Community Energy Identities.


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Overview of the Research Project: Understanding social innovation in comm. energy.

Research Question:
Can concepts of citizenship and community identity be mobilized as strategic resources for sustainability transitions by community energy projects?

Hypotheses guiding my research:

**CONCEPT**
- **CITIZENSHIP** comprises concepts of **RESPONSIBILITY** to community and resources
- **RENEWABLE ENERGY IS SYSTEM TRANSITION** changing the socio-technical transfiguration as well as roles for community and individual

**AGENDA**
- **POLITICAL** (structural change), **SOCIAL** (joint realization), **COMMUNAL** (meaningful beyond individual interest)

**COMMUNITY ENERGY DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITION PROJECTS MATTER** for identity and process
Community practices are emergent and diverse, yet **INTERNAT. SIMILARITIES** in **CONCEPT** and **AGENDA**
Telling an international story:
Similarities in ideas of citizenship and mobilization?

- Community energy projects in four European countries: Scotland, Denmark, Germany, England
- Differences in policy environment for community energy as well as socio-technical configuration of energy sectors
- Projects in urban, rural and island settings
- Services beyond energy generation (e.g. distribution, retail, education, efficiency, reduced consumption)
- Majority ownership and/or management by community
- Active for more than 2 years
Preliminary results: Community energy leadership
Citizenship, Identity, Process.

IDENTITY
Emergent yet distinct and shared concept of energy citizenship
Leadership within projects is individualised, with core personas invoking these concepts in others and facilitating individual operationalization

POWER
CITIZENSHIP and COMMUNITY IDENTITY are mobilized as strategic resources, reinforcing individual as well as community commitment

TRANSITION
international similarities in CONCEPT and AGENDA underscore the relevance of community practices for broader mobilization
Policy learning: Design for social dimension
Behind the project: Research on, by, and for community energy.

Analytical innovation
• Combine research on sustainability transitions with analyses of resource mobilization and power focusing on grassroots innovation.

Participatory approach
• Research motivated by community practice: What is the power of community energy in sustainability transitions and how can this be reflected in respective policy decision-making?
• Include community energy actors as leaders and experts in the project, with the researcher in a collaborative role.

Target
• “Producing use-oriented basic research. (...) Theoretically driven and intended to be put to use.” (Hale (2001) What is Activist Research: p. 14)
• Finding meaningful ways of collaboration with community energy projects within the research project and communicating results effectively
Thank you for your attention.

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This summary presents preliminary results. It is intended for participating community energy projects. I appreciate your thoughts or comments. Please do not circulate or publish content.