

# ENERGY AND POWER. SOCIAL ONTOLOGY PERSPECTIVES AND ENERGY TRANSITIONS

## SEMINARS

October

Alfredo Agustoni, University of Chieti

**Sociology of Energy or energetics sociology?**

November

Jean Claude Leveque, University of Torino

**Flat Ontology: objects, machines, and energy.**

Dicember

Alessandro Cerutti, University of Torino

**Understanding food's thermodynamics.  
An introduction to system thinking**

January

Ugo Bardi, University of Florence

**Peak Oil and Energy Transition**

January

Osman Arrobbio, University of Torino

**Rebound effect and energy transition**

February

Roberto Cantoni, LATTS Paris

**Shale gas e altre amenità per fare sognare**

February

Nicola Labanca, JRC - Ispra

**Adaptive complex systems and energy transition**

March

Franco Ruzzenenti, University of Siena

**Economic and energy cycles**

April

John Urry, University of Lancaster

**Climate change, carbon society,  
and sociological theory**

April

Erik Swyngedouw, University of Manchester

**Urban metabolism of Hybrid cities:  
conflicts, controversies and  
strategies of transition**



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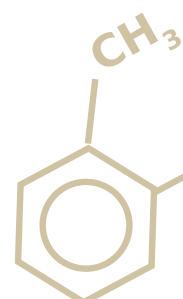
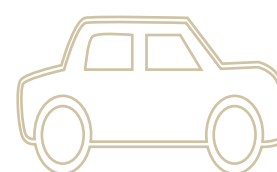
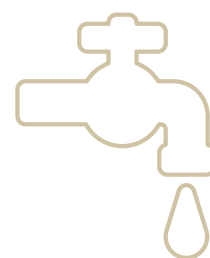
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and Territory Management



ICT e Innovazione per Società e Territorio

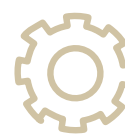


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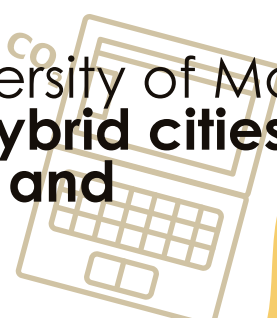


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# ENERGY AND POWER. SOCIAL ONTOLOGY PERSPECTIVES AND ENERGY TRANSITIONS

The socio-environmental issues that arise from the appropriation, conversion, transformation, distribution and use of energy were not the object of sociological studies for a long time, but energy is closely intertwined with the dynamics of communities. A historical analysis shows that **energy sources** are crucial to the organization of society, while the scale of the ongoing **ecological crisis** – which manifests itself mainly through climate change – has brought the issue of energy to the fore and made it a pivotal on the global political agenda.

However, the activation of a **transition towards renewable energy** able to mitigate climate change within a short time is surrounded by uncertainty. It is also hard to see whether this desirable energy transition will be able to redefine the power relations currently shaping the world energy networks. There is no certainty that energy will become a **public good** and will stop being the main commodity able to determine major financial fluctuations on a global scale, as there is no certainty about the possibility that independent and decentralized energy communities will be capable of generating free clean energy for themselves and others. Scenarios abound, but several aspects indicate that the transition will be hard but necessary, given the materiality of energy dynamics intertwined with **socio-economic stability** issues concerning wide areas of the planet; the logistics-driven mobility of goods and people; food production and price variability – as for cereals, cocoa, coffee, meat; the local and global war scenarios; and growth and degrowth related issues.

Energy is at the centre of our model of development, but to most people it is invisible, taken for granted and imperceptible; it is perceived as managed by powerful networks that capture, produce, refine, convert, distribute and supply. These centralized networks, run by **powerful vertical corporations**, are the main obstacle to an energy revolution, which would also require to overcome the path dependency due to the powerful **socio-technical systems** that are uniquely able to transform high entropy energy into low entropy energy.

