“I think the overall theme will be the role of theories/notions of practice in innovation models/strategies.” Hans

A few notes in response from Elizabeth

TRANSITIONS IN PRACTICE
climate change and everyday life
Elizabeth Shove, Lancaster University
ESRC climate change leadership fellowship
Transitions and end-user practices

“In this presentation I argue that social theories of practice are useful and important because they deflect attention away from the actions and responses of end-users and consumers. By taking practices as the central unit of analysis, new and different questions emerge that are relevant for understanding social change and sustainability.” Elizabeth

“In this session we will reflect upon the KSI research results aimed at investigating a better, context specific fit between greening strategies and consumer practices. In general, people underscore values of a more sustainable development. However, in practice, it proves to be rather difficult to change consumer behaviour. What is the problem here?

How to give citizen-consumers a stronger role as change agents in multi-level transition processes? Involving end-users in transition processes will prove itself to be more of a socio-cultural than of a purely technological and/or economic nature.” Hans
Investigating a better, context specific fit between consumers and greening strategies (Hans)

it proves to be rather difficult to change consumer behavior.

How to give citizen-consumers a stronger role as change agents in multi-level transition processes?

PRACTICES

NOT PRACTICES

Fit
A version of “Spaargaren’s ears” : practices as outcomes; domains of behaviour; lifestyle choices not selection environments
Transitions and practices

Selectors (selection environment, close link to markets)
Facilitators and obstructors (of transition, link to failure)
Existing practices as context of change, habit, barrier (landscape?)
Media of change (knowledge is radically revised)

Practices and transitions

How sociotechnical systems are used in daily life;
Lifestyle, not just market
pressure and motivation to change, spur to transition (citizen-consumer)

Producer-promotors
Innovators, entrepreneurs

Institutional, systems of provision, infrastructures
Implicitly agree:

Step change in the configuration of practices+sociotechnical systems of provision

Implicitly disagree:

Origins of change up, down, left or right, but not the middle.

Units of enquiry

Directions:

- Landscape
- Practices
- Systems of provision
- Niche
- Lifestyles
Re-integrating resources from social theory

practice (Giddens)  Social sciences study “Neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of social totality but practices ordered across space and time”

practice (Schatzki)  Practice as ‘embodied, materially mediated arrays, shared meanings’ (i.e. materials, images, skills)

=  a material (integrative) theory of practice

Practice is a process of integration resulting in a structured arrangement - i.e. resulting in a practice that exists (for a time) as a recognisable entity.

Elements that are integrated consist of material, image and skill
Generates slightly - but significantly - new questions

- How do practices emerge, exist and die?
- How do practices recruit constituent elements and activating practitioners?
- How do systems of practice form, exist and break down?
- How are elements of practice generated, renewed and reproduced?
How do practices emerge, exist and die?

Making and breaking links between elements

proto-practices (pre-formation)  practices (re-formation)  ex-practices (de-formation)

Attend to the trajectories of image and competence as well as material
Desires/lifestyles and systems of provision are outcomes of practice
How do practices recruit constituent elements and activating practitioners?

Recruitment and reproduction

Capture practitioners
Careers of carriers
Path and project
Careers of practice

Link between career of practice and anti-programme, recruitment, selection and fossilisation

Transitions in relations between practices (which win, which lose), not between technologies alone.
How are elements of practice generated, renewed and reproduced?

Elements are partly autonomous because they are created through multiple integrations (practices).

how different elements (stuff, image, skill) circulate; how different elements constitute each other.
Loss of quiet roads

Introduction of better bikes

Gap, new skills required for busy roads

Less freedom

Elements on the move: how cycling went from mainstream to niche
In this presentation I argue that social theories of practice are useful and important because they deflect attention away from the actions and responses of end-users and consumers. By taking practices as the central unit of analysis, new and different questions emerge that are relevant for understanding social change and sustainability.

For example:

- Commuting by car
  - Shared by many
  - Significant and relatively recent change
  - Resource intensive

- Regularly eating meat
  - Can be understood in terms of: changing and new configurations of materials, images, skills; processes of recruitment and defection, relation between practices (time).

- Daily showering
  - Deliberate interventions: focus on elements, with consumers-users conceptualised as carriers of practice – not as primary agents of change, not as selecting the fate of technology.

- Expecting 22 degrees C indoors
  - Social practices consist of technologies (along with skills and materials) and are not external to them.
practices

Individual Lifestyles

Circuits of reproduction, transformation, erosion

landscape

Systems of provision

other practices

elements

carriers

niche
Where most effort is focused

Individual attitudes, behaviour, choice, price and persuasion

Changing forms of everyday practice

Eating, heating, cooling, washing

Where the societal challenges lie