies and social groups (Zeiderman, A., 2016). The production and implications of these different time horizons for present everyday lives is a pertinent topic in current contexts of austerity, and can help to reveal how 'the future' is unevenly distributed across societies and around the world. For example, whether a home is owned or rented creates different time horizons of the future, and how lives are imagined and lived within it. Touching on this idea, Timan and Ellsworth-Krebs use digital methods to explore contemporary DIY in the Netherlands and the UK, focussing on which near futures of the home such methods might reveal.

Taking the relationship between past-present-future in a slightly different direction, Wright and Pooley provide an accessible overview of methods and sources for studying everyday pasts and past futures, and reflect on these histories as sources for understanding presents and shaping futures. Gatherer, Kuijer and Nilstad Pettersen draw on an historical exploration of the use of data in decision making, to reveal the processes of quantification and de-contextualisation of everyday judgments which futures of big data might hold. Marcore and Spurling also draw on an historical analysis, to explore how practices of domestic food growing have endured and waned across time, suggesting the importance of cultural heritage (and of what is considered to be cultural heritage) for futures of everyday life.

The variety of relationships between past-present-future is also driven home if we consider practices that actively set about to create change – such as planning, designing and making. Such approaches challenge the everyday as the repetitive and routine, instead viewing the present as a potential turning point between the past and the future (Luhmann, 1976). This view opens up horizons and makes multiple futures possible. Meadow and Kouw's aim is to design methods which emphasise this openness and plurality of the future. Different futures will have different winners and losers, and an analysis of who these winners and losers are, the production of multiple visions and the conditions of their realisation enables, they argue, more inclusive future design.

By bringing a range of questions, concepts and methods to bear on the question of 'what is the everyday future?', and why it might be an explicit focus of research and debate, the authors in this volume bring a broad spectrum of topics to the table. The essays that follow share our initial conversations, from which a rich programme of research has begun to emerge. We hope you enjoy it.

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