

Community Low Carbon Transitions

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Community Low Carbon Transitions gathers analyses of the ways in which communities respond to low-carbon challenges. This can be so-called ‘bottom-up:’ grassroots activists coming together to do something about environmental challenges (for example the Transition Town movement); ‘top-down:’ neighbourhood-based schemes of carbon footprint reduction; or less obviously scalar: co-housing schemes, car sharing, community-owned energy. The community implied varies widely. Consider the various ways in which a perceived idea of togetherness is used when environmental action is encouraged: for example the commonly heard sentences ‘the scientific community needs to communicate the science better’, or ‘we need to act on environmental issues’. Varying kinds of ideas of collectivity and togetherness are involved whenever community and environment are co-implicated.

This fellowship will lead to a book, briefly outlined below, which will represent a critical take on these empirical phenomena. There are many different competing theoretical takes on these keywords—standard sociological theories of ‘community,’ what precisely ‘low carbon’ means or does, and how ‘transition’ shapes the academic reception of theories of change in this area. What I mean by *Community Low Carbon Transitions* differs from each of these and offers a more critical approach. My work, along with that of my colleagues, has previously engaged critically with what these social forms, or the normative tasking of community with environmental actions and responsibility, does. It has done this by investigating political/post-political aspects (see EPA paper), discursive and semantic factors, and the enrolled subjectivities called upon in these processes (EPC).

Community Low Carbon Transitions, as an emerging field, is in search of a theoretical framework or quilting point, where many of its key ideas and concepts can be laid out clearly together. Many of the guiding lights in the field have been single case studies and, where not, tend to be surveys or statistical overviews. These are useful, but when analysing social phenomena such as community an ethnographic approach can better grasp many of the underlying aspects and experiences crucial to these social technologies and arrangements. This book, which is based on two in-depth, long-term research projects, is therefore helpful not only in capturing the state of play in this area, but also in setting an agenda for the future of this field.

The first research project this book is based on is a study of three Transition Town projects in a single city (my PhD), the second analyses the formation of a network of community-based environmental activism in Luxembourg (my post-doc). The book will obviously draw on these experiences and papers I have published about them, but will also encapsulate other relevant projects emerging in the literature. One of these sources in particular will prove an important way-marker in the field, and clearly articulate the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘in what ways’ questions for future research on *Community Low Carbon Transitions*.