How theories of practice can inform transition to a decarbonised transport system.

How theories of practice can inform transition to a decarbonised transport system

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Abstract

In this article, I explore the potential of theories of practice to inform the socio-technical transition required to adequately decarbonise the UK transport system. To do so I push existing applications of practice theories by outlining a “systems of practice” approach, which articulates theories of practice with socio-technical systems approaches. After sketching out a theory of practice, I explore the potential of a practice theory approach to illuminate systemic change in transport. I do this by confronting two key criticisms of practice theories; first of their apparent difficulty in accounting for change; second of their limited demonstrated ability to move beyond a micro-level focus on doing. The counter I offer to these criticisms leads directly into recognising how theories of practice can articulate with socio-technical systems approaches. From this basis, I go on to consider the implications of a practice theory approach for informing
interventions to effect a system transition towards decarbonised transport.

Highlights

â–º A decarbonised transport system requires fundamental changes in what people do as well as in technologies and infrastructures. â–º Policy aimed at change in transport behaviour needs to move beyond individualistic and technocentric approaches. â–º Theories of practice offer a distinctive way of understanding how what people do relates to systems of transport.

Keywords

Practices; Socio-technical systems; Transition; Transport; Cycling; Driving

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