

XXIV Journées scientifiques de la Société d'Ecologie Humaine,
27-28 septembre 2012 MMSH Aix-en-Provence



Searching English language journals on Interdisciplinarity and Energy

Ben Campbell
Durham University
Anthropology

RESUME : « La place de l'Ecologie humaine dans les revues anglophones »

A partir d'exemples pris dans le champ des questions énergétiques l'intervention aborde la question des publications interdisciplinaires dans les revues anglophones.

My Interdisciplinary History



- With Development Studies
- With ethnography of biodiversity conservation
- *Living Between Juniper and Palm: nature, culture and power in the Himalayas*
- Now with energy

in PhD research in the field of conservation studies, when for example one student is expected to both animal and human behaviour, the social science component usually consists of survey work on ‘attitudes to wildlife’

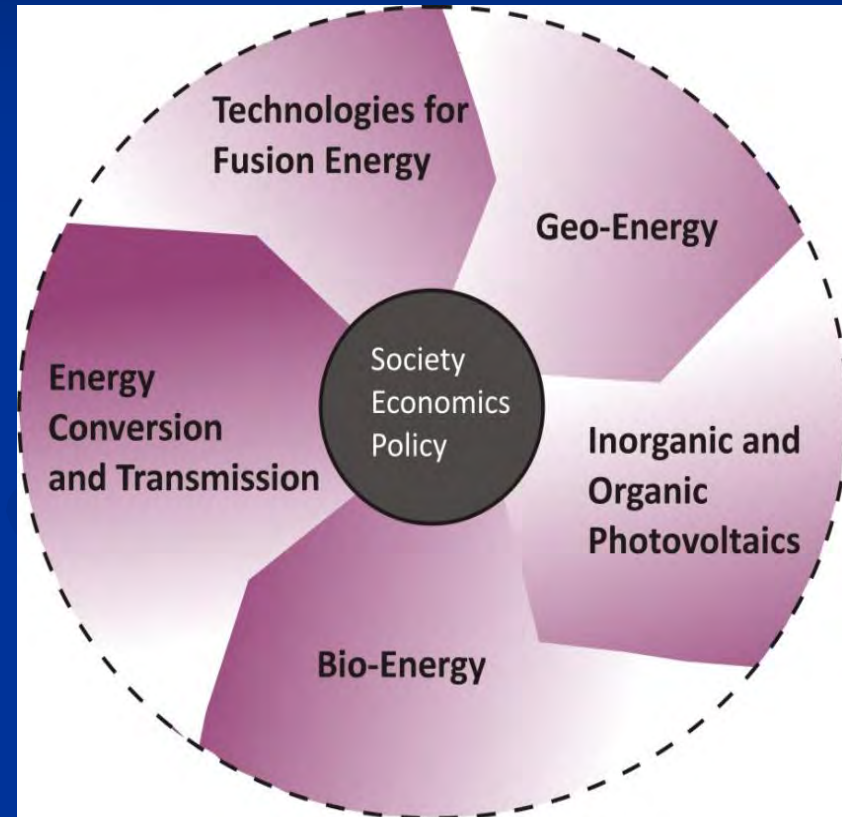
QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Research grants in prospect:

How to avoid ‘end of pipe’ social science, with issues of acting human beings entering the system only once the material **stuff** has been delivered.

Our Approach

- Energy systems are socio-technical: they are made and operated through combination of social and technical elements
- Low Carbon Energy Transitions therefore require processes of social and technical change: we need to understand both of these aspects simultaneously



- articles I have identified concentrate on theoretical and conceptual framings for interdisciplinary work on energy and society.
- attempting to reconcile the dominant techno-centric and market-oriented approaches with attention to diversity in the conditions and cultural contexts in which technologies and exchange values operate.
- The attention of techno-philes and free-marketeers need to be mobilised by considerations of evidence ‘on the ground’ from project failures, unintended consequences, of other views and examples of alternatives and local practices which point towards the achievement of sustainability goals by other means.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

2009 the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

An Uncommon Scholar of the Commons

Carl Folke, John M. Anderies, Lance Gunderson , and Marco A. Janssen

2012 Ecology and Society 17(2): 31

- 1990 book *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*
- Her work countered the conventional wisdom that only private ownership or top-down regulation could prevent a “tragedy of the commons,” in which users would inevitably destroy the resources that they held in common. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combined theory, field studies, and laboratory experiments, she demonstrated that people are capable of creating rules-in-use, institutions that allow for the sustainable and equitable management of shared natural resources.

- Lin was deeply engaged in collaborative research on social-ecological systems and resilience thinking, excited about learning and rethinking earlier views, expanding frameworks, and understanding across the sciences, always open for new findings and thinking. It was never about defending turf. It was about collaboration and grounded scholarship for a deeper understanding of social-ecological systems,

■ *Ecology and Society*

- There is a strong emphasis on ‘systems’, and the managerial impetus for influencing how things change on the ground has found favour for historical analyses of systems transition. Some of the more interesting work in this respect has been done by STEPS/SPRU (Smith and Sterling)
- Smith, A., and A. Stirling. 2010. The politics of social-ecological resilience and sustainable socio-technical transitions. *Ecology and Society* 15(1):

- My problematic is how to introduce cultural comparative reflections on what energy ‘is’, and how energy-related problems become subject to social analysis. How can we move from projections about scarcity in energy provision for current systems of production, consumption and transport that assume a future in which renewable energy sources can substitute in the mechanisms of global lifestyles.
- And whether radical alternatives can be proposed ‘at scale’ for ‘smart’ grids, for bio-regional approaches to food-and-energy systems, and for community ownership models for microgeneration of renewables.
- These are general sustainability issues

TRANSFORMING INNOVATION— DIRECTION, DIVERSITY, DISTRIBUTION

- “Such farmer-led strategies emphasize sustaining smallholder livelihoods and recognize the importance of diversity—of crops, seed varieties, agro-biodiversity, and strategies—in building resilience in complex, dynamic local environments. Dialogs and fora that bring farmers, scientists, businesses, and policymakers together, such as those conducted in Kenya ... have helped to clarify the roles of these different innovation pathways in addressing diverse national and local sustainability priorities and both the need for and challenges of building the multi-scale approaches that will be essential to address dryland challenges.”
- Leach, M., J. Rockström, P. Raskin, I. Scoones, A. C. Stirling, A. Smith, ..., .. 2012. Transforming innovation for sustainability. *Ecology and Society* **17**(2): 11.

What about 'culture'

- *Energy Policy* journal is explicitly interdisciplinary

Energy Policy 38 (2010) 6120– 6129

- ‘Energy cultures: A framework for understanding energy behaviours’
- Janet Stephenson, Barry Barton, Gerry Carrington c, Daniel Gnoth, Rob Lawson, Paul Thorsnes
- Keywords: Integrated framework Energy behaviour Interdisciplinary

- Building on a history of attempts to offer multi-disciplinary integrating models of energy behaviour, we take a culture-based approach to behaviour, while drawing also from lifestyles and systems thinking. The framework provides a structure for addressing the problem of multiple interpretations of ‘behaviour’ by suggesting that it is influenced by the interactions between cognitive norms, energy practices and material culture.
- The Energy Cultures framework is discussed in the context of a New Zealand case study, which demonstrates its development and application. It has already provided a basis for cross-disciplinary collaboration, and for multi-disciplinary research design, and has provided insights into behavioural change in a case study community. As the conceptual basis of a 3-year research project, the framework has further potential to identify clusters of ‘energy cultures’ – similar patterns of norms, practices and/or material culture – to enable the crafting of targeted actions to achieve behaviour change.

- Reading across a range of disciplines, it seems that ‘behaviour’ is sometimes characterised primarily in terms of the energy technologies acquired or adopted by the consumer (e.g. is the house well-insulated? does it have a heat pump?); sometimes in terms of the consumer’s use of energy-related technologies (do they drive or walk to work? do they use a dishwasher?); sometimes in terms of the consumer’s aspirations (e.g. cleanliness, a healthier environment), and also as various interrelationships between these factors (Shove, 2003; Keirstead, 2006; Wilson and Dowlatabadi, 2007).
- While the fuzziness of the term could be considered to be problematic, from our inter-disciplinary perspective the ability to consider all three characterisations of behaviour – technologies, activities and aspirations – as inter-relating aspects proved to be a key to the energy cultures concept. (6122-3)

- The Transition Town movement is a ‘vibrant international grassroots movement that brings people together to explore how we – as communities – can respond to the environmental, economic and social challenges arising from climate change’ (Transition Towns New Zealand Aotearoa, n.d.(a)). They are thus a great place to learn about the process of behaviour change towards greater energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy. (6126)

Renewable energy policy and public perceptions of renewable energy: A cultural theory approach

- J. West a,n, I. Bailey a, M. Winter b,1
- Energy Policy 38 (2010) 5739–5748
- In summary, the strengths and weaknesses of cultural theory suggest that it is most fruitfully used to provide snapshots of a controversial debate, to enable: structuring of the multiple and complex ways issues are perceived; exploration of the parameters of debates and assessment of the implications of worldviews for issues like RE policy. ..
- evidence exists of the ability of cultural theory to categorise complex debates into a more coherent form

- In overview, only egalitarian discourse was represented by positive associations between energy efficiency and lifestyle changes; individualist and hierarchist narratives portrayed lifestyles as non-negotiable. These positions were not immovable, however, and several participants who expressed individualist discourses suggested that people would respond to economic incentives for energy efficiency behaviour. Hierarchist narratives demonstrated a willingness to modify lifestyles, in contrast, but only if assurances were received that changing lifestyles did not mean compromising them and that similar commitments would be expected of everyone. (5743-4)

The socio-technical barriers to Solar Home Systems (SHS) in Papua New Guinea: “Choosing pigs, prostitutes, and poker chips over panels”

- Benjamin K. Sovacool n, Anthony L. D’Agostino, Malavika Jain Bambawale
- Energy Policy 39 (2011) 1532–1542
- This article reviews attitudes and observations in the energy domain, combined with research in Papuan communities

- another participant commented that:
- Institutions like the World Bank or USAID think that if you have a good idea or new energy technology, you are 90 percent there, and implementation takes the remaining 10 percent. Experience here suggests it is really the opposite: 10 percent the idea, and 90 percent the training, the consumer awareness, and the promotion. Getting the technology right is completely secondary to effective promotion in gaining social acceptance. (1539)
- Attempts to promote SHS in PNG so far have partially failed because they did not appreciate the importance of culture. They have presumed that the users of SHS in PNG were similar to those in other countries where conceptions of money, property, time, and community were widely held. In PNG, users do not fully understand how commodities and a market economy work, and often view SHS as an affront and insult to their local culture, something to be destroyed rather than deployed. Many villagers also place greater priority on purchasing pigs, drinking alcohol, gambling, or saving for one's "bride price" instead of energy services or SHS.(1541)

Common Knowledge 18:3

- A few students in Paris circulated a petition in 2000, calling for pluralism in the economics curriculum, such that neoclassical and rational-expectations theory would no longer be taught “as if this were THE economic truth,” and mathematical modeling no longer learned as if it were the only respectable way of doing economics. A number of economics instructors, throughout France, replied by organizing a reform movement that gained renown under the name of “non- autistic” or “post-autistic” economics. The movement spread swiftly to Britain, where the Independent newspaper translated the message from France: “If there is a daily prayer for the global economy, it should be, ‘Deliver us from abstraction.’ ” By 2001 students of economics from seventeen countries had met in Kansas City and composed an “international open letter” encouraging “a broader conception of human behavior” among economists, along with a “recognition of culture,” “consideration of history,” “a new theory of knowledge” (not based on the fact- value distinction), “empirical grounding,” “expanded methods,” and “interdisciplinary dialogue.” (526-7)

- I have not come across ethnographic accounts of how interdisciplinary collaborations have actually progressed on the ground, and how research objectives have been negotiated through the engagement of researchers and their different kinds of relational encounters and reflections in the field.

Strathern, M. 2006. 'A community of critics? Thoughts on new knowledge'

J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst. (12): 19-209

- simultaneous translation vs trade pidgin
- “interdisciplinarity ... combines in itself two sets of values that Euro-Americans, and especially those of the British sort, find compelling. On the one hand is all the creativity contained in the idea of crossing boundaries with the innovative possibilities of making connections. On the other hand are the ‘shirtsleeves’, the logic of marshalling of experts to talk with one another to solve problems, and the practical sense of addressing issues that cannot be handled by one approach alone. It is an unbeatable combination” (2006:196)

- interdisciplinarity evoked as a measure of innovation obscures attempts to apply evaluation procedures to itself. The result is ‘the lack of available criteria to assess interdisciplinary work on its own terms’ (2006:200)
- Each interdisciplinary encounter points to a fresh encounter in a terrain only uncertainly mapped. It is the obviousness of the uncertainty that is important here. The constant shortfall of knowledge that never gets beyond recognition spaces holds out the hope that one can always re-engage.(2006 : 203)