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Reconfiguring Systems of Energy Production and Consumption: what role for intermediaries?

Energy efficiency is a political priority for the EU. The reconfiguration of systems of energy production and consumption that this implies are the subject of attention in a large number of energy demand side management programmes (DSM). Yet, why and whether DSM programmes succeed or fail is not well understood. One reason this is the case is that DSM programmes are a generic name for a variety of different programmes, practices and social contexts.

DSM programmes are developed at a variety of political levels (supranational, national, regional, community etc), with different political motivations and expectations, with a focus on different 'end-users' (citizens, consumers, households, SMEs, communities, cities, regions). The understanding of *how* DSM programmes engage with different end users in various European cultural contexts requires further conceptual development to understand the processes and practices 'in-between' different contexts of production and consumption. We require a richer understanding of how intermediary organizations (e.g. ESCOs, consultancies, advice centres etc) operate.

In this paper we outline a typology of the different types of intermediary organizations that work between DSM programmes and end-users. We use examples from DSM programmes across the EU to illustrate how these different types of intermediaries build the capacity and capability to work between energy production and consumption interests in actively reconfiguring systems of energy production and consumption. In doing this we examine the financial resources, social networks and forms of knowledge that intermediary organizations mediate in their attempts to actively transform relations of production and consumption.

We also outline a series of future directions for research exploring the active and transformational potential of different intermediary organizations.

Keywords: intermediaries; DSM, end users, production/consumption