

SPRU Friday Seminar

Date 16 May 2014
Speaker Elizabeth Shove (Lancaster University)
Title Infrastructures, technologies and practices:
implications for energy demand

Abstract

We know that technologies and infrastructures have a critical but also complex role in defining and transforming social practices and the energy demands associated with them. Much has been written about the relation between individual technologies and specific practices (many 'user' studies are in this tradition) but rather less about how infrastructures - including those of transportation and of energy provision - from the grid through to the household, and from the car/road through to systems of automobility - are implicated in the reproduction of many social practices at once. In this presentation I explore ways of capturing and analysing changing relations between infrastructures and practices over time and at different scales. This approach informs a more systemic understanding of how patterns of energy demand emerge, persist and disappear. It does so by turning attention away from the end consumer and towards the social and the material ordering of daily life.

Bio

Professor Elizabeth Shove is Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University. Elizabeth came to Lancaster in 1995 as deputy director of the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change and was director of the Centre for Science Studies for a couple of years before joining the Sociology Department in 2000. Her current research interests have to do with the relation between consumption, everyday practice and ordinary technology. She is co-director of DEMAND, an EPSRC/ESRC funded research centre on the Dynamics of Energy, Mobility and Demand started in May 2013.