

Institution: Lancaster University
Unit of Assessment: Sociology (UoA23)
Title of case study: From Attitudes to Practices: new Approaches to Climate Change Policy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>For the last two decades, sociologists at Lancaster have demonstrated the centrality of social organisation and practice for climate change policy. This case study focuses on the impact of Elizabeth Shove's research in particular. Shove's work challenges the prevailing emphasis on individual attitudes and behaviours and shows that the consumption of energy, water and other natural resources is an outcome of shared social practices. Through innovative forms of interaction and collaboration ("working parties"; exhibitions, etc.) Shove has inspired organisations such as WWF, the Environment Agency, DECC, DCLG, DEFRA, the Scottish Government and the International Energy Agency to take social practices seriously as topics of policy, planning and intervention. Individual behavioural models are no longer the only point of reference in policy design.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>In 2008 Elizabeth Shove was awarded one of six ESRC climate change leadership fellowships. This 3 year award, "Transitions in Practice: Climate Change and Everyday Life", which received a unanimous 'outstanding' evaluation, recognised her important contributions and enabled her to develop the policy implications of practice theory. In 2012, Shove and colleagues were awarded £5 million (EPSRC/ESRC/EDF) for DEMAND, a new research centre on the Dynamics of Energy, Mobility and Demand which draws on similar ideas. Based in Sociology, Shove extends Lancaster's tradition of cutting edge research on social-environmental change, a tradition pioneered by the widely influential Centre for the Study of Environmental Change (CSEC), established in 1991.</p> <p>Shove's own line of thinking has taken shape since the mid-1990s, supported by a series of significant research awards (the European Science Foundation, ESRC programmes, the EU) and consultancies (Unilever, the UK water industry research association etc.). Key concepts and results from these projects were discussed in the landmark book, <i>Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience: the social organization of normality</i> (Shove, 2003) – over 880 citations (Google Scholar). Shove's arguments, and those of her colleagues, have been developed in subsequent publications including 5 other books, and a series articles and book chapters. Recent works include a best-selling book <i>The Dynamics of Social Practice</i> (Shove et al, 2012), and an influential article '<i>Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change</i>' (2010) - over 187 citations (Google Scholar). These and other writings show policy makers how they can influence the 'elements' of which social practices are made and how they can shape the 'systems' of practice on which the resource demands of daily life depend.</p> <p>Policy makers and planners charged with the task of reducing CO₂ emissions routinely suppose that patterns of consumption stem from individual beliefs, actions and lifestyle choices. These assumptions, inspired by dominant paradigms within economics and psychology, underpin a repertoire of policy responses in which people are provided with information about the consequences of their actions and encouraged to change their attitudes, behaviours and choices (ABC). Shove's research develops an alternative approach, drawing on social theories of practice, consumption and technology.</p> <p>This strategy recognises that most environmentally significant forms of consumption occur without reflection and in the course of reproducing taken-for-granted practices and conventions of comfort, cleanliness and mobility. Shove and colleagues provide a conceptual framework for understanding how practices are reproduced and transformed in the detail of everyday life. This involves</p>

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analysing the materials, meanings and competences on which practices depend and demonstrating how individuals are recruited to, and how they become the 'carriers' of practices like those of daily showering, commuting and heating indoor spaces to 22°C. The crucial point is that social practices, their elements, and their evolution over time and space, figure as the central units of analysis *and* of policy intervention.

Through her ESRC fellowship, her involvement in the Manchester-based Sustainable Practices Research Group, and her directorship of the DEMAND Research Centre, Shove has developed an increasingly influential body of work around these core concerns.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Shove, E., Pantzar, M. and Watson, M. (2012), *The dynamics of social practice: everyday life and how it changes*, London: Sage.
- Shove, E., (2012), 'Putting practice into policy: reconfiguring questions of consumption and climate change', *Contemporary Social Science: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences*
- Shove, E. (2010), 'Beyond the ABC: climate change policy and theories of social change', *Environment and Planning A*, **42**(6), pp. 1273 – 1285.
- Shove, E. and Walker, G. (2007), 'Caution! Transitions ahead: politics, practice and sustainable transition management', *Environment and Planning A*, **39**(4), pp. 763 – 770
- Shove, E. Watson, M. Hand, M. and Ingram, J. (2007) *The design of everyday life*, Oxford: Berg.
- Shove, E. (2003), *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience: the social organization of normality*, Oxford: Berg.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The most tangible impact of Shove's research is to have established 'social practice theory' as a point of reference in climate change policy. As such, her work challenges the dominance of behavioural paradigms which have proved largely ineffective in securing a sustainable future. Because of Shove's research and engagement, new ideas are filtering in and there is substantial debate about how policy makers might engender significant transitions in practice. This is an outcome of a distinctive and innovative approach to impact.

As part of her ESRC fellowship, in 2010, Shove established a 'social change, climate change working party' including academic and non-academic members. Working party meetings were critical in shaping ideas and feeding them into the strategies and working practices of organisations like the Environment Agency and the International Energy Agency (IEA), private firms (e.g. WS Atkins, AD Research & Analysis), and NGOs (e.g. WWF). Through such direct methods of engagement, Shove's work has been taken up and applied: WWF has revised research methods and agendas as a result; AD Research & Analysis (a policy/research consultancy) has actively promoted practice-theory models, and the IEA now supports research on practice and energy demand. Working party members comment as follows: "Elizabeth is the singular most influential person in the 'behaviour and energy efficiency' work I have been tasked to lead at the International Energy Agency.", Sara Bryan Pasquier (Programme Manager - International Energy Agency, and from Glenn Watts (Theme Expert – Environment Agency) "you introduced me to new literature and different ways of thinking that made me re-evaluate my approaches to thinking about water use and climate change. I think that your "Sociology of water use" report is extremely valuable and I use it frequently with colleagues new to the subject of water use."

The working party process culminated in an *Extraordinary Lecture* on "How Social Science Can Help Climate Change Policy", held at the British Library (2011) and performed by Shove and working party members. This event drew an audience of around 200 including members of the public and people from business, policy and academia. The performance and an associated interactive "Exhibition of Ideas" presented key insights from Shove's fellowship. This is some of the unsolicited non-academic feedback. "I was sitting beside Moira Wallace (DECC's Perm Sec) at dinner last night....I told her about your BSA meeting [with which the extraordinary lecture and

exhibition were combined] and the conversation actually echoed many of the points made there.”; “Tell me more!” (DCLG); “No doubt you spotted our massive enthusiasm for your work. Please do keep us posted of developments.” (DECC). The film of the Extraordinary Lecture has been viewed over 3,171 times on the fellowship website, which has had more than 12,881 visits (Google analytics)(1).

Following the success of the Extraordinary Lecture, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) hosted “DAY 22”, an exhibition led by Shove on the history, future and environmental implications of a standardised indoor climate (funded by the ESRC Festival of Social Science). 148 people attended, mainly from DECC and other Government Departments. 69% of DECC visitors who responded to the feedback survey thought the exhibition would, or might, change the way they thought about their work (2). DAY 22 prompted DECC’s acting Permanent Secretary to discuss risks of overheating with the Health Protection Agency and ‘reinvigorated’ links between DECC and DCLG. This exhibition has since been mounted in Melbourne, Australia (2012) for a local government audience, and for the Scottish government (2013).

More conventional forms of dissemination have also had effect. Shove was invited to present evidence in person to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee in 2010, following a written submission outlining the limitations of the behavioural paradigm and the principles of an alternative ‘practice theory’ approach (3). In addition, researchers and policy consultants have drawn heavily upon Shove’s work which is now routinely cited in analyses, reviews and guidance on behaviour/climate change produced by and for government. Examples include advice to Defra on habits and routines (AD Research & Analysis, 2010 and 2011) (4), ‘An introduction to thinking about energy behaviour’ (DECC/Chatterton, 2011) (5); ‘A study of domestic energy use’ (DECC/Fell and King, 2012) (6), analyses of behaviour change initiatives for the Scottish Government (SPRG, 2011; AD Research & Analysis, 2012) (7), plus the European Commission’s Science for Environmental Policy: Green Behaviour (2012).

In combination, this is evidence not of a single policy change in a defined area, but of a more diffuse and perhaps more powerful impact on how policy problems are framed. This explains wider public interest, demonstrated by media coverage in the UK (as a guest on Radio 4’s Woman’s Hour – talking about changing laundry practices, 2009, on Radio Coventry and Warwickshire (2013) on showering following coverage in the Times and Daily Mail (2013) (8), in Australia (Canberra Times, 2009; ABC radio, 2009) and the USA (New York Times, 2013). It also explains why Shove’s research is having an impact on business and policy beyond the field of climate change. The product design organisation IDEO sponsored a CASE studentship on practice-oriented design (Shove/McHardy), the UK Water Industry Research Association has funded research into domestic water-consuming practices (Shove/Medd), Shove’s research has been taken up by the Forestry Commission (FC/Morris et. al. 2012) and the EDF R&D, together with Transport for London and the IEA are providing over £1.6 million additional/in-kind funding for the DEMAND centre.

Looking ahead, and looking beyond energy/climate change policy, Shove is developing the implications of practice-theory for public health. The first step in this strategy is to co-author an agenda setting article with Professor Mike Kelly, Director of the Centre of Public Health at the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the production of which is timed to coincide with revisions to NICE guidance on ‘behaviour change’.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- (1) Shove and members of the social change-climate change working party, *The Extraordinary Lecture*, British Library, 17 January 2011: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/shove/lecture/filmedlecture.htm> and related *Exhibition of Ideas*: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/shove/lecture/lecture.htm>
- (2) DECC/Matt Lipson, host of DAY 22 co-authored this report on the event’s

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impact <http://www.sprg.ac.uk/uploads/day-22-report.pdf>

- (3) Shove's submission and oral evidence to the House of Lords enquiry into behaviour change (2010) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/ldsctech/179/17902.htm>
- (4) DEFRA/AD Research & Analysis Ltd (2011) 'Habits, Routines and Sustainable Lifestyles' <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=One&Completed=0&ProjectID=16189>
- (5) DECC/ Tim Chatterton (2011) An Introduction to thinking about 'Energy Behaviour' - <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/about-us/economics-social-research/3887-intro-thinking-energy-behaviours.pdf>
- (6) DECC/ Fell D., King G. (2012). *Domestic energy use study: to understand why comparable households use different amounts of energy.* https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/65599/6919-domestic-energy-use-study.pdf
- (7) Scottish Government/SPRG (2011) 'International Review of Behaviour Initiatives' <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/01104638/0>
- (8) Radio 4's Woman's Hour, 'The Washing Line', 19 November 2009 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/03/2009_46_thu.shtml; Radio Coventry and Warwickshire, 16.6.13, Mollie Green show, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p019rcyn>; Peta Bee 4.6.13, "Should we say goodbye to the daily shower"; <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/article3781798.ece> and Daily Mail <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2335634/Take-shower-just-ONCE-week-want-better-hair-skin-say-dermatologists.html> (misquoted as Elizabeth Lancaster)
- (9) Koerth-Baker, M. (27.1.2013), 'What Does It Mean to Be Comfortable?'; New York Times Sunday Magazine http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/magazine/what-does-it-mean-to-be-comfortable.html?_r=0
- (10) Forestry Commission/Morris et. al. (2012), Forestry, sustainable behaviours and behaviour change: Policy context: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/behaviour_review_policy.pdf/\\$file/behaviour_review_policy.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/behaviour_review_policy.pdf/$file/behaviour_review_policy.pdf)

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