

13th Conference  
of the European  
Sociological Association

(Un)Making Europe:  
Capitalism, Solidarities,  
Subjectivities

**ESA 2017**  
**ATHENS**

29.08

01.09



ABSTRACT BOOK

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HELLENIC  
SOCIOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

Athens | 29 August – 01 September 2017  
ESA 13th Conference | (Un)Making Europe: Capitalism, Solidarities, Subjectivities |  
<http://esa13thconference.eu/>  
Organisers | European Sociological Association | <http://www.europeansociology.org/>  
Hellenic Sociological Society | <http://www.hellenicsociology.gr/el/content/1>  
Graphic Design | Dimitris Fragoulakis | e-mail: [dfragoul@yahoo.gr](mailto:dfragoul@yahoo.gr)

ISSN 2522-2562  
Abstract book (European Sociological Association)  
Publisher | European Sociological Association (ESA), Paris, France  
URL: <https://www.europeansociology.org/publications/esa-conference-abstract-books>  
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field perspective as an approach to study this interplay. Social fields are conceptualized meso-level social orders in which different types of actors interact based on shared structures in the form of joint understandings, rules, and power-constellations. The approach is applied to the empirical case of the energy transition in a German city. In the course of the interplay of local politicians, businesses, municipal employees, scientists, citizen initiatives, a local energy transition field emerges which is marked by hierarchies, collaboration, shared understandings, and differing positions regarding the purpose of the energy transition.

Unmaking still in the making? Technological trajectories of the German energy transition

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The German energy transition is often framed as a success story: new actors emerged in the field of policy making and technology development and helped establishing renewable energy production and consumption and by so doing paved the way towards more sustainable futures. However, the German energy transition lacks commitment towards decarbonizing its electricity sector, coal fired energy is still produced in old intensely emitting facilities. This underscores the need to also envision 'dead ends' of energy transitions, which means to divest from coal- or lignite-firing technologies which renewable energy innovations actually try to overcome. The presentation explores the German divestment from coal-fired electricity producing technologies in the face of the German energy transition. One of the findings is that discourses around the German energy transition are biased towards ideas of modernization and innovation, but little attention is given the pathways of ending technological trajectories. At the same time, it seems the ending of technological trajectories is directly linked to the idea of innovation. This raises questions about both the character of energy transitions and its governance. On a general base this also calls in mind the question about where Europe's technological remaking is headed.

Uncovering multi-level governance and policy idea transfer in energy policy using topic modelling on large policy corpuses

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This paper uses a natural language processing method called dynamic topic modelling to map the transfer of ideas between policy levels. The paper presents a case study on energy policy in the European Union, Finland and the Helsinki metropolitan area, using policy documents spanning the past 25 years. The documents include laws and regulations, but also scenarios, roadmaps and

administrative documents, and constitute a massive corpus of circa 2500 documents and tens of thousands of pages. The corpus has been collected with web scraping methods.

The paper uses dynamic topic modelling to map the structure of this corpus and analyze trends over time at the three governance levels. Topic models are a family of machine learning methods that map word co-occurrence in documents to find word probability distributions that are, ideally, interpretable as topics to a human reader. Each document is a selection of words drawn from a mixture of topics. For example, the words "carbon" and "capture" might occur with a high probability in a topic, and that topic might then be interpreted as discussing carbon capture and storage technologies. Dynamic topic models also allow for the evolution of the word distribution, so that the prevalence of "greenhouse effect" might be overtaken with "climate change" as the vocabulary evolves.

This paper looks at the evolution of the topic structure and the words within topics in the three policy contexts, and evaluates whether the emergence of new issues and ideas happens first at the international, national or the local level, and whether the three levels are similar in the topics that are discussed and what vocabulary is used to discuss them.

Linking Portuguese and Iberian anti-nuclear struggles with the global environmental justice movement

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The anti-nuclear mobilization that took place in the last decades throughout the Iberian Peninsula, has been characterized by civil society's participation of both countries. In Portugal there are some cases that have evolved different approaches: 1976: planned nuclear power plant in Ferrel; 1987, 1998: siting of a nuclear waste storage in the Spanish border; 2003-present: uranium mining environmental impacts and ex-workers health and rights; 2007-present: high risks to environment and health due to operation of Spanish nuclear power plant; 2014: mining project near the border.

Meanwhile the Iberian countries are dealing with the controversial decision process of shutting down the nuclear power plant of Almaraz (Spain). We look at this particular case, where the proximity to the frontier and the potential impacts in the biggest Iberian river – Tejo, have brought together citizens, NGOs and activists to protest and pledge to exit nuclear energy for good, as an example of an improved understanding resulting from the global environmental justice movement.

Our activist-research about socio-environmental struggles was developed in the aim of the EJAtlas and the exploratory project "Environment on the move".

We produced a conflicts inventory and worked on cases document analysis and participated/organized events that promoted interaction between researchers, associations, movements and activists linked with different environmental struggles, including nuclear field. This paper presents the different anti-nuclear grassroots mobilization, exploring the different cases complexities regarding the conceptions of conflict, health, environment, citizenship and issues regarding economic, political, social, technical-scientific and also the broader scenario of mobilization.

RN12 | Session 09b Environmental Management and Democratic Governance

Water management as discursive battlefield: the importance of narratives in the struggle for re-municipalization of water in Barcelona.

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The re-municipalization of water has become a growing global trend; more than eighty communities around the world have de-privatized water and sanitation services over the last 15 years. It was the economic crisis in the EU countries, however, that turned the re-municipalization of water into the decisive battlefield in the struggle against neoliberal policies. Currently, discourses promoting privatization as a depoliticized, 'no alternative' part of entrepreneurial urban governance (Harvey) are radically contested by narratives on 'right to city' and environmental justice. In Spain, this tendency coincides with the rise to power at urban level of the new 'populist' leftist parties (Podemos, En Comú), also seen as institutionalized grassroots movements. In this context, my paper analyzes the dynamics of Barcelona's water justice movements from a critical discourse analysis perspective. Using a comparative framework with other cities - Paris, Berlin, Madrid - it will trace the discursive strategies/nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001) at re-politicizing the resources management. It is the purpose of this paper to approach the discursive strategies of mobilization of grassroots movement in the field of water and assess their translation into mainstream urban policy. It will seek to understand how the re-municipalization discourse became hegemonic in the urban policy in Barcelona, in comparison with other cities. It will discern the role of water justice movements in the process as well as the role of the interaction with the institutionalized movements - i.e. political parties such as Podemos, En Comú. The research is based on evidence from (i) critical discourse analysis of the water justice movement's frames; (ii) analysis of decision-making processes in-depth interviews with party and movement leaders; (iii) systematic data gathering.

Citizen education and learning as key components of democratic governance for sustainable

development  
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This paper argues that education and learning are key parameters in democratic environmental governance. It starts with exploring the links between democracy and transparency, explicating the social mechanisms that govern the access of citizens to disclosed information, and articulating the concept of democratic informational governance. Then it takes up key elements in debates on education and learning (including recent views on social learning for sustainability) and brings them to bear on the position of education and learning in informational governance. Drawing on the concept of rationalization of the lifeworld (Habermas), social practice theories (Nicolini), and contextualized learning (Vygotsky), the paper argues that political learning of citizens in everyday life is of central importance to democratic environmental governance, rather than natural science education or advancing critical reflection. The argument is illustrated with cases from climate policy and biodiversity management.

RN12 | Session 10a Environmental Justice

Undermining community heritage and identity? The troubled reopening of the Parina Valley zinc mines

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When in 1982 the last zinc mine of the Parina Valley (in Northern Italy) closed after over a century of activity, a way of life and the community identity of the Valley's mining villages were brought to an end. Hundreds lost their jobs and the younger population migrated to larger cities. The Valley attempted to boost its touristic potential, but its local economy subsequently dwindled. The mining heritage was kept alive with the opening of two small museums, and the annual celebration of the 'miners fete'. Thirty years later a new mining future was proposed for the Valley. In 2014, following the sharp rise in zinc prices and amid a revival of the European mining industry, an Australian company showed interest in the mines and started ongoing works to recommission them and commence new extraction activities.

Drawing on observations, informal conversations with local people and media analysis, this paper presents a preliminary exploration of the impact the mines' reopening has on the Valley's local community, its economy and environment. We engage with and build on scholarship that explores the interconnections between a renewed trend in extractivism largely headed by overseas corporations, local heritage spawned by traditional mining practices, and broader community interests. In particular, we draw on the green criminological literature discussing potential