

Call for Projects
Collaboration on Knowledge Infrastructures and Energy

To be held at
University of Edinburgh, Scotland
June 6-7, 2016

This exploratory workshop will discuss ideas for future collaborative research on a distinctive social studies of energy and information infrastructures and markets.

A number of groups of scholars have shared interests in social studies of science, technology and innovation. These include Edinburgh (e.g. the Energy and Society Research Group), Copenhagen (e.g. the Markets and Valuation cluster), Santiago (The Millennium Center for Energy and Society Research) and Paris (Le Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation, Paris Tech Ecole de Mines).

This workshop is an opportunity for these groups and other interested researchers to share knowledge and to discuss their work, but first and foremost to articulate a provisional research programme and explore concrete possibilities for common research projects (e.g. a possible Horizon2020 application in February 2017).

Participants at the workshop are invited to present ideas based on an example of recent work using a sociological approach to societal innovations in energy markets, and/or information and knowledge markets and infrastructures.

Empirical interests

Two empirical fields are our main interest:

- Energy infrastructures and markets. Climate issues and decarbonisation of the economy, and affordability and resilience concerns make electricity and energy infrastructure and market change pertinent issues.
- Information infrastructures. Steps are being taken in what is likely to become a decisive break with and supplement to existing infrastructures (smart cities, Airbnb etc.).

These two areas both call for specific attention. But they also converge as in e.g. SmartGrids. [Project proposals relating to, or extending, these empirical fields are invited.]

Conceptual development

A material sociology of markets and valuation is developing from European traditions of sociology and anthropology of economics (see for example Callon, 1998), actor network theory (Callon and Latour, 1981) and sociology of scientific knowledge (MacKenzie, 2009). This conceptualisation makes specialist knowledge and expertise, and its role in the formatting of markets, the structuring of value and material investment, a subject for investigation. Most work has so far focused on economic science, processes of economisation of societies and the implications for future sustainable and socially just prosperity. This perspective tests the conjecture that economics may have 'performative' effects through development of instruments, which create the conditions for a theoretical proposition to become true, thus enacting 'homo economicus' (Caliskan and Callon, 2010). Cultural practices of value, which defy or resist monetisation may be lost or marginalised in the process. Relatedly, actor network theories conceive of economic agency not as residing solely with human actors, but as distributed across heterogeneous socio-technical assemblages, or *agencements*, of human and non-human constituents, including the instruments of economics. This theoretical framework also suggests questions about the potential performative effects of other forms of specialist expertise. These could include the legal, contractual and regulatory institutions, which govern the markets of advanced capitalism, as well as the multiple sciences of business management, finance and engineering.

A material sociology of energy and information infrastructures aims to avoid an over-socialised model of market practices, as well as the opposite *under*-socialised model. Hence we consider the dimensions of corporeality and sociality as integral to practices. The former conveys the significance of the material capacities and limitations of the human representatives of complex organisations and inter-linked social ecologies. The dimension of sociality emphasises the relational networks of belief, trust and distrust, cultural scripts and reputations, which shape the legitimacy, validity and reliability of technical models, cost benefit metrics and valuation instruments, and contribute to the making of facts about value (Beckert, 2011; Fligstein and Dauter, 2007). An orientation to sociality does not mean simply micro-social interactions, but seeks to reveal the historically-contingent materiality of power and differential control over resources, and their agency in shaping innovations in actor-network assemblages.

Format

We aim to structure the workshop around two sessions; one on energy infrastructures and markets, and one on information infrastructures/markets. The workshop will start on Monday June 6 at 2 pm and conclude Tuesday June 7 around 2pm. A more detailed program will follow. The workshop will include short presentations of projects (ideas), facilitation of discussion, formulation of common topics and decisions on next steps.

The workshop will act as a foundation for future funded research projects as well as structured and in-depth dialogue. Future shared research projects could include an application for a Horizon2020 project (Work programme 2016-2017 call on 'Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy' call, deadline in February 2017).

Submission and further information

One page abstracts, should be send by May 22, 2016 to Julie Munk jmu.ioa@cbs.dk
Deadline for complete papers/project ideas (length of 1 to maximum 5 pages) is June 1, 2016.
We accept papers covering potential project ideas, former work, (draft) research applications or current research.

The workshop hosts (the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Business School) cover catering, but transport and hotel is to be paid from own budget.

All questions are welcome to administrative co-organizer Julie Munk (email listed above)



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