

Thank you!
Any questions?

'Researching life as a whole':
*the use of life history to understand
career commitment in hospitality.*



Doctoral College Annual Student Conference
2nd June 2014

Maria Gebbels
School of Sport and Service Management

 **University of Brighton**

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Why do hospitality management graduates
choose to leave the hospitality industry?

What makes
people
committed to
their chosen
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choose to leave the hospitality industry?**



HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Self-efficacy

"People's level of confidence, efficacy, and ability based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true." [Source: https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-efficacy-2796267](#)

“people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true.”

(Bandura, 1977: 2)

Career commitment

**A psychological state of a relationship between an individual
and solely his or her career,
which is based on an affective relationship to that career
and "an ability to cope with disappointments in the pursuit of
career goals."**

(Aryee and Tan, 1992: 289)

Career inheritance

**Careers are inherited from the family one was born into,
and the family occupations and socio-economic status
frame pre-career childhood experiences and
expectations.**

(Inkson, 2004)



HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



What is
Life History?

Life history

is an umbrella term for

"life writings":

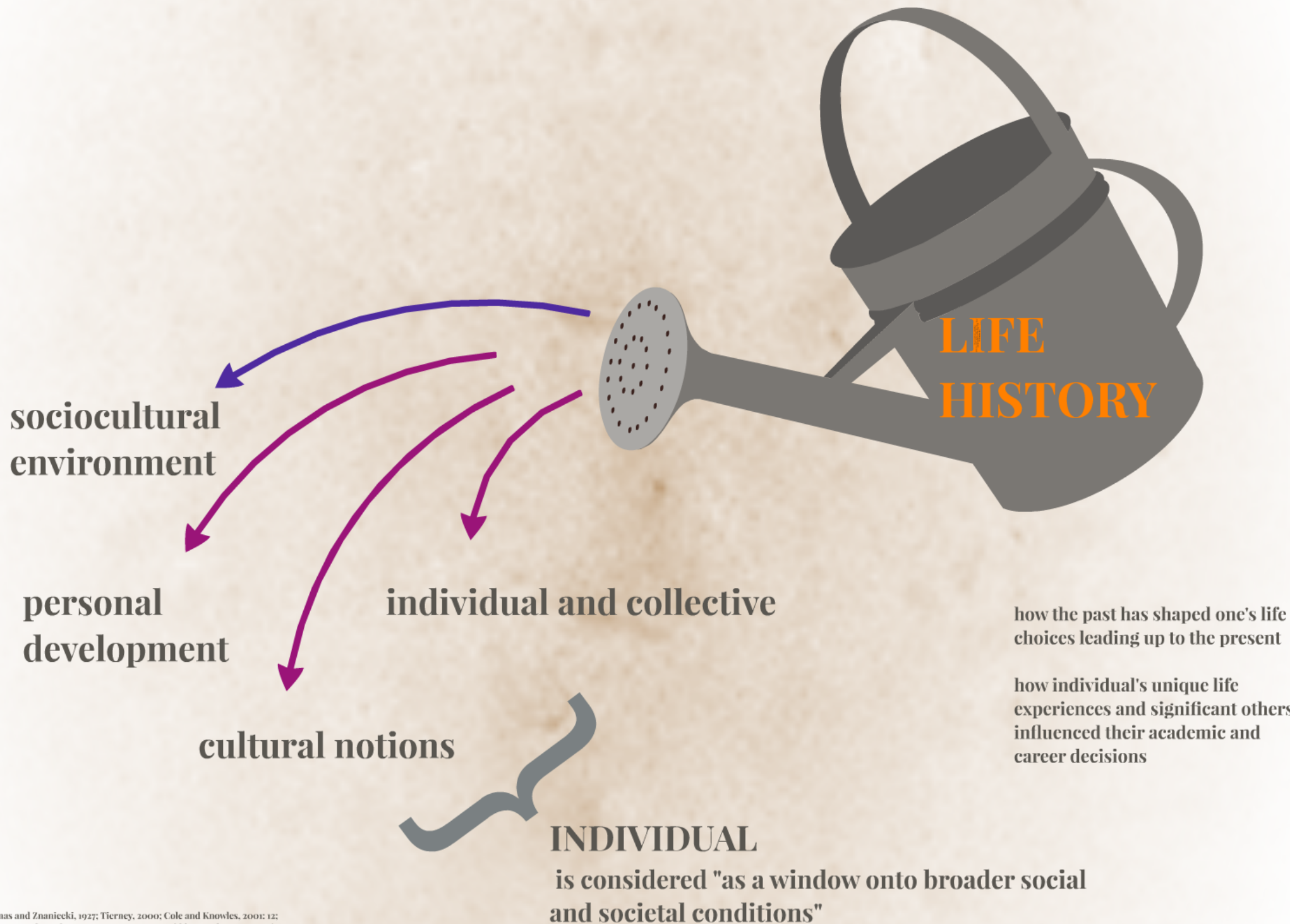
life stories

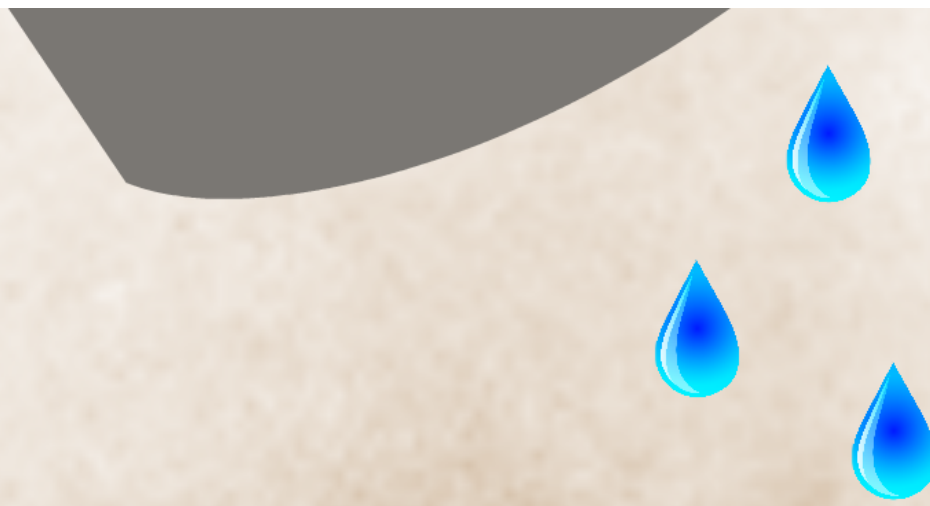
journals

autobiographies

diaries

(Smith, 1994; Ladkin, 1999)





**how the past has shaped one's life
choices leading up to the present**

**how individual's unique life
experiences and significant others
influenced their academic and
career decisions**

**“The account given by an individual,
only with emphasis upon the ordering into themes or topics
that the individual chooses to adopt or omit
as s/he tells the story”.**

(Miller, 2000: 19)

Life history

method

disciplinary
perspective

theoretical
position

METHODOLOGY

*categorisation of
individuals' events*

**looking at one's
"life as a whole"**

*detailed and in-depth exploration of the
development of personal experiences, feelings
and emotions*

**theoretical
position**



perspective

METHODOLOGY

**categorisation of
individuals' events**

**looking at one's
"life as a whole"**

**detailed and in-depth exploration of the
development of personal experiences, feelings
and emotions**

(Ladkin, 1999; Tierney, 2000; Atkinson, 2002; Johnson, 2002)



Life history or life story?




**interested in historical events impacting
on lives of one or more people**

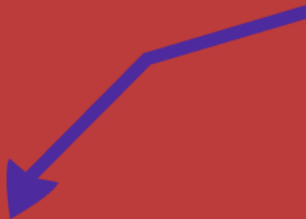


focuses on an entire life of a single individual

**Each
life history
is constructed
from many life stories.**



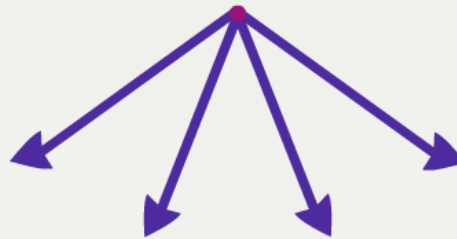
**Each life story is complex and indicates
patterns, perceptions and processes,
which help to understand people's lives.**



**"Life stories offer glimpses of the sometimes hidden
qualities and characteristics that make us all so
fascinating, and fun to listen to"**

Life history in social science research

**Allows to explore
social change**



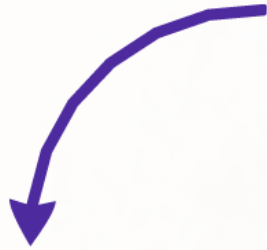
**To complement other
research methods**

**Investigation of the past
provides new insights
about the present**

**Can be used for
exploratory purposes**



Employing life history in this research



to understand the underlying reasons behind individuals' career choices



to explore why and how individuals made their academic decisions

Focusing on individuals' 'lives as a whole' leads to an 'all-round' picture of how certain events, memorable stories, and significant others have influenced their career choices.

Researching career commitment, starting by exploring individuals' roots, is key in understanding their reasons, motivations and aspirations.



Collecting life stories



diaries



journals

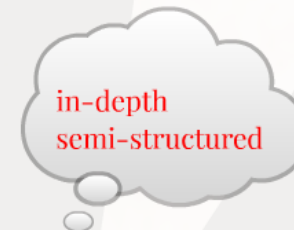


photographs



INTERVIEWS

through the dialogue during an interview process
life stories can be constructed.



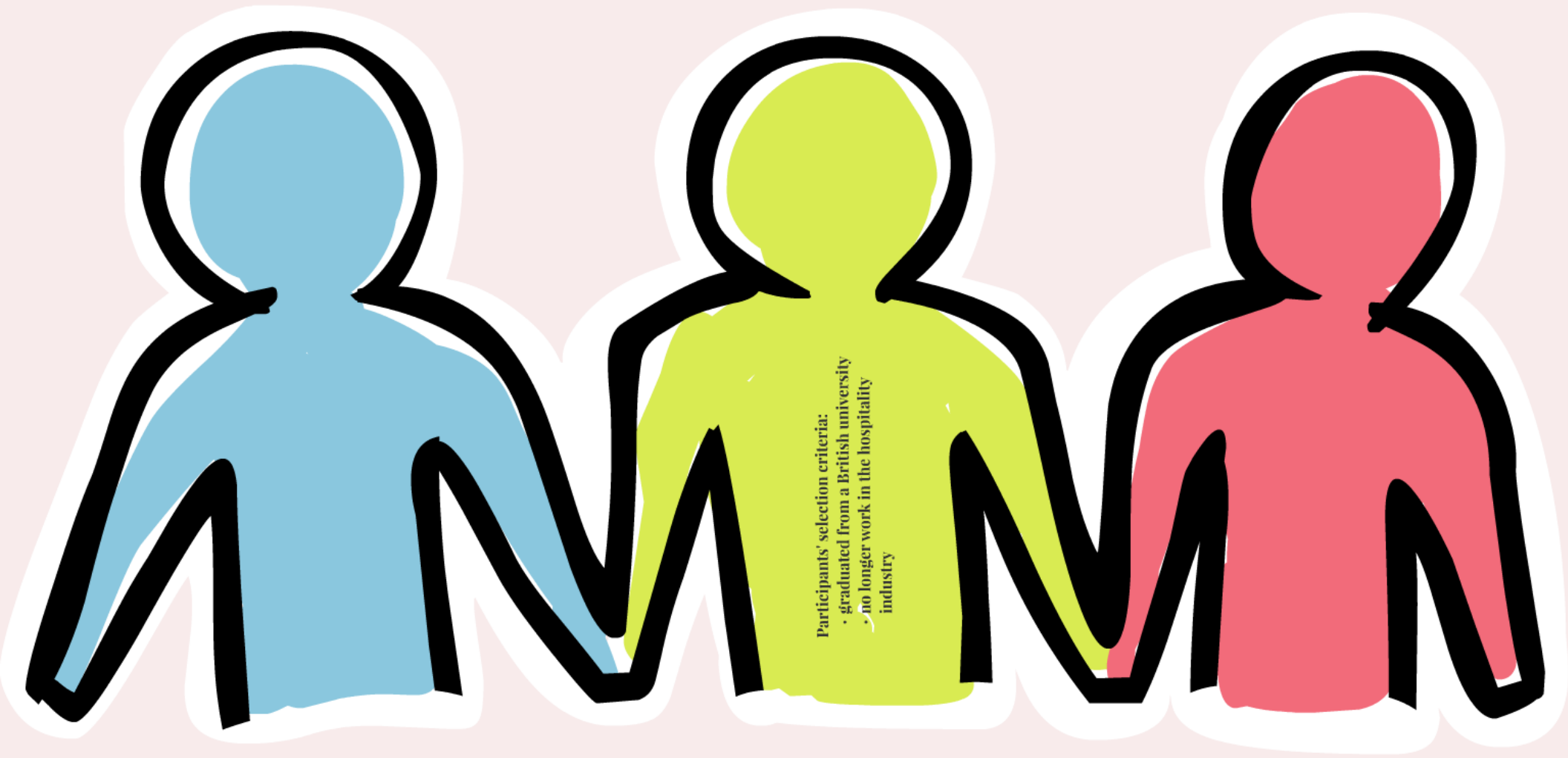
in-depth
semi-structured



Interviews

- 🍏 to understand multiple perspectives on the subject of career commitment
- 🍏 to find out the underlying reasons behind participants' career choices
- 🍏 to find out more about participants' decision-making processes related to pursuing academic and career goals
- 🍏 aim to uncover the hidden elements of participants' lives, their experiences, perceptions and changes over time
- 🍏 invite participants to elaborate on experiences that have been the most important to them over time.





Participants' selection criteria:

- graduated from a British university
- no longer work in the hospitality industry

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Interview Sections



- 🍏 first section asked basic demographic questions, such as their age or current occupation
- 🍏 second section sought understanding of their self-efficacy beliefs:
“Can you tell me one memorable story that will help me to understand how you decided to leave the hospitality industry?”
- 🍏 third section included questions related to their career inheritance:
“Can you tell me whether you think your parents had a career in mind for you?”
- 🍏 fourth section sought their understanding of the key concepts, and enabled them to analyse their own stories and significant life events.



Challenges

- finding participants
- what "not working in the hospitality industry" means to people
- 'the unknown'



Lessons learnt

- digital voice recorder
- limitations of using "ice-breakers"
- letting participants talk

Insights

- each life history is unique
- 'joining the dots'
- reflective individuals
- me, myself and I





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**I
N
T
E
R
V
I
E
W**

A 3D rendering of the word "INTERVIEW" spelled out using wooden blocks. The blocks are arranged in two rows: the first row contains 'I', 'N', 'E', 'R', 'E', 'W' and the second row contains 'T', 'V', 'I'. The blocks are light brown with black lettering and are placed on a white surface with a light gray grid pattern. Each block casts a soft shadow to the right.