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The Politics of Innovating Governance in the UK Energy Policy: The Case of Electricity Market Reform

While the necessity of a substantial change towards sustainability in energy system seems uncontroversial, the exact frame of the problem, the prospect of sustainability and the role of government in this fundamental transformation are still quite contested. In the case of UK energy policy, after a long period of the orthodox dominance of liberalized market-based energy system with a very marginal role of state, apparently there is a pattern of energy policy re-birth alongside a substantial change in the policy objectives from competition and cheapest price towards low-carbon, secure and affordable energy system.

This research is shedding light on the complex process of policy evolution and paradigm shift in the UK energy policy leading to the formation of Electricity Market Reform in 2011, as an obvious sign of policy change and complicated innovating governance. For this analysis, a combination of policy process frameworks and public policy theories has been used to explain how and under which contextual situation energy policies are developed and evolved. As an integrated analytical framework, I have used some elements of the Advocacy Coalition framework and Epistemic Communities. The rationale behind this combination is to provide a comprehensive framework to examine the contextual factors framing the energy policy context and highlight the role of new ideas and policy innovations embedded in epistemic communities, like transition management, in the dominance of one policy design amongst other competing policy alternatives.