

‘Pro-savers’: the role of community in energy demand reduction

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eccee Summer Study

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Structure

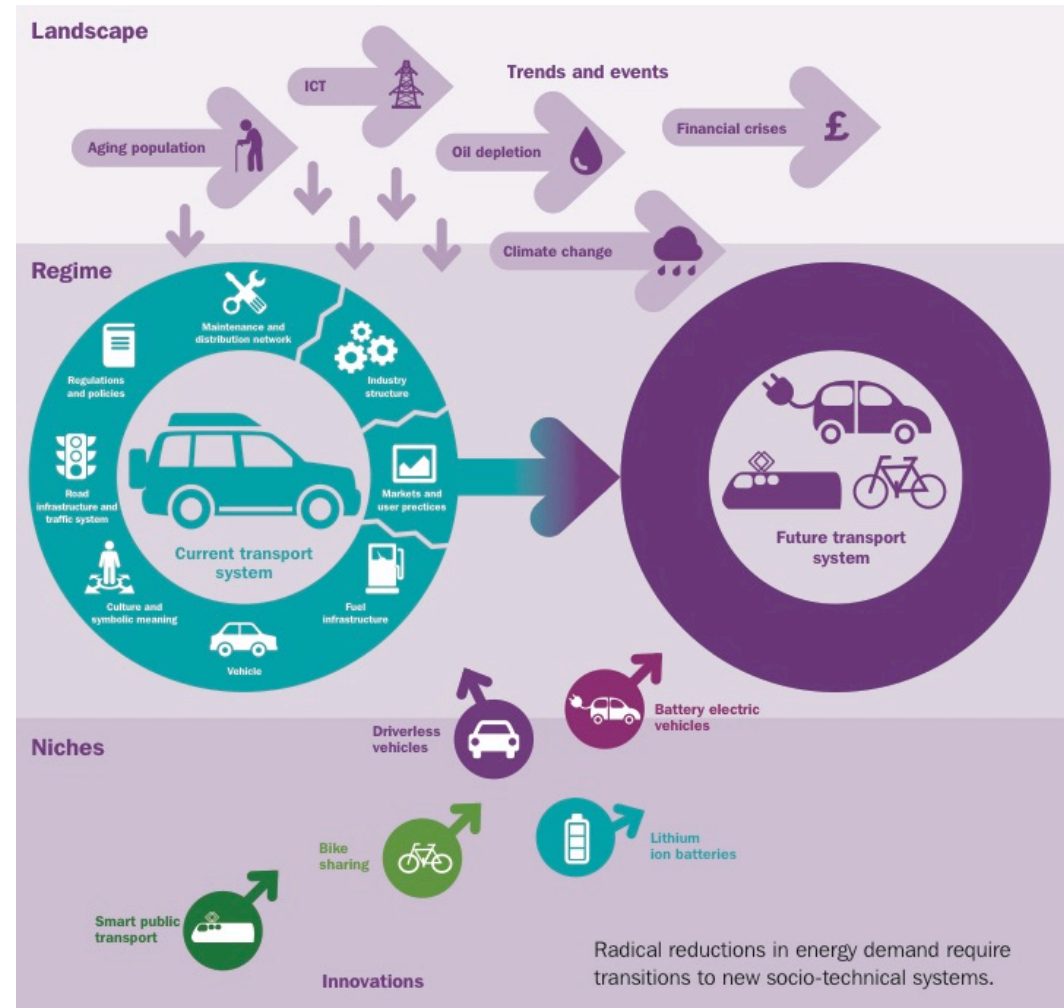
- Quick introduction to Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand
- Community energy in the UK
- The emergence of the ‘pro-saver’
- Hyde Farm Climate Action Network
- Summary and conclusions



Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand



- Based at Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex
- Funded by EPSRC 2013-2018
- A socio-technical, whole systems, approach to energy demand
- The *emergence, diffusion and impact* of radical low energy innovations
- www.cied.ac.uk



“Currently we lack deep understanding of the complexities of what really drives energy demand and how to change it at user and provider level. If these complexities are to be understood, energy demand research must adopt inter-disciplinary, multi-agency approaches to deliver understandings of:

- The lifestyle and social drivers of the demand for energy services
- Changing technologies and how they are adopted at the point of use
- The institutional and policies framework within which technical and social decisions are made.
- The interactions between all of these.”

CIED aims to address these questions + wants to interact with stakeholders (‘knowledge co-development’)

Community energy in the UK



- **Community energy as**
 - “Sustainable energy projects, which are initiated, developed and owned by *civil society* actors such as neighbourhood groups, co-operatives, charities and voluntary organisations”
- **Developed for economic, social and environmental reasons**
 - Save £££££ on energy bills, reduce emissions, build communities, tackle fuel poverty etc.
- **Varying technologies and group settings – no one type**
- **Increasing interest in the UK the last 5-10 years**
- **Support measures such as funding programmes, Feed-in-Tariff, Renewable Heat Incentive**
- **Community Energy Strategy in 2014**
- **Difficult to estimate actual size of the sector**



Community energy in the UK energy system

- UK Energy system dominated by the 'Big Six' utilities
- Investment has traditionally for large scale energy projects, owned by established corporations
- Despite its small size, community energy is there to challenge the status quo
 - New way of 'doing energy' and new way of doing business, e.g. technological and social innovation, community ownership, social good
 - Bottom-up approach that can be a driver for transformative change
- E.g. regulator Ofgem waking up to this
 - Consultation on Non-Traditional Business Models in 2015
- Community energy is not without challenges



The emergence of the 'pro-saver'

- **'Prosumption'**
 - People engage in generation (or production) of energy as well as consumption
- **'Pro-saving'**
 - Includes the development of innovative approaches that can combine distributed energy with demand reduction and demand side response
 - E.g. a community group which is proactive on energy saving alongside considering energy generation/production measures
 - Shift focus on active energy saving and then follow with measures such as load shifting
- **Pro-savers are active and use**
 - Tacit knowledge, local knowledge
 - Technological and social innovations
 - Develop solutions to their circumstances



The emergence of the 'pro-saver' cont...

- **'Traditional' community energy business model is focused on energy generation and many projects relied on feed-in-tariff**
 - However, changes in FiT meant that it does not enable viable business models for everyone
- **Communities are developing new innovative approaches to demand side services**
 - Financial motives, saving money
 - Autonomy over energy
 - Empowerment through energy
- **Moving from a passive prosumer that engages in generation to active pro-saving behaviour**



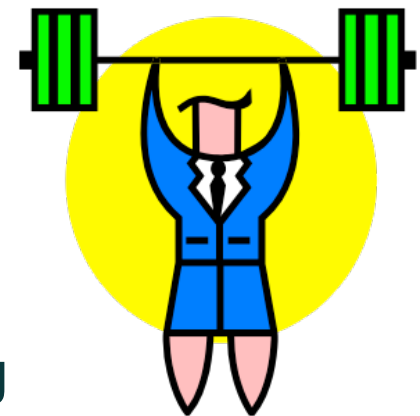
Hyde Farm Climate Action Network

- London-based neighbourhood group
- Aim to understand climate change, reduce emissions, act as community
- Conservation area, planning restrictions
- Support from ECHO Action and British Gas Green Streets programme
 - Initial advice was too abstract, so they set up their own meetings
- Monthly Draught Busting Saturday, renewable energy installations
- Wanted to help especially those on low incomes
- Initiatives beyond what incumbent supplier (i.e. British Gas Green Streets programme) was offering
- Active sharing of lessons and experience with other community energy groups – not to ‘reinvent the wheel’



Summary and conclusions

- **Communities are ideally placed to deal with energy demand and generation at the point of usage**
- **An opportunity to empower people to take an active role**
- **However, community energy projects require stamina, volunteer time, often a big effort**
- **Focus cannot be just on generation/production but needs to also include demand management**
- **Further research could conceptualise how pro-saving can add to the concept of prosuming**
- **Future research could evaluate how pro-saving reduces electricity demand**



Thank you!



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