



Transitions in Energy Landscapes and Everyday Life in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Time 27-29 April 2017

Venue Kerschensteiner Kolleg, Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany

Conveners Heather Chappells (University of British Columbia), Vanessa Taylor (University of Greenwich), Frank Trentmann (Birkbeck, University of London), Helmuth Trischler (Deutsches Museum, RCC)

Abstract This workshop will explore the co-evolution of energy landscapes and everyday lives over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Energy landscapes are environments defined by energy-related processes and infrastructures of extraction, generation, transmission, distribution, and consumption. These environments have changed dramatically in the last two centuries. Systems based around local extraction of wood to fuel open fires have been gradually, though not completely or uniformly, replaced by centralized generating plants, gas pipelines, pylons, and wires delivering energy directly to homes. Changes in material and spatial energy formations have coincided with major social transformations of consumer cultures and urban/rural ways of life. But how energy transformed everyday lives and how people engaged with energy and other infrastructures of modernity was, and still is, highly differentiated by political, cultural, and social contexts.



Thursday, 27 April 2017

8.00 pm Informal dinner at GAST (Rosenheimer Str. 5, 81667 München)

Friday, 28 April 2017

9.00–9.15 am Welcome / Introductions

9.15–10.15 am **Keynote**
Ruth Sandwell (University of Toronto)
"Households at the Centre: Understanding Canada's Great Energy Transformation"

10.15–10.45 am **Break**

10.45 am–12.15 pm **Session 1: Everyday Encounters with Energy: Households in Energy Landscapes**
Moderator: Frank Trentmann

This opening session addresses the interconnections between domestic energy users in everyday life, energy landscapes and networks. Key topics for consideration are how consumers were imagined and structured in their encounters with new material forms of energy and how they themselves shaped the domestic energy spaces and social relationships that evolved.

Heather Chappells and Vanessa Taylor (University of British Columbia, Vancouver; University of Greenwich)
"Landscapes of Home: Variability in Household-Energy Connections in the 20th Century"

Emily Roehl (University of Texas at Austin)
"Material and Affective Extraction in the Standard Oil (New Jersey) Photographic Project"

Nina Möllers (Deutsches Museum)
"From Single Objects of Wonder to Energy Landscapes: How Household Exhibitions Mediated Energy Consumption Patterns, 1920s until Today"

12.15–1.30 pm **Lunch**

1.30–3.30 pm **Deutsches Museum Exhibition Visit**

3.30–5.00 pm

Session 2: Transformations of Urban and Rural Space: The Evolution and Politics of Energy Grids

Moderator: Vanessa Taylor

This session addresses the emergence of energy grids in different historical and spatial settings. Papers will highlight the evolution of energy infrastructures, from locally based to centralized systems, in different urban and rural environments. How were these related to divergent economic and social concerns at multiple scales – from national politics to community cooperation or resistance? The significance of past spatial formations and their underlying politics in understanding current debates around sustainable network development will be explored.

Abby Spinak (Harvard University)

“The Wired Hand: Rural Electricity and Cooperative Capitalism in the New Deal”

Kayt Button (University of Cambridge)

“Spatial Change in the Valley of ‘Firsts’: How the Lea Valley Changed Alongside its Power Sources”

Dieter Bruggeman (Ghent University)

“Historical Electrification Logics and the 2014 Electricity Supply Crisis in Belgium”

5.00–5.30 pm

Break

5.30–6.30 pm

Session 3: Material Encounters and Spatial Coordination: Energy Distributions, Dynamics and Disruptions

Moderator: Heather Chappells

This session explores energy users’ encounters with new material energies and how these were coordinated within systems of energy provision. The role of distributional and domestic infrastructures in mediating consumer interactions with material energies and nature will be explored in relation to the past. Papers will also address how different fuel materialities (coal, oil, gas) and ancillary technologies are relevant to developing renewable energy forms today.

Sean Patrick Adams (University of Florida)

“The Bin as the Battery: Energy Storage in Nineteenth-Century Urban America”

Brian C. Black (Pennsylvania State University)

“Pumping Up American Transportation: Filling Stations and American Energy Dependence, 1880-present”

7.30 pm

Conference Dinner at Auer Hof (Mariahilfplatz 4, 81541 Munich)

Saturday, 29 April 2017

9.00–10.30 am

Session 4: Material Transitions and Meanings of Modernity: Cultural Variability in Energy Landscapes

Moderator: Helmut Trischler

This session offers alternative, multi-disciplinary views on energy transitions in developing countries, spanning diverse scales from distributed household systems to large-scale electricity grids. Papers will draw attention to shifting notions of productivity, efficiency and modernity in relation to culturally variable energy landscapes emerging in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Ute Hasenöhr (University of Innsbruck)

“Colonial and Postcolonial Energy Landscapes: The Indian Case, 1857-2016”

Jennifer Baka (Pennsylvania State University)

“Landscapes, Livelihoods and Energy Transitions: A Political-Industrial Ecology Analysis of India’s Biomass to Biofuel Energy Transition, 1970s to the Present”

Sarah Strauss and Carrick Eggleston (University of Wyoming)

“Water, Wind, and Sun in the City of Dawn: The Undulating Energyscape of Auroville, India”

10.30–11.00 am

Break

11.00 am–1.00 pm

Session 5: Material Energy Transitions: Working with Nature in the Past, Present and Future

Moderator: Christof Mauch

This session explores the implications of diverse forms of renewable energy and working with nature in the past, and what these can tell us about current aspirations and future projections.

Jennifer D. Carlson (Rice University)

“Natural Histories of Power: Senses of Slurry and the Production of Exclusion in Germany’s Energy Transition”

Odinn Melsted (University of Innsbruck)

“Harnessing the Earth’s Power: The Formation of a Geothermal Heating Regime in Reykjavík, 1930–1960”

Daniel A. Barber (University of Pennsylvania)

“The Shaded Modernism of the Global Interior: Climate, Risk, and Media in the work of MMM Roberto, Rio de Janeiro, 1936-1955”

Karen Pinkus (Cornell University)

“Energio Mega-Structures”

1.00–2.15 pm

Lunch

2.15–3.00 pm

Session 6: Final Discussion

This final discussion reflects on the value of comparative historical transformations for understanding sustainable transitions today and in the future.