

Conference theme: Transition to sustainability

Session 16: Local Innovation Impulses and the Transformation of the Energy System

Performative connections: sustainable transition and local communities

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Abstract

The debate on sustainable transition is characterized by the confrontation of the multi-level perspective and the social practice theory. Both attribute great importance to the micro level in the analysis of the green innovation but how local communities can manage or adapt the sustainable transition process seems less analyzed. In this respect, the study of commons by the approach of the institutional analysis and development offers important insights on this topic.

Based on these theoretical reflections, we try to propose an analytical hypothesis according to which the formal regulation of the ecological transition in some circumstances may be translated by *performative connections* with the constitutive elements of local community in an unpredictable eco-efficient and fair way. In short, we suppose that in some circumstances communities can translate the regulation patterns of the ecological modernization expressed by the governance of energy incorporating the dimension of socio-environmental justice.

In order to test our hypothesis, during 2013 we carried out an exploratory research on the community of Castalda Sasso, a small mountain municipality in the Basilicata region, Italy. This case-study seemed interesting to investigate because this community implemented environmental-energy local policies that seems hybridized the social local regulations with multi-level governance of the sustainable transition.

Keywords: ecological modernization, sustainable transition, local community.