



SECOND INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF ENERGY

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES
FACED WITH
ENERGY TRANSITIONS



CALL FOR PAPERS

1 - 3 JULY 2015
University François-Rabelais
Tours / France

www.socio-energie2015.fr



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The Second International Days of the Sociology of Energy will take place from July 1st to July 3rd, 2015. They are organized by the UMR CNRS CITERES and the CETU ETICS of the François-Rabelais University (Tours), supported by the CR 16, 23 and 32 of the AISLF (Association Internationale des Sociologues de Langue Française), the RT1 of the AFS (Association Française de Sociologie), and by the INSIS (Institut National des Sciences de l'Ingénierie et des Systèmes) and the Cellule Énergie du CNRS. This conference aims to bring together researchers in the social sciences whose work contributes to advancing social phenomena related to energy, whether they are sociologists working on this topic from their particular disciplinary perspective, or researchers who use the approaches and/or methodologies of sociology in order to study specifically the energy object, or even professionals who question the social aspect of energy through a reflective process. The conference will also offer an opportunity to young researchers and PhD candidates, who are invited to present their research, either on-going or completed.

The angle proposed in order to regroup these contributions is that of the process of socio-energetic changes at work today, designated for several years in the public debate as “energy transition”. In the context of this conference, we prefer to use the plural to insist on the diversity of conceptions of this change, or even the conflictual nature of a process which brings together numerous categories of actors, of contexts, of markets and multiple issues. It is a question, on the one hand, of illuminating the way in which contemporary societies at every level (daily, organizational and in policies) by forced changes in energy issues, and on the other hand, how the practice and the mobilization of the actors question and create alternatives to projects of energy transition such as they are conceived by the deciders.

Sociological research has set in place high expectations given the impasses coming from an exclusively technico-economic vision of the reasons for change. Beyond the purely scientific objective of the conference, there is also the question of exposing the themes and the research results to those asking social questions about the relative knowledge of the social issues of energy. The intention is to create a meeting place for researchers and actors, in order to promote a fertile discussion about the scientific questions and the dilemmas of action.

THE MAIN THEMES

METHODOLOGY / FORESIGHT / REFLEXIVITY

These last years have been ones of a strong solicitation of social sciences, notably sociology, to clarify energy issues. The interrogations which are the focus of researchers from these disciplines question the conditions of the production of a “social” knowledge, but as well production conditions and the mobilization of tools and of methods.

Through this thematic axis, we wonder if the sociology of energy constitutes a real topic and specific field of research, with unique methodologies serving to unite the questions around its research fields. Can energy be a research object on its own for sociology or does it need to be studied inside a larger configuration, as a cross-sectional component of multiple social processes? How does the specific nature of the energy object lead to an evolution of classical methods of collecting data and even inventing new ways?

The question of levels and methodologies of questioning can equally be the object of a paper presentation. How to articulate micro-approaches, which illuminate individual initiatives or on the level of limited collectives, and those more macro, which stress the weight of socio-technical structures? In an energy sector which has, until now, used mainly technical approaches, can the interactions between social and engineering sciences lead to a new perspective with regards to energy and research practices? For sociologists, it is notably a question of evaluating the capacity to respond to the growing needs of the actors in the world of energy, notably those in industry and technical offices, but also public action, in terms of sociological knowledge capable of orienting their strategies. What is the nature of the sociological question in the field of energy? What collective and individual positions can sociologists adopt faced with these expectations? What are the tools at their disposition? Must sociology seize these questions, answer these expectations or should it maintain a position of uninvolved observer? There must also be a reflection on the way in which the energy question works with the sociological field regarding its relations to other competencies which can be experienced through types of competition.

THE MAIN THEMES

PUBLIC POLICIES AND TERRITORIES

Energy systems needing to be reformed find, at a territorial level, a new perspective to reach objectives of energy efficiency, of de-carbonization, of supply and of the conversion of use towards a more sober approach. In fact we witness in France and in Europe that locally the energy issue is put on the agenda: territories are showing new competencies and are appropriating the necessary instruments to go in this direction (local electricity distribution, energy networks, mixed funding companies, etc.)..

Still often perceived as a constraint rather than as a renewal opportunity, the creation of a new attractivity or a re-dynamization of the local community, the processes in motion provoke, in spite of everything, a growing interest and lead us to predict new initiatives in public action. This topic will be the chance to raise questions about the way in which collectivities make of this energy question a political issue for their territories, characterizing putting energy on the agenda and the actions which result. We are interested in, among others, the policies of a decentralized production of energy and their forms, more or less participative, as well as the development of “intelligent” networks which can be deployed across numerous territories. We must equally call for a comparison between Europe and the world in order to understand the current processes, beyond local difficulties.

The territorialization of energy transition calls into question globally national policies, in the sense that the idea of a unique territorial transition model is largely called into question. The challenge is that territories engage in their own models and try to adapt to the objectives fixed at national and European levels. What are the observable territorial differences (choice of energy mix, circular economy, the mobilization of local actors)? What is at stake here are the social imagination and energy policies: energy sovereignty and energy self-sufficiency, the solidarity and the mutualization of energies, auto-consumption, peer-to-peer... It is also an opportunity to address the fact that recent territorial competition might make reconfigurations of competencies appear, and there will then be, among the different levels of public actors (regions, departments, inter-communities, communities, urban, rural, etc.) winners but also losers.

THE MAIN THEMES

BUILDINGS AND WAYS OF LIVING

Residential and office buildings represent, in France, more than 40% of final energy consumption, which means that this sector is a chosen target of public policies. The regulations are multiplying and weigh on all building professionals (from the conception to the actual construction) and on the occupants. The former are requested to find innovative solutions in construction and in renovation, while the latter are asked to reform their daily habits, towards more conservation, even to adapt their lifestyles to the technical systems which are imposed upon them, ad to adhere to issues of energy transition. Territorial configuration is also questioned at the local level and/or at the level of local collectivities, of cities and up to megacities.

Most of the issues, which, for some amongst them, are just beginning to be worked on by the social sciences, are found at an intersection of technical and social themes. All contributions are welcome, but we can, amongst other issues, question the role of the different actors in the processes of conception, of production and of the maintenance of buildings considered as energy efficient, including in the process engaging with alternative forms of cooperation between the contractor, the project manager and the inhabitants. We are also interested in the conservation requirements involved from a point of view of the types of domestic organizations and professional organizations submitted to new social norms and morals. We reserve a significant place to papers which question the role of new technology in this theme, as well as those which explore the ideologies and the social representations relative to these new types of buildings, like the contradictions which may arise with a look at other dimensions (from lifestyles to the quality of inside air in the buildings, to the treatment of energy precarity and methods of financing). Conference contributions can explore the relationship between architectural conceptions and ways of living, on the role or roles assigned to technology, including to reflexive technologies, through the creation of quantitative objects for saving energy and the learning curves necessarily associated with them, to the way the occupants take into account the conception of energy and energy modelization.

Users being the most often placed in restricted situations in these ecological buildings, a number of actions are put into place to accompany their learning. Whether it is lodging or work spaces, those contributions related to the tools of accompanying change are also welcome. These tools may be sensitivity campaigns, forms of coaching, nudges (a push in an eco direction) or the deployment of “smart-meters” destined for

homeowners or occupant collectives (offices, companies...), new formations destined for professionals working on buildings before building (design, conception) and after, at the work site.

In the end, we can question the historical and socio-technical conditions of the production of such notions as “energy performance” or “energy efficiency”.

THE MAIN THEMES

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Except amongst “experts”, the energy question is only rarely associated – spontaneously—with the transportation sector. However, compared to other sectors, whose parts in total energy consumption are stagnating (44.5% in building, that is +2% between 1973 and 2012) or diminishing (21%, in industry, that is -15% between 1973 and 2012), the part of the transportation sector continues to grow rapidly (32%, that is +12% over the same period)(1). If the field of technology remains at the cutting edge, notably through the conception of vehicles with reduced CO2 emissions, considerations linked to the organizational aspects of transportation, to traveling habits or even to policies encouraging alternative transportation are a larger part of the current debate.

In what ways have mobility practices evolved and can they be a way to reduce energy consumption? Under what conditions, encouraging people to take advantage of modal solutions (mass transportation, soft methods – sustainable transport) or organizational (carpooling) alternatives to the individual car is the general public receptive, notably the more restrictive in terms of traveling or of geographical location? The question of level is also raised and the modalities of putting into practice territorial traveling policies that consume less energy. What are the roles and the responsibilities of elected officials in the debate? New services (auto/bicycle in self-service, parking/ public transportation), economic and fiscal (ecological tax, price indicators...), the possibilities for intervention are multiple. What are the effects on human organizations? At the same time, inside companies, the policies of reducing the ecological and energy impact also pass by incentives to use alternatives models, written in the business’s mobility plan. How are these policies conceived and put into action in companies, and how are they perceived by the social actors who are no longer involved only as citizens, but also as employees to act toward a reduction of their consumption of energy and, more generally, to change their individual and collective habits?

In situations of energy precarity, the questions of lodging and mobility are strongly linked. Where are we in the discussion about the compromises made by households between lodging and transportation? How, in this analysis, to distinguish between forced mobility and chosen mobility? In what way are the injunctions of alternative transportation pertinent for those groups suffering from energy precarity ?

(1) Chiffres clés de l'énergie, Repères, Service de l'observation et des statistiques, Commissariat Général au développement Durable, february 2014).

THE MAIN THEMES

THE SOCIO-ECONOMICS OF ENERGY

Energy problems open multiple debates about how to establish durable transformations of habits and ways of life. Among the possibilities, the economic one is regularly put forward as one of the most persuasive, or at least the one to which social actors are the most sensitive.

This is notably the case for price incentives, eco-taxes or even sending pricing signals. In what measure do these decisions, but also the perception of the price of energy and its possible variations, impact the daily habits and decisions of the actors? Other questions arise, that of the margin for maneuver in order to reform the habits of actors diversely and unequally provided with resources to face the demands of change. Pricing decisions can place one part of the actors into complex situations, how to understand the phenomenon of energy precarity, beyond quantitative indicators (rate of effort)?

For their part, the energy industry integrates more and more the occupant and the individual in their strategies of innovation, and more than just the technical dimension, attempting to adapt their business models to the demands of reducing energy consumption, and how are the "behaviors" integrated into technical and commercial innovations aiming to reduce the consumption of energy? How do these issues, written in the new energy contract, rework the collaborations and the "balance of power" between departments in companies (between R&D and marketing, the sales department...)? How do they contribute to the emergence of new economic actors and to the re-composition of ways of creating value? On other levels, what are the issues and the interests in the presence of putting into place new energy infrastructures at a local level or beyond (the energy cycle, recharging stations, anaerobic digestion...)?

THE MAIN THEMES

WORK AND PROFESSIONAL GROUP

Work is also a consumer of energy, be it to produce goods and services, or through transportation, but it is also through the work of professionals, from the most prestigious to the most humble, that the sources of energy function and are enhanced.

Approaching social issues of energy through the prism of professional groups leads one to see the occupations and professional activities as a system of interdependencies in which the changes in one profession provoke consequences in other professions. Energy issues, notably because of rising costs, appear as an immense challenge for the “system of professions”, occupational identities in the structure of professional organizations. Some new professions are already emerging, in areas such as consulting and expertise in the fabrication, the installation, and the maintenance of devices to economize energy or the usage of renewable energies. Other professions will be led to modify the range of their interventions and to develop new procedures, new knowledge, and to review their practices; and still others will find themselves in difficulty and may disappear. All, eventually, are concerned by the multiplication of directives, of standards, of controls or of injunctions of a diverse nature, as well as in terms of the image to protect in the public opinion, that of values structuring professional ethics or technical or legal conformity. These changes, bringing opportunities to some, risk and obstacles to others, lead to adjustments in the levels of power and of prestige in professions, as well as in the market competition of work or of products and services.

From now on, one can ask about how companies, professional branches and organizations are preparing to put into place the norm ISO 50001 and respond to the criteria of energy management that must be taken into consideration: what competencies are needed for its application, how is it perceived, appropriated, and altered by professional groups?

In a broad perspective, the re-composition of professions, of professional knowledge, of practice and of training, of professional identities, of the relations between professions or professional segments is at the heart of the themes of these International Days of the Sociology of Energy.

THE MAIN THEMES

ENGAGEMENT / MOBILIZATION / CONCENTRATION/ EMPOWERMENT

Energy issues, and more precisely the actions to take and the measures to put into place concerning energy policies and the preservation of the natural resources of territories, which are at the heart of numerous debates, give rise to controversies, sometimes even conflicts between the protagonists. Citizens are more and more numerous to mobilize and get involved in the discussions, coming together in order to orient certain decisions.

What is the effective weight of these militant collectives, more or less structured, compared to the actors of the merchant system (actors in the economic world, business people, lobbyists...), to the experts and political actors, in the process of socio-energetic change? Next to “ecological” values, what are those values which support today the engagement of individuals in the debates around energy transitions? In what way and in what conditions can those who support these associations enroll individuals who do not necessarily master the issues? How do the created groups organize themselves in order to strengthen their power for collective action (empowerment), and to what point do these actions defend the general interest? What is the role of coordination in these steps? In a perspective of balance of power, in certain cases of resistance or of opposition clearly claimed and shown, how do these collectives makes themselves sufficiently heard so that the decision makers cannot do otherwise but to associate them in the decision process? And in this case, what kind of evaluation to make about the ways of elaborating public policy which is supported by this participation by citizens (National Debate on Energy Transition for example)? We may equally ask the question of the pertinent level of collective action and of mobilization, because the types of associations mobilized around energy issues are varied, between the association which works to defend the natural heritage or of biodiversity at the local level and the national association which wishes to weigh on policy orientations and the issues as ways to provoke divergent actions. As such, the sociology of social movements can be called on to analyze the issues of mobilizations around energy transitions. We are interested equally here in collective actions in the center of professional sectors more directly impacted by energy orientations. According to what modalities are professionals able to regroup to defend common interests, and how do they articulate them with the objectives of public policy? Across the board, the question of links to establish between the debates on energy transition, scientific steps, economic interests and citizen engagements is asked. Through these questions, are included, those, larger, of the democratic debate and of the risks, seen or unseen, of the “confiscation” of this debate.

THE MAIN THEMES

ENERGY AND VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGIE

Methodologically, the conference wishes to reserve a particular place to scientific communications / productions and documentaries relevant to film and photography. As soon as they are registered in one or several of the themes developed above, the contributions can take the form of an exploration of the issues, from a photographic perspective in the context of an ethnographic study or an original video exposing a social phenomenon touching on the energy object.

OPEN THEME

The conference is completely open to all propositions that fall in the domain of the Sociology of Energy, inasmuch as the boundaries are not fixed. Because of this, those social science authors whose work does not correspond to one of the above-mentioned themes should still feel free to propose a paper as long as it has a link with energy. The International Days of the Sociology of Energy, being a scientific conference, insists that all contributions must nevertheless be based on a work of research, whether it be “fundamental” research, research-action, a study or any reflection on action.

HOW TO SUMIT PAPERS

This call for papers is open to researchers, PhD candidates, teachers/ researchers, as well as to those who are operational and institutional actors. Oral presentations can be made in either French or English (simultaneous translation will be provided).

Propositions should not be longer than one page (3000 signs, including spaces).

All propositions must mention in the following order:

- Last name and first name of the presenter or presenters, as well as the institution of origin (University, company, etc.).
- The title of the paper
- 5 key words
- The subject or subjects and how they are linked
- A summary of the paper
- A short biography (if possible with reference to one or two other publications)

We request authors to use Arial 12 point (single spaced) and to furnish the text in two different formats, one being Microsoft Word, the other PDF, both being named using the family name of the 1st author.

A French version **and** an English version must be furnished.

Propositions must be sent before November 15th, 2014 to: jise@univ-tours.fr

Authors will be informed of the decision of the scientific committee in the second half of December 2014.

In order to better prepare the round tables and the workshops, the authors chosen must send the text of their presentation before May 31st 2015.

All presentations will be recorded or filmed and may be broadcast on the website of the JISE 2015.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Publication in the form of a printed work is planned at the end of the JISE 2015. The modality of contribution submissions, in the form of articles, will be detailed shortly. Propositions for publication, in the form of a summary (or the completed article) must arrive before November 15th, 2014 with a response by the scientific committee before the end of 2014, completed articles must arrive before May 31st, 2015 in order to be taken into consideration.

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