Energy-renovation of buildings as an intervention in ecologies of practices
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The paper is addressing theme 2: Professions and Energy Demand.

It is increasingly acknowledged that change in energy consumption cannot be sufficiently addressed by 1) targeting the consumer as an individual, or 2) merely optimizing energy supply and buildings. The socio-materiality of energy consumption needs to be addressed and investigated based on a more comprehensive understanding of how different bundles of practices (re)produce and shape consumption patterns.

Several relevant accounts exist concerning the constitution of current practices that implicates a resource-dependent everyday life, and the environmental implications of the performance of these practices (e.g. Warde, 2005, Shove et al, 2012). These accounts provide substantial insight to what constitutes energy-demand, suggesting that energy-demand is a result of the constitution and reproduction of numerous practices interlinking patterns of energy-production/supply and energy-consumption/demand (e.g. Pantzar and Shove, 2010, Spurling et al 2013).

In this paper, we build on these insights, by contributing to the discussion that interventions in energy consumption should thus address these linkages. More specifically, we are interested in exploring new forms of governance initiatives, where energy renovation is addressed through the cooperation between different professions involved in development of buildings, like local governments, energy utilities, craftsmen and banks. Our aim is to conceptually explore a way to unfold the relationships between different professions – their expertise, organisation and practices – and the (re)making of demand in daily life. We engage in this conceptualization by presenting a time-space specific case study of an innovative planning process regarding energy efficient renovations of existing houses in the Danish municipality of Middelfart.

In taking point of departure in a) Schatzkis notions of ‘sites’ (where practices unfold in activities and events) and b) Kemmis et als (2015) exploration of ‘ecologies of practices’, we explore examples of existing dynamics of practices involving energy governance, energy production and energy consumption related to conventional processes of renovating houses, and how these are challenged, translated and reconfigured in the innovative governance approach in Middelfart. Through this demonstration, we show the strategic disruption of practices necessary to intervene in energy consumption patterns. Inspired by Kemmis et al (2015), we discuss the practice-architectures of the Middelfart planning process, by exemplifying how new relations (Kemmis et al, 2015) are made between (professional) practices of planning, banking and refurbishing, as well as those of household dynamics, in order to provide a meaningful/lucrative basis for renovating houses for energy efficiency.

Interestingly, the municipality has initiated this new form of planning process as a means for revitalizing the local business community rather than promoting it as a means for energy renovations, which makes a case for exploring this strategy as an interressement device (Callon, 1986). Therefore, we further seek to contribute to a discussion of how translation processes can be addressed as an outcome of (disruptive) practice-dynamics.