



Energy Epistemics as Drivers of Local Energy Transition: How to Solve the Zero-Sum Game of Land-Use and Renewable Energy?

Paper proposal for the STS Conference Graz 2015 "CRITICAL ISSUES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY STUDIES"

Session 22: ENERGY TRANSFORMATIONS, ENERGY EPISTEMICS AND GOVERNANCE – THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Thomas Pfister, Sarah Glück, Martin Schweighofer, Mikro Suharu, The EnergyCultures Research Group, Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen, Germany

Over the last decades the governing of energy transition has witnessed significant changes with an increasing focus on the local rather the national level. Studies indicate the potential of local energy production for the creation of value and for the mitigation of greenhouse gases. So far, the majority of research is on best-practices, and the role of social sciences is rather one of an outside observer to provide objective descriptions of local processes. However, as local energy transition becomes a mainstream solution for local problems, increasingly complex and contested challenges emerge and block localized developments towards sustainable communities. These challenges are routed in social conflicts over different forms of land-use such as nature conservation, agriculture, etc. combined with cultural identities or localized values.

This paper discusses the potential role of social science (among other disciplines) to launch a process of cooperation between scientists (experts on land management, energy systems, governance, and participation) and practitioners (administration, regional politics, culture clubs, energy suppliers). Using the concept of an *innovation group*, social sciences contribute a transdisciplinary and participative instrument to provide conflict resolution within the on-going planning process of local energy transition in the county of Ahrweiler in Germany. Within this process, the innovation group tries to elaborate a jointly developed and commonly accepted concept of sustainable land use in the county. On that basis, the project aims to develop a general model of an epistemic, participatory, and scenario-based decision making process to meet major challenges of sustainable land-use and energy supply.

Dr. André Schaffrin
Project Coordinator
andre.schaffrin@ea-aw.de

Conception of sustainable land use and energy supply
at the municipal level. Implementation in the model
region Ahrweiler (EnAHRgie)

EA European Academy of Technology and Innovation
Assessment GmbH
Wilhelmstr. 56, 53474 Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler,
Germany
Phone +49 2641 973-322