

# WHAT ENERGY IS FOR: THE MAKING AND DYNAMICS OF DEMAND

## HIGHLIGHT POINTS FROM THE WORKSHOPS



# Conceptualising Futures

- Papers in the sessions together revealed the constituting power of future visions through their action in the present, together with the complex way in which futures have iteratively unfolded historically
- Taking a practice approach seriously makes meaningful participative envisioning of futures a long and messy process

# Time and Temporality

- Time use data is a fantastic resource, but we need to keep a critical view on what it can and cannot reveal. Influencing what time use data is collected in the future would be handy ..
- The relationship between observed timings of what is done and 'flexibility' in those doings is more complex than we might think

# Professions

- The professions are central to energy demand and practice theory offers new ways of understanding their effects.
- Understanding sites and jurisdictions of practice gives new insights into the constitution of energy demand and how it changes.

# Methodology and Practice Theory

- Taking "practice" as a central conceptual unit of enquiry generates a range of distinctive questions. The choice of methods depends on the kinds of questions you want to take up and pursue. Using practice theory is thus not directly tied to certain methods, but the choice of methods is dependent upon your specific research question.

# Space, site and scale

- Relations between space and energy demand are variously constituted by markets, infrastructures, technologies, patterns and histories of provisioning systems, design scripts and competing ideas of how places & the practices they are produced by should be and the meanings they should carry
- ‘A house cannot be sent to China to be retrofitted’

# Energy and money

- There is a fruitful discussion to be had between economists and DEMAND-like researchers about challenging/enriching, and learning from, textbook economics notions such as elasticity, discount rates, etc.
- There is a fine balance to be found between a sectoral and an integrated approach to affordability. There are relationships between poverty, fuel poverty, transport poverty, etc. but the relations are not linear, and not (yet) very clear.

# Sharing

- Sharing is normatively and often uncritically considered as "a good thing" (across a variety of discourses/spheres, from household/domestic, transport, particular commodities, etc). This is an idea our workshop began to critique and/or problematise to some extent, and is related to this idea of 'sharing as novelty' and a lack of accounts of the 'mundane' or routine forms of sharing which already happen day-to-day.
- The way of framing (more sustainable/equitable) consumption as based on "access" rather than ownership arguably does not question our perceived need for certain forms of consumption or ways of life. Under this framing, most attention focused on commodities which have 'shareable qualities' (e.g. drills and lawnmowers). Yet focusing on individual goods alone draws attention away from asking whether our present 'ways of life' are sustainable or not, whilst seemingly 'normalised' patterns and forms of consumption and energy demand remain largely unquestioned.



# Cross-national and cross-cultural

- Cross-cultural and cross-national comparative studies and insights provide an essential prism to reveal the dynamics of energy demand and mobility
- Skype conferencing (which we successfully managed) is the best way to reduce conference-related energy demand, but you miss out on the great local beers

# Entitlement, Expectation and Excess

- How do emotions fit into practice theory? Can we talk of emotions as a practice? What role do emotions play in demanding energy?
- Who is entitled to what and how does this change over time, space, generations, the lifecourse and between sites and regions. How is the notion of entitlement therefore linked to change in energy demand
- What are the processes through which wider discourses attach themselves to practices/action?

# Conceptualising Change

- Does understanding energy demand as an outcome of practice challenge or defy linear causal/directional, singular, evolutionary and progressive accounts of changes in energy use?
- How does the idea that energy demand is an outcome of practice influence the kinds of questions we ask about change?

# Steering demand

- Given the complexities of interactions that enable steering, how or in what way is it possible to identify opportunities to shape energy practices?
- When we study non-energy or implicit interventions or influences, what space exists for raising or changing the terms of the debate in that process?