ESRC End of Award Report

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the grant reference as the email subject, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. We reserve the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Reference</th>
<th>RES-062-23-2252</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title</td>
<td>If the Shoe Fits: Footwear, Identification and Transition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Start Date</td>
<td>6.9.2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant End Date</td>
<td>5.9.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Amount Expended</td>
<td>£ 401,830.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant holding Institution</td>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Holder</td>
<td>Professor Jenny Hockey</td>
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<td>Grant Holder's Contact Details</td>
<td>Address: Email:</td>
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<td>Co-Investigators (as per project application):</td>
<td>Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Victoria Robinson</td>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
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1. **Non-technical summary**

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by us to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. [Max 250 words]

1. Identity transitions were this project’s primary focus, with shoes providing a vehicle for exploring the living out of identities across the life course and on an everyday basis. We chose footwear to reflect the importance of the body to identity, since shoes contribute to how we stand, move and get about, influencing our daily work and leisure activities. After discussion groups with people from different backgrounds in the north of England, 15 were selected for year-long case-study work. They gave us a tour of their shoes, made an inventory of them, kept a 3-week log of their pattern of shoe-wearing, chose an activity for us to film where they wore a typical pair, took us shoe shopping, made a scrapbook about their relationship with shoes, and discussed these activities during three interviews. Rich data illuminated, among other things: the transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood and the importance of income to exercising control over shoe choice; shoes’ role in young people’s experimentation with different identities; links between particular types or brands of shoes and chronological age that revealed four different responses to growing older; femininity as something women chose to display at times, as one aspect of their identity. While fairy tales and popular culture stimulated our interest in shoes and transformation, and marketing figures suggested a major growth in fashion shoe consumption, what our project highlights is footwear’s longer standing contribution to the everyday transitions through which gender, ethnicity, age and class-based identities are reproduced and resisted.

2. **Project overview**

**a) Objectives**

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to us. [Max 200 words]

1. To provide a more nuanced understanding of how (internal) self-definition and (external) definitions of oneself offered by others synthesise during processes of identification.
2. To generate empirical data through which to engage theoretically with debates around reflexive self actualisation as an aspect of identification.
3. To examine the embodied experience of transition between social categories and between categories of experiences.
4. To develop understanding of the nature of agency within processes of transition.
5. To conduct an empirical examination of the symbolic efficacy of shoes within everyday and life course transitions.
6. To explore the status of shoes as 'biographical objects' capable of illuminating the relationship between historical and biographical memory.
7. To establish the nature of the cultural imaginary which informs, and derives from, the consumption, ownership, storage, maintenance, wear and divestment of shoes.
b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with us. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. [Max 200 words]

The original aims and objectives were adhered to but the number of focus groups was increased from five to twelve in order to explore social difference more broadly and to accommodate the many self-identified female 'shoe lovers' who contacted us. Nineteen rather than twenty case studies were undertaken and of these four participants were unable to proceed beyond the first interview, for personal reasons. The richness and extent of our data led us to decide against replacing those participants and to add their data to that derived from fifteen completed case studies.

We were given ESRC permission to vire from the staff budget to the non-staff budget because the original costing for an RA went in at Grade 8.2 for a named researcher - Dr Meah, and funding was based on this appointment. However, Dr Meah had already been taken on as RA for another project by the time we were notified of the award. Rachel Dilley, the researcher we actually employed started at Grade 7.5. As a result there was an underspend of £22,000 in the staff budget which allowed us to employ a professional film-maker to create a documentary based on the project's findings, a film that has already made a very valuable contribution to our impact activities. We were, in addition, able to attend three international conferences – in Milan, Victoria BC and New York – and achieve far wider dissemination than would have been possible through the one international conference budgeted for.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max 500 words]

In order to explore the embodied nature of identification the project was designed to include visual methods as well as more established interviewing techniques. Postcards describing the project were distributed throughout public venues in Sheffield and a short piece was published in a local paper. Participants for 12 focus groups were recruited in this way, each group containing between six and eight people (80 in total). Groups were as follows: pilot, generic, climbers, parents, bereaved people, young women, young men, Muslim women, people with foot health problems, older adults, female shoe lovers, male shoe lovers. Photos of focus group participants’ shoes were taken, along with a recording of the discussion. Nineteen people, mostly from focus groups, were then recruited for year-long case-study work which involved them giving us a tour of all their shoes, wherever they were stored, and photographing both the shoes and their storage; making an explanatory inventory of all their shoes; choosing one of their typical activities and allowing us to film them undertaking the activity in the shoes best suited to what they were doing; making a scrapbook that illustrated their relationship with shoes; taking us along on a shoe shopping trip; and taking part in three interviews which focussed primarily on the materials generated through these activities. Focus group data were coded using NVivo software, and case study interviews and related
materials were scrutinised by two members of the research team and, after discussion, key themes relating to the project’s theoretical questions and relevant quotations from the data were drawn out. In addition, fieldnotes were made after each interview.

Together, these methods allowed us to investigate shoes’ capacity to shape embodied experience, as a prosthetic of self, as well as to contribute to memory-making and the generation of personal narratives through their status as an object. It was in these ways, then, that we came to understand footwear’s role within processes of identification.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on the ESRC website. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

While considerable scope remains for drawing additional themes from these data, findings to date address the following aspects of identification, all of which have been disseminated either via conference papers or journal articles:

1. Shoes role within reflexive self actualisation was evident throughout our data, particularly at times of transition, a finding which suggested a greater sense of commonality than difference when compared with historical material.

2. The pervasiveness of a single shoe type (trainers), one worn by both women and men of all ages, including children, allowed us to investigate the symbolic efficacy and cultural biography of the trainer and its enmeshment with identification, data revealing the very different meanings attributed to and acquired by the same shoe type for the members of diverse social categories (participation in Northampton Shoe Museum trainer event; journal article under review)

3. The importance of embodied agency in relation to femininity was revealed by the variation in occasions when women chose to wear high-heeled shoes and the ways in which any associated pain was managed (research seminars at York and Sheffield; journal article under review)

4. The importance of meso-level analyses of relations of power, and the internal-external dialectic of identification, particularly concerning gendered inequalities, was evidenced in the relational environments within which shoes are bought and worn (international conference papers).

5. The varied repertoires of masculine identification open to young men making transitions to adulthood - their cultural imaginaries - were evidenced in their data and revealed the dynamic processes through which ‘doing masculinity’ is embodied (national and international conference papers).

6. The contribution of shoes to ageing across the life course was evidenced in the different orientations towards growing older expressed in participants’ associations between particular kinds of shoes and chronological age. The scope participants discovered for temporal manoeuvres undermined the dominance of linear models of the life course (conference papers; journal article under review).

7. Ethical issues and the tension between consumption, desire and a concern with the environment (conference paper)
8. The contribution of shoes to cultural encounters, where membership of a particular society was realised through encounters with others whose shoes were different (conference papers).

9. Health issues were a more pervasive dimension of the relationship between shoes and identity than had been envisaged when the project was designed. Where shoe choice was constrained, either by congenital foot problems, ongoing foot health issues particularly those related to diabetes, or simply by age-related deterioration in the well-being of feet, social participation could be affected in that certain kinds of clothing were rejected if appropriate footwear could not be worn with a set of garments. Job choice and participation at social events requiring formal dress could be diminished as a result. These findings have been of particular interest to podiatrists, locally, nationally and internationally, who have concerns about patient compliance (project documentary, presentations to podiatrists where documentary was screened, dissemination of DVD with documentary among podiatrists).

10. The project’s capacity to reveal the emotional associations of certain pairs of shoes (particularly via the documentary) had marked impact for Clarks Shoes, as indicated by the response of their CEO to the documentary, and for podiatrists. This dimension of footwear was particularly apparent at times of transition such as growing up into adulthood, a wedding, finding employment, becoming a parent or when age or illness made a favourite pair unwearable.

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative’s objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]
3. Early and anticipated impacts

a) Summary of Impacts to date
Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on the Research Outcomes System (ROS). This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [Max. 400 words]

Academic Impacts
Through conference presentations and journal articles the project has made an impact on theoretical work on identity by offering both a methodology and a body of findings that demonstrate the importance of a focus on embodiment and material culture to the processual nature of identification. In particular, its work on gender, femininity and masculinity and on ageing, embodiment and dress has been well-received within spheres where these topics have been longstanding focuses for research.

Broader Social Impacts
The curator of Northampton Shoe Museum, the head of Sheffield Podiatry Service, and an independent shoe designer have been key members of our Advisory Board who have assisted us with carrying out our impact plan. This has included disseminating our findings to the Sheffield Podiatry Service and at the annual podiatry conference in Liverpool where they have been enthusiastically received. A documentary based on the project’s findings, and produced by a professional film-maker, has demonstrated the potential of joint working with film-makers as a way of circumventing the limitations of text-based public dissemination. In that the project explored identification as an embodied process, the use of visual methods for both data collection and dissemination has proved to be of significant value. The DVD of the film has now been given to around 20 podiatrists, many of whom plan to use it as part of their teaching and CPD activities. The post-graduate student attached to the project has meanwhile been exploring the relationship between representations of shoes and the experience of shoe-wearing through fieldwork at Clarks headquarters at Street, Somerset. A screening of the documentary at a staff development event, attended by the company’s CEO, had considerable impact on levels of awareness of the relationship between shoes, transitions and emotion. Moreover her hourly teaching at Nottingham Trent University has been significantly informed by findings from both her own research and the project’s main data collection and theory generation.
b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

An established working relationship with Wesley Vernon, head of Sheffield Podiatry Service, is being sustained with a view to submitting further research proposals, particularly a bid for follow-on funding from the ESRC.

The DVD of the project has been submitted to a number of national and international documentary film festivals. In that we have a considerable number of DVDs available, these will continue to circulated to podiatrists and also to university staff involved in teaching research methods as well as substantive courses on identity and material culture (the documentary has been advertised on the Anthropology of Britain mailing list).

The anticipated publication of the final three journal articles will ensure the project’s academic impact in 2014.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.
4. Declarations

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed. Please note hard copies are not required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick one statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section (this should be an image of your actual signature).

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report. YES

ii) Submissions to the Research Outcomes System (ROS)

Output and impact information has been submitted to the Research Outcomes System. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available. YES

or

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to the Research Outcomes System as soon as they become available.

iii) Submission of Data

Data arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the UK Data Service. YES

or

Data that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the UK Data Service has been notified.

or

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.