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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

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



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Keywords

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

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