

## **3: Politicising Climate and Energy Transformations**

### **Children of the Anthropocene: Nature, Energy and Citizenship**

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#### **Abstract**

Energy systems have gained relevance through the concept of the Anthropocene. Humans are now possibly informed actors for destroying, maintaining or repairing their habitat. Dominated by its electricity form, energy systems was a main ingredient in forming advanced industrial-based civilizations. IPCC (2014) declared electrical energy production (especially coal) as a main driver of climate change. The paper discuss the possibility of responsible “energy citizens” that develops skills relating to new energy regimes more characterised by sustainability, decentralization and mass-market organization. Energy was traditionally local, even family based; matters of skill and caring that gradually developed into large scale, industrialized, sentralized and commodified products. We discuss the perspectives, practices and alienation attitudes towards nature that came with modernity and industrialism, the new forces of governance and the resulting institutions of huge grids and big power plants. The climate change challenge goes together with changing perspectives on nature and cultural anti-commodification factors. Together with more consumer-oriented, mass-produced and decentralized energy production regimes (examples are wind and solar) these factors may create a renaissance for roles of responsible energy-consumer-prosumers. Consumers may develop into actors in several ways; in daily life as more energy-oriented citizens, also as co-producers in a dialectical and growing interface with new technologies, in markets through grades of political consumerism and finally as cultural-political agents of energy-based anthropocene responisibility. These trends combines a longing for lost authenticity and acotor status (commodification) with possibilities for being responsible Anthropocene actors. The aim of the paper is to discuss these possibilities and our position is that they are possible, not necessary determined developments.

### **On the Inertia of Northern Hemispheric Polities in Moving Beyond Oil**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper explores the carbon fingerprints in the recent rise of an antiestablishment populist right (Trump, Brexit, Geert, Le Pen, etc.) across the Northern Hemisphere

against the backdrop of scholarship on climate change, energy studies, and political economy.

Contemporary scholarship helps us understand the productive socio-material carbonscapes imbued across industry, democracy, and capitalism, which fostered enormous power, wealth and security for the minority human population of the Northern Hemisphere over the past two centuries. An increasing carbon footprint became central to the entitled political and social positions of being American, English, French, Dutch, etc.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see this entitlement challenged by the politics of climate and energy. Southern hemispheric nations are mobilizing ascendant aspirations for carbon infused development. Diverse constituencies within both Northern and Southern hemispheric nations are pushing to move beyond carbon to avert the worst outcomes of climate change.

Climate metrics outlined in the Paris Agreement entail up to an 80% reduction in many Northern hemispheric nations, creating complex reactions across this region. Several decades of neo-liberal economic policies across the Northern hemisphere have created a growing inequality within and between nations. In particular, working class populations across the Northern hemisphere have met declining living standards and life opportunities, creating volatile social and political dynamics.

This complex set of developments situates the recent emergence of an antiestablishment populist right across the Northern Hemisphere, creating both movement and inertia in transformations associated with 'moving beyond oil'. Against the backdrop of these developments, I explore current trends in Northern Hemispheric identity formation as a reactive climate and energy politics of the Anthropocene.

## **Theorizing transformations: from bounded systems to relational mobilization**

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### **Abstract**

Examining and realizing transformations to societies beyond oil raises questions about where innovation takes place, and how this change is mobilized to other places or scales. Resilience approaches and multilevel transitions theory have examined relatively bounded systems or niches, based on the assumption that innovation in one niche may over time affect a larger regime. The understanding of transformation initiatives is accordingly based on a vocabulary emphasizing local innovation, (living) labs, incubators, niches, experimentation, and front-runners. Yet, research on how innovations from these sites may in fact generate more widespread social and political changes is strikingly scarce.

We argue that much can be gained from examining how transformations are mobilized as relational, rather than bounded, endeavors. A relational understanding of

transformation processes stresses how innovations and local mobilizations are interconnected with multiple elsewheres, which shape and condition their possibilities. This has implications for how agency in transformations is theorized, for elaborating the pathways through which transformations are scaled, and for empirical approaches for studying transformations. Drawing on theoretical debates on the spatialities of politics, particularly the policy mobilities literature, we will show that transformation depends on interconnections between multiple geographically dispersed nodes of innovation. Our empirical examples are drawn from our research on urban transformations in Europe. It shows that innovative and transformative interventions in cities rarely come about in bounded systems or niches. Instead they are mobilized by innovations, technologies and interventions that are exchanged and translated between cities, and within networks of policy makers, planners, consultants and activists at a transurban scale.

## **Conceptualising and performing 'energy precarity'**

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### **Abstract**

This paper develops the notion of 'energy precarity' in order to uncover the governance practices and material conditions that drive and reproduce the inability of households to secure socially- and materially-necessitated levels of energy services in the home. The overarching aim is to foreground a geographical approach towards the study of domestic energy deprivation, by emphasizing the complex socio-spatial and material embeddedness of fuel poverty. I employ energy precarity as a means of unpacking the spaces where energy deprivation is produced, experienced and contested. Among other findings, I highlight that people's fluid lifestyles and specific end-use energy demand patterns mean that energy deprivation metaphorically and physically overflows the limits of home, creating multiple performativities of precarity that have received very little attention to date.