Energy democracy? A socio-ecological transformation in the area of energy

Compilation of texts of the international conference Socio-ecological transformation focus energy in Vienna, 3-5 July 2013, organized by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels and Ulrich Brand, Vienna University

Brussels, July 2013

Compiled by: Marlis Gensler. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels
gensler@rosalux-europa.info

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels
11, Ave. Michel-Ange, B- 1000 Brussels
Tel. +32 (0)2738 7660
Fax: +32 (0)2738 7669
info@rosalux-europa.info
www.rosalux-europa.info

Click here for conference website…

universität wien

ROSA LUXEMBURG FOUNDATION BRUSSELS OFFICE

Content

Energy democracy? A socio-ecological transformation in the area of energy

Ulrich Brand (Vienna)

Short conference report

More than 60 participants from 18 countries and a wide variety of areas of activity came together for the conference Socioecological Transformation – Focus Energy at the University of Vienna from July 3-5, to explore the possibilities and limits of just such a transformation. The conference was organized by Ulrich Brand of the University's Institute for Political Science, and by the Brussels Bureau of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

In his welcoming statement, Klaus Sühl placed the conference in the context of a multi-year process which the Brussels Bureau would like to support with workshops, conferences, studies and publications. Knowledge and proposals are to be drafted, positive and negative developments assessed, and stable and trust-based networks established. That is all the more important since European energy policy is developing very dynamically and also very problematically: in the interest of the major corporations and powerful capital groups, clearly away from the goal of sustainability and the democratic structuring of society and its relationship with nature.

Clearly, this will involve a restructuring of energy systems in the core area of any sustainability policy, and the question immediately arises as to whether such a policy is indeed taking place at all, and who is determining that process – in other words, how democratic or how capital-driven is it? How can various actors – policymakers, trade unions and companies, social movements, NGOs and the scientific community – contribute their specific experiences and perspectives in the fruitful manner?

The conference was structured in such a way that open questions and problems could be raised. For example: how might companies and employees of the fossil fuel extraction industry be won over to the transformation process? How – if the path forward does not only involve technological innovation – can production and consumption be reduced without causing crises and impoverishment? What role can European policy play, with its orientation toward international competitiveness and the strategies of "energy secu-

rity"? Which alternatives are currently being developed at the local, national, European and international levels?

One term that was repeatedly used, and which could introduce a restructuring process, was "energy democracy". It could show how the transformation of energy systems might be conceived as a societal task oriented not only toward the profitability interests of business, but rather much more comprehensively.

Ulrich Brand, Professor at Department of Political Science, Vienna University

Socio-ecological transformation: dominant developments, resistances and alternatives – energy as a crucial terrain

Ulrich Brand (Vienna)

Introductory paper for the conference

Analytical-political starting points

The energy landscape is presently shifting. We discussed last year[1] – besides concrete resistances and alternatives – some dominant trends:

- Growing demand of energy due to the intensification of a resource intensive mode of production and living in the capitalist centres and the rapid growth of so-called emerging economies (which in fact produce for the global North and for their own middle and upper classes).
- Rising prices of energy with price volatilities and problematic distributional effects (energy poverty for many, subsidies for energy intensive industry etc.).
- Depletion of cheap and available fossil resources which leads to a dynamic growth of the exploration of "unconventional" oil and gas.
- The financialization of nature which means that over-accumulated capital tends to look for investment opportunities within the energy sector (which goes hand in hand with new enclosures)
- Intensifying geopolitical competition and increasing "resource nationalism" which leads to a growing awareness of political and economic elites in Europe to pursue active energy and resource politics ("diplomacy").
- A lot of attention is given to the development of (capital intensive) infrastructures for the transport of energy (generated power or fossil fuels).
- There is some awareness to foster policies towards energy efficiency and consistency of material and energy flows.
- Energy (use and policies) are increasingly related to issues of climate change and resource depletion, to the food and agricultural sector.

[1] International Conference in Vienna, July 2012, http://rosalux-europa.info/events_en/la_eu_seminar_2012/

- The global distribution of energy use is still a disaster: 1.5 billion people have no access to electricity and one billion have only an instable access.
- Dominant scientific and political thinking is still grounded in neoclassical environmental and resource economics: "Let develop markets and technology, the state should create an adequate framework (or should intervene in the case of market failure) – then private and public companies as well as consumers will decide rightly."
- The emergence or strengthening of a remarkable sector of renewable energy which is mainly understood as *complementary* to the dominant fossilist-nuclear path (Germany is here an exception which intends to *substitute* a share of nuclear and fossilist energy; however, this takes place within a corridor of eco-capitalist modernization).
- Energy transition strategies are mainly technology driven (off-shore wind farming, large infrastructures, "second generation" agrofuels, CCS technologies).
- Conflicts – which can be called energy struggles - about the negative consequence of resource extraction, energy production and distribution intensify. Whether they are going to have a common vision or horizon – like energy democracy or energy autonomy – needs to be discussed.

What is left out of the dominant trends and debates is a questioning of the assumption that energy demand is going to grow, the mode of production and living is not at stake and societal power relations are only mentioned when it comes to North-South relations. That an energy future might consist of a decrease of energy use in many countries is left out of the picture. He same is the case for the linkages between the energy sector and the military-industrial complex.

Behind this – and also usually denied - lies the logic of a capitalist appropriation of nature and the shaping of societal relations: the search for profit and capital accumulation, the tendency towards the commodification of societal (nature) relations and that capital wants to control the structures and processes of energy production and distribution which implies a tendency towards a centralized energy production system. And it intends to control nature as well.

At the end of the 2012 conference we detected that a more structured debate about what is going on in Europe is needed. Europe is key in a process of global socio-ecological transformation towards a just, democratic and really sustainable society.
In 2009 and according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Europe-27 consumed 13.6 per cent of global primary energy (oil, gas, coal, water, wind, solar energy, biomass, nuclear energy). But it must be included the energy which is used to produce goods and services elsewhere which are consumed in Europe (the so-called ecological backpack). The energy mix consisted of almost 35 per cent oil, 25 per cent gas, 16 per cent coal, 14 per cent nuclear energy and 10 per cent renewables (7 per cent biomass, 1.7 per cent

water power, less that 1 per cent solar, wind and sea energy and 0,4 per cent geothermic) (sea energy: energy from power plants using tides, currents and waves).
However, there are remarkable differences. In France, more than 40 per cent of primary energy is produced in nuclear plants. In Norway, almost 40 per cent is covered by water energy, in Austria and Switzerland it´s more than 10 per cent. In Germany, the percentage of renewable energy within the energy mix of power generation (not heating and transport) grew within a few years up to 22 per cent in 2012.
One problem in Europe seems to be that energy transition seems to be in many countries quite high on the agenda but, in fact and beside Germany, it does not work.

A hypothesis

There is a capitalist corridor to deal with energy problems, which is between business-as-usual and a partial greening of the energy sector. But this is a highly uncertain process – which has its capitalist and powerful push and pull factors – and a better understanding of the possible patterns and contradictions are crucial to develop emancipatory answers.

Some questions

What do we know about current political and economic strategies, of relevant private actors and their think tanks? Is a comprehensive mapping and an evaluation of strategies possible? If yes: how?
What does the hype for "unconventional" oil and gas really mean – in the U.S., for Europe?
Which potential really exists with biomass?
Which kind of technologies are actually developed and need to be criticized / stopped or welcomed / promoted?
It seems that the EU has actually problems to formulate a coherent energy policy which goes beyond 2020. What does this mean for alternatives?
Is the perspective of a reduction of energy production and use – beside a different mix towards renewables – really a perspective? To answer this question would imply a closer look to other sectors: industrial production, food and agriculture, housing, transport, communication.
The question of time (especially concerning climate change and potential tipping points): in what sense does this affect emancipatory energy politics?
And more general: How do we evaluate the strategies and moves towards a "Green Economy"? Are there positive or at least contradictory things in it? It is an open question whether the projects of a Green Economy or Green New Deal open up certain spaces against more brutal forms of capitalism.
Is the Green Economy an indicator of dissent within the power bloc? Which roles do play trade unions here?

Resistances and Alternatives

As the friends from The Corner House show in their May 2013 report "Energy Alternatives. Surveying the Territory"[2] (and Nick Hildyard is going to present some insights at our conference), the landscape of alternatives is very complex. There are different questions asked, varying criteria applied, various spatial scales referred to.

I just want to prepare a bit our common reflection. An emancipatory perspective might start with the following assumption:
The production and use of energy is the basis of human activities in general and fossil energy for the capitalist mode of production in particular. It is not just the basis but a driving force of capitalist expansion itself. Energy is a *social relation*:

- I.e. it bases on the existence of and access to resources, water, etc., on different forms of technologies, infrastructures and consumption patterns.
- It is linked to the production or wealth and poverty and (re-)distribution and to property structures,
- Energy has a lot to do with production and consumption patterns, is the basis for local, national and global economies,
- Has to do with displacement, territory and de-territorialization,
- With finance, military and repression, with development policies and international organizations.
- It is linked to manifold forms to organize labour / work (as formal work and informal work) and to the international, national and local division of labour, to its class, gender and racialised impacts.
- Energy is not only resources but also waste, is the use of sinks and pressure on ecosystems.
- The local (oil in the ground) can be highly global (production, finance and consumption).
- Energy is highly related to societal orientations like "progress" or the growth imperative. Energy resources might have impact on identities (like in the extraction regions) or they can be made invisible (e.g. for consumers).

Energy is about power and domination – about resistance and alternatives.

However: From an emancipatory perspective we need to admit that actual energy politics is embedded into extractivism as a development model which is quite attractive for capital, the state, employees in the sector and those parts of the population which benefits from the revenues through redistributive politics. Resistance comes mainly from the negatively affected people in the region where the resources are extracted.
Given the existing conditions of high world market prices for many resources (despite its volatility) and the lack of alternatives, extractivism is broadly accepted and welcomed,

[2] Energy alternatives, 2013. http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/energy-alternatives

i.e. we can call it hegemonic. The discovering of new resources is a major and positive notice in most countries.
How can we batter understand the contradictions of the dominant and ongoing processes, and here especially the fact that millions of people live from resource extraction and the existing energy model; the orientation at low energy prices and related problems to this?

Beside this "hegemonic constellation" concerning energy, there is another fact which was at stake last year. Esperanza Martínez from Oilwatch and Acción Ecologica in Ecuador argued in July 2012: "*We need to understand the reasons why people do/don't organise to struggle*. Key factors are fear and misinformation. The most frequently invoked type of aggression: health problems; land occupation; ecological tensions in fragile/protected areas; human rights aggressions (murders/killings)."[3]

So, what are entry points to think and realize resistance and alternatives?

Entry points:
One entry point is concrete conflicts which sometimes suddenly emerge and might be further politicized (not by a vanguard but by offers to understand the root causes of conflicts, the interests of the "other side", to go further). We all have many of those conflicts in our regions, countries and cities / towns in mind: Conflicts about energy prices, access to energy, about private or public ownership, large infrastructures, etc.
One important question here is: Are there specific "momentums" of politicization (e.g. Fukushima), of a critical mass, of successful and visible experiments, niches etc.?

Contradictions within the power bloc and of dominant strategies:
I already said that the contested character and uncertainty of actual energy politics might be a point of departure. In Europe, some contradictions could be politicized.

- The EU Commission advocates in its strategy papers a resource light and low-carbon economy while in its policies, imports of oil, gas, coal and uranium and respective infrastructures are promoted.
- The strategy towards a green economy has a major implication in the energy sector, i.e. the import of agrofuels – 20-30% of biodiesel comes from Argentina – which leads to a use and concentration of land in the producer countries.
- The question of a historical energy and resource debt of Europe and the Global North in general.

The manifold resistances and contradictions should be framed and put into a wider context of principles and horizons; and crucial questions should be asked:

[3] Esperanaz Martínez, 2012: http://rosalux-europa.info/publications/books/socio-ecological-transformation-reader/

Here I see our task as a network (or better said: one of many networks) sharing experiences and producing knowledge (even more than information; because in many respects this is there – however, we might detect during the conference that we need also information, e.g. about energy companies). This kind of knowledge might influence strategies of certain actors like political parties, NGOs, social movements, public entities, private actors.

Principles: There should be principles of democratic, just and renewable forms of energy production, distribution and consumption as well as the principle of a dramatic reduction of the overuse of energy (as a principle! – it is highly contested what this means)
… what else?

Horizons: We contest a "naïve cosmopolitism" in the global North which wants to save "the planet" but does not contest global and social power relations, does not consider the realities in the global South and, in fact, might promote authoritarian solutions in order to save the planet.
An important aspect seems to be that emancipatory perspectives against the dominant capitalist-fossilist-industrialist energy regime and related resource extractivism need to offer attractive alternative socio-economic ways of production and living for the masses. One general criterion for this process can be called a *just transition* and for this we should develop and refer to *energy transition scenarios*.
Emancipatory energy politics is much more about energy transition! It is about a comprehensive *socio-ecological transformation* (some call it green socialism) which aims to change in a much more profound way the mode of production and living, social and individual desires and psychology, forms of politics and the dealing with common problems etc.
Alternatives definitely need to question actual imperatives like world market competitiveness and competition at any cost, they imply forms of societal and political planning, a diversity of property regimes (including a strong public sector and a strong solidarity economy). Despite a lot of emphasis on learning processes in transition and transformation debates, emancipatory alternatives probably need to be implemented against the political and economic interests of the elites; but also aim to shape the direct interests of many people in the Global North and the middle-classes in the Global South.
I think that we can learn here from the current debates about de-growth.

Some questions to be asked

I conclude this first input to our conference with some open questions (there are much more, of course).

A crucial question to me is how to overcome the hegemonic constellation which binds people materially, mentally and with their desires to the existing mode of production and living and its related energy system. The strengths of the Green Economy proposals is

that they do not question the former by aiming to alter the latter, i.e. the energy and other socio-economic systems within a corridor of eco-capitalist modernization.
Another question here is how to organize work and the international and societal division of labour differently. How to get people and their trade unions on board, in countries which are affected by the crisis (and where unions are weakened and hope for a re-start of the growth engine) or in countries which are not so affected and people have the feeling that they have a lot to lose?
However, we should not go in the radical-conservative trap to throw out the baby with the bathwater, i.e. to sacrifice social achievements on the altar of ecological urgency or even a portrayed collapse. This is not a leftist answer.

A second question becomes more and more obvious. Against the background of the experience that many people know that a lot needs to be changed, but that their everyday practice continues to be the same, we might put more energy into the development of *attractive stories* of a better life and living which can convince people today that its worth to act differently (without creating the illusion that the critical consumer is the answer to all our problems).
How to do this? What is an adequate methodology to develop and tell radical-emancipatory stories – in general and in the energy sector? (This would contrast the manifold catastrophic stories the book stores are full with)

A final note

At the end of our conference we should detect carefully what to do. Hopefully, a lot of suggestions for the own practices in party and state, association, NGO and social movement, academia, think tank and broader public can be taken home. I think that we might enter into a phase to produce some written (or audio-visual) material to clarify issues and to promote alternatives. Moreover, we should think which kind of networking is needed.
There is a lot going on. I trust our collective knowledge and experience that we can agree on some initiatives which are urgently needed and which do not repeat existing.
The strength of our group (which is fluid but has a core) is that it has since the beginning an internationalist perspective. Moreover, it is close to leftist political actors.

Ulrich Brand, Professor at the Department of Political Science, Vienna University

The controversial energy turnaround in Germany: successes, contradictions, perspectives

Hans Thie (Berlin)

Preliminary remarks: To date, the energy turnaround in Germany has first and foremost been an "electric-power turnaround." In the area of heat/heating, the dynamics have been much less strongly pronounced. In the area of fuels, we see chaos, setbacks and no movement. And there has been little progress overall in the area of energy savings.

The Energy Turnaround – in electric power – has been a spectacular success.

Virtually all expansion estimates have been surpassed. The speed of expansion is considerably higher than had been expected. The current situation is this: The renewable energy share is around 25%; there are 25,000 windmills and 1.3 million photovoltaic facilities in Germany. Some 60% of these facilities are in the hands of citizens and farmers. There are now almost 400,000 jobs in the renewables sector.
Renewable energies have far and away the highest level of acceptance in the population.
Renewable Energy Law (EEG) was and is the basis for the "energy turnaround from below," which is emerging in many municipalities and regions.
The expected and planned priced regressions of the renewable energy facilities have by and large been realized. Notable are, however, the world market price increases, especially for metals.
The additional cost of the energy turnaround have been close to zero, if all macroeconomic and all ecological effects are taking into account (merit order, jobs and income, less fossil fuel imports, environmental damage avoided, open and covert subsidies).
The energy turnaround has shown that powerful support for a right policy – in this case, the EEG – is far and away better than the reticent and largely ineffective punishment of a wrong practice (emissions trading).

The energy turnaround was the success of a movement on the basis of which movement-oriented members of Parliament passed laws

The environmental movement generally, and the anti-nuclear-power movement in particular, were the societal foundation of this success.

Popular resistance and popular consciousness building made the option in favor of nuclear power and fossil fuels impossible in particular cases, and increasingly restricted those options at the societal level.
Dangerous and dirty energy sources are on the defensive, and have to justify themselves.
Strategically, the pro-renewable-energies option was taken up in the right way: price regulation instead of quantity regulation; priority instead of equality; long-term guarantees instead of short-term incentives; cost allocation instead of taxation.
The pro-renewable-energies option was launched and defended in a tactically intelligent manner: a broad alliance in Parliament, and a broad alliance in society.

The secret of the EEG's success was a new type of combination of planning and the market

Since 2000, the EEG has shown that it is possible to restructure an entire sector of industry by political means. The EEG is today the most effective instrument for ensuring a structural transformation in a conscious and farsighted manner.
The EEG's recipe for success was an intelligent combination of planning and the market. Investors did not have to worry about a number of issues which are usually at the core of business activity: market access – for they enjoyed priority access to the grid; and sales and pricing risks – for they had these guaranteed. What remained where management and technology-related risks, and the need to innovate.
The market forces were encouraged to do what they do best: ensure efficiency and technological progress. They were shielded from the factors which they cannot control – the ups and downs of the business cycle and of prices. The basic policy decision had been taken to allow renewable energies to grow, and to force energy sources which had been recognized as mistaken to yield; that decision neutralized the usual uncertainties.
In spite of all this euphoria, we still have to soberly recognize the fact that it was not environmental consciousness, but rather financial advantage, that was the foundation of the mass effectiveness of the EEG.
The more successful the EEG has been, the more it will have to be connected with the restructuring of the entire energy system. If wind and solar are to become the two most important energy sources – in Germany – then the rest of the energy system will have to orient itself around them.
Once this dynamic – wind and solar define the conditions for everything else – has been irrevocably established, the energy turnaround will have been decided on the material side; however, with regard to its societal form of organization, the decision will still be pending.

The current issues are the speed and manner of the energy turnaround

If we can keep up the speed, and if a considerable portion of the energy turnaround is implemented decentrally, the major electric-power corporations in Germany will have no basis for their business any more, in the medium-term.

The David-masses are defeating the Goliath-monopolies; hundreds of thousands of photovoltaic facilities, operating at midday, are stealing the most profitable hours from the power corporations.
"Delay and take over" – that's the current slogan of the power corporations, albeit not openly expressed. They have to act that way because they can't keep up with the speed at which the energy turnaround has been moving. Putting on the brakes on photovoltaics and onshore wind power means longer running times for conventional power plants, more opportunities for offshore wind, and more time to resolve the most serious offshore problems.
It is still important to maintain the possibilities for private households, small and medium-sized businesses, energy cooperatives and public utilities and municipalities to act independently. The investment initiative must stay in the hands of the protagonists of the energy turnaround, and must be as decentralized, as citizen-run and as local as possible.

The opponents of the energy turnaround are practicing a one-sided cost re-distribution, and on this basis are raising the issue of prices, as well as the social question

The annual costs of the privileges and exemptions for major commercial users and power-intensive industries come to a total of €16 billion.
The power prices for households and SMEs would be 3 to 4 cents per kW cheaper, if these privileges and exemptions were to be reduced to an acceptable level, and if effective price supervision were to force the gains made from lower prices on the power exchange to be passed on.
Deceptive campaigns – "defend the energy turnaround – repeal the EEG!" – have so far not had the desired success. But even the most absurd arguments – "regulate quantities instead of prices" – have not been abandoned.

The defenders of the energy turnaround are facing difficult tasks

If we want ecological progress, we will have to provide "freedom from fear" of the turnaround. The protagonists of the energy turnaround are called upon to take the social issue seriously in its full force, and to contribute to defusing it. If they don't, the alliance for delay may yet succeed.
Regarding the issue of grid expansion, the opponents of the energy turnaround have succeeded in causing confusion. The defenders have no common message.
How the pillars of the EEG – the feed-in priority, long-term cost-covering prices, technological breadth – are to be further developed individually, but also it is systemic context with other structural elements such as the grid, storage facilities, cogeneration and heating, is the question for which convincing answers are needed.
What is needed are more activists who have mastered the "magic pentagon:" societal competence, organizational talent, missionary ambition, communicative power and local acceptance.

The energy turnaround is giving rise to new "green" distribution battles

Homeowners with above-average incomes are discovering energy autonomy as a source of cheap power. The "good" principle of energy autonomy is here juxtaposed to the "good" principle of social justice. The struggles for distribution of infrastructural costs are important.

A provisional solution: The fixed share of the electricity bill must be increased, and grid connection must be mandatory. The alternative: Tax financing of infrastructures, although this has not proven itself in practice – for shortages in the public budgets have been and will be used to choke off the energy turnaround, as has been shown by the caps on renewable energies in other countries.

Take over the renewable energies branch with regard to social and labor market policy: Fair working conditions and a higher degree of union organization.

The energy turnaround can be the entry into a broad socio-ecological transformation

In many municipalities and regions, an "energy turnaround from below" has been successful. As this practice has shown, a multidimensional "return on initiative" is possible:

- Reduction of CO_2 emissions
- Creation of added value locally, with new jobs in commerce and agriculture
- Substitution of fossil imported energy sources with domestic, clean power generation
- Favorable energy prices for private households and companies by means of local district heating networks, and a drastically increased share of cogeneration
- Strengthening of local democracy, the municipal tax base and citizens' involvement
- Direct meshing of citizens' and local interests
- Stable regional economic circuits, based on needs-appropriate coordination of resources procurement, production and use
- Profitable recycling of residual and waste materials, instead of expensive disposal
- Increased independent activity on the part of municipalities, public utilities, the citizenry and companies
- Minimal dependence on external interests
- Expansion of inter-municipal and interregional exchange (no competitive projects between the municipalities)
- Strengthening environmental consciousness, knowledge about energy, and interest in innovative technological solutions
- Practical implementation of sustainable development models.

If municipal/regional actors recognize their potential, the transfer of the energy mobilization which has proven itself in practice to other areas of activity is conceivable: transport, housing and other areas of public necessities.
As the quintessence of what is already being practiced at the initiative level, a new type of community will appear on the horizon, democratized by means of citizens' decision-making and citizens' control, based on the principle of complete transparency, so that all its activities are visible uncontrollable at any time, and with the authority and capability to act economically, to a much greater extent than is true today.
It is time to view municipalities/communities differently: as investors, designers and powerful actors, committed to their citizenry, and to doing whatever is necessary to enable a life of free self-determination. Instead of acting out of need, as petitioners appealing to the investors, such local communities would become actors, they would take into their own hands what is necessary to ensure a good life for their citizens.

Hans Thie, Advisor on economic policy for the Left Party in the German Bundestag, Germany

The energy transition as a vehicle for emancipation

Sören Becker and Conrad Kunze (Berlin)

Results of empirical case studies in spring 2013 in Western Europe based on an online survey and telephone interviews with organisers of local energy-projects in France, Belgium, UK, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary

Geographical findings

Projects with an emancipatory character (politics, ecology, property, democracy) are limited to the named countries, there was nearly nothing found in post-socialist Eastern Europe.
More than by nations, the cutting edge developments are carried by regions like Catalonia, northern Italy, eastern France, and Western-Scotland and so on.

Emancipatory findings

A strong form of democratic ownership is possible. This can take the form of public financing or mixed ownership.
Strong democratic ownership is not limited to wealthy regions. Even regions with no money like in Scotland or ones officially in bankruptcy like Zschadraß in Saxony (that created an artificial parallel household pv/wind-kindergarten) can finance and run renewable energy production facilities.
Thus the transition is and can be a vehicle for a return of the public household to production, investment and ownership, including income generation.
Participation should mean in its best sense the union of co-ownership and co-decision making. The Scottish Model, e.g. in one of the best cases like Giggha, enables this and thus strengthens democracy by incorporating local ownership.
The transition can be a vehicle to emancipate from financial and economic dependencies. The Scottish public households gained financial independence from wind-power-income. Sinti and Roma in a Hungarian village gain the ability to produce legal and sufficient biological heating material in an encouraging project.
The Transition goes along with a revival of cooperatives across Western Europe.
Cooperatives are a weak form of democratic ownership compared to local public ownership. However they are a big step compared to the status quo and they are increasingly easy and quick to be set up.

Cooperatives can promote new forms of democratic self organisation, e.g. in the internet participation tools (that are really used) of the Spanish Coop *Somenergia*. They can go along with other democratic struggles like the re-regionalisation of villages in Scotland or emancipation from administrative paternalism like in Belgium.
The transition in its rather participatory, democratic and localised forms creates local income and (not a lot, though but) a little employment. As examples from Italy demonstrate, contracts are given locally, to foster acceptance and promote a project.
Cooperatives can also be organised supra-local. *Somenergi*a, the Belgian *Allons en Vent* or the German EWS organise producers and consumers across the country.
There is an "urban-dentist" effect in cooperatives. Rather wealthy families and individuals invest and end up even wealthier. This effect is strong in production-only coops.
However, cooperatives that organise also consumers, like *Somenergia* or *Retenergia* (Italy) have a democratising effect, as consumers have a vote and voice in how prices are structured. The democratically preferable mode is therefore the production-and-consumption cooperative.
The Transition *can* go along with an increased ecological awareness (consumption, biodiversity, recycling) and related actions like in France and Belgium, particular in *Ungersheim* (France). Though that can also be absent like usually in Germany or Scandinavia.
The transition, especially were carried by coops or small local initiatives often forms coalitions and symbiosis with social movements like *transition towns* (only in the UK, especially England) or with ecological movements (in Spain).

Caveats

There is a "urban-dentist" effect in production-only cooperatives. See point 14.
We have found no initiative with serious actions towards de-growth of consumption, despite some verbal commitment. The best example of how that is possible is found outside Europe, in Cuba with the newly introduced strong progressive electricity tariff. (c.f. Seifried/Ö-Quadrat 2013).
The transition is in its present form is far from an industrial revolution in manufacturing that would solve the unemployment problem. Quite the contrary, it takes less people to run a huge windpark than even a modern gas or coal power plant. This problem will have to be solved by political action, and cannot be left to technological changes.

Theoretical findings

There is nothing wrong with this sort of localism, as "ecolocalism" is criticised by e.g. Gregory Albo. Outside a few regions these emancipatory projects are still "socio-technological niches". However they do learn from one another and they often have a political vision of ecological transformation. Thus they are not a retreat from reality that resembles the hippies-on-the-hill. These niches enable progressive, emancipatory arrangements when they are not yet possible on a big level, and they can (later in their development) be scaled up to significant size as in Scotland, Belgium or Germany.

The emancipatory energy transition as a model is strong enough to develop and survive in not-perfect political surroundings like Belgium or England or even in hostile ones like France.
We agree with the caveats voiced by the CornerHouse-report "surveying the territory" (2013) in the sense that a hostile attempt to occupy and re-shape the term "energy-transition" is likely, as done e.g. by a up to date McKinsey report ("Chancen für die deutsche Energiewende" (5/2013)).
With reference to the struggle for the term democracy we opt for the slogan "real energy-democracy now!" as part of a strategy to occupy and fill the concept energy-transition from the left, as done with this very conference.

Sören Becker, IRS Erkner, Germany
Conrad Kunze, Office for a Regionalized and democratic Energy Transition, Berlin, Germany

Green capital in the European electricity sector

Hendrik Sander (Berlin) and Tobias Haas (Tübingen)

There is no such thing as a unified European energy market. The energy markets are mainly organized at the national level. The EU-27 consists of very diverse energy systems with regard to the mode of regulation, the relation of forces, the energy mix, the support schemes of renewables and so on.

With the liberalisation during the last two decades, there emerged seven huge transnational electricity companies (EON, RWE, GDF, EDF, Vattenfall, Enel, Iberdrola) with a large share of the European electricity market(s).

All these companies integrate renewable energies in a selective way into their strategies, but follow different ways in doing so. While the Spanish companies Iberdrola and Endesa (the latter now partly owned by Enel) have been strongly developing the Spanish market for renewables, German companies tried to block the development of renewables in Germany. Furthermore, all of them still rely predominantly on fossil and nuclear energy.

The growth of renewable energy all over Europe (especially wind and solar) has been accompanied by the emergence of new green fractions of capital with business associations on the national as well as on the European level. Apart from the ownership and operation of renewable energy facilities, there are also new green companies that specialise in the construction of windmills and solar cells and modules. Besides these new small and medium-sized enterprises, there are also large enterprises like Siemens or ABB in the market.

One can identify two typical patterns of development of renewable energy in Europe. They are linked to the conflict line between "green" and "grey" capital: In Spain and in the UK the conflict line is not very clear as huge energy companies also dominate the market for renewables. The development in these countries follows the logic of centralised renewable energy projects. In contrast, in Germany the conflict line is quite clear as the huge energy companies try to constrain the further development of renewables, which is so far dominated by local, decentralised approaches.

In southern Europe the politics of austerity are not only socially catastrophic; they also concern the energy market as feed-in tariffs are suspended (Spain, Portugal) or radically reduced (Italy, Greece).

These processes coincide with a very serious crisis of the European solar cell and modules producers and a crisis of the windmill producers. The crisis of the solar sector is mainly caused by its inability to cope with the aggressive competition of Chinese and Taiwanese companies, the crisis of the wind sector mainly by declining growth rates in the European wind market.

In the European energy market the development of renewable energies is currently slowing down and becoming more centralised, which strengthens the traditional energy enterprises. They try to push for a further integration of the European electricity market on the political level and to strengthen the centralised structures of energy generation. In Germany, for example, there is a tendency that the further development of renewable energies is more and more dominated by huge projects, engineered by huge energy companies. This causes the contrast between grey and green capital to be further blurred.

All in all, there are no forces in the current constellation of the European energy sector that could bring about the emergence of a green capitalism. The green factions are too weak and the strategies of the big power companies are inconsistent. There is at best an incremental change towards an ecological modernisation.

The starting points for left energy strategies should be: a criticism of the authoritarian austerity policies, as they close the window of opportunity for a renewable, decentralised and democratically controlled energy system (1); a critique of all kind of huge energy projects (renewable and non-renewable) connected with the aim to link different struggles under the umbrella of a democratised energy system (2); interventions into decentralised approaches, to strengthen progressive elements going beyond ecological modernisation and to trigger a shift in the balance of forces within the relevant networks, as for example the *Berliner Energietisch* tries to do (3).

Hendrik Sander, Berliner Energietisch (Berlin Energy Table)
Tobias Haas, University of Tübingen

Energy democracy and austerity policies in Greece

Alexis Charitsis (Athens)

A democratic way of producing, distributing and consuming energy, but also democracy as the framework in which important decisions regarding energy projects are taken and energy resources are handled, is a concept that is currently running throughout the energy sector in Greece.
I identify and focus on three main issues regarding energy democracy in the current political and social reality of Greece:

- Price of Energy, people's accessibility to basic energy services and the Right to Energy.
- Privatisation of the major public energy enterprises.
- The current deadlock of the Renewables sector.

For each of these issues I will try to present the dominant concept and the alternatives that have been developed to challenge the existing policies.

Price of Energy, people's accessibility to basic energy services and the Right to Energy

The household and industrial prices of energy have been increased 12 times in the last 4 years, with a cumulative increase of more than 50% in the same period. The main argument of the government and the troika, which has been explicitly presented in the relevant troika reports, is that the prices should be increased in order to reflect the actual cost of production and make the "liberalised" market more attractive to the new private "players". Since July 1st 2013, household prices have been fully "liberalised", enabling PPC, which still holds 98% of the retail electricity market, to increase the prices without any restrictions. One interesting point here is that due to the unpredicted repercussions of the recession (i.e. sharp reduction of demand, total collapse of the renewables sector which by the end of 2013 will have created a deficit for the electricity market of approximately €1 bn, costly mechanisms for the promotion of private electricity production using natural gas), there is currently underway an ongoing intra-systemic "all against all" conflict between the different capitalist interests around the electricity market.

Combined with the harsh impact of austerity policies on people's income, the increase in electricity prices and the introduction of new taxes in the electricity bill has made it impossible for thousands of households to cover their needs in energy and heating.

The reaction of the Left is twofold: on social level, through its solidarity structures it supports the households that face an electricity cut-off. There were many cases where people self-organised on a local level and together with electricity technicians reconnected the households to the grid. On a political level, the Left and the social movements are trying to raise the issue of electricity price as a matter of democracy. In this context, SYRIZA, as part of its short-term programme for the alleviation of the socially destructive austerity policies, has introduced the *Right to Energy*, which will ensure that no individual suffers from energy deprivation. This could take the form of a free basic amount of energy for each individual / household suffering from extreme poverty and social exclusion. The Left is also trying to identify and focus on the direct link between the privatisation of the energy sector and the increase in the price of electricity.
At the same time, there is an ongoing internal discussion, within the Left, on the cost of energy and who should pay for it. Everyone agrees that the first priority, from a leftist standpoint, should be to provide cheap energy for those parts of the society that are currently suffering. However, whether policies of reduction in energy consumption should be of equal importance is still an open issue. Furthermore, it is still in discussion whether industrial consumers (i.e. energy-intensive factories and environmentally unfriendly lines of production) should (in the current "emergency state" of recession) receive price reductions in order to become more competitive or they should pay more in order to create the space for a gradual transformation to an environmentally friendly and energy efficient production.

Privatisation of the major public energy enterprises

The struggle against the privatization of all major public energy enterprises (i.e. PPC: Electricity, ELPE: Oil, DEPA/DESFA: Natural Gas) is one of the great challenges that the Left and the trade unions are currently facing in Greece.
The privatisation process has been in progress since 2000, although it has reached its peak through the memorandum policies of the last 3 years. As it has happened elsewhere, the current model of the public sector management and functioning (corruption, ineffectiveness) has been used by the advocates of the "free market" in order to discredit public enterprises in principle and present the privatisation of the public companies as an economically sound and "morally justified" decision.
The Left has a difficult role to play in this environment. On one hand, it has to defend the public enterprises, as a way for society to control its energy resources and as a precondition for an alternative, democratic energy system, and on the other hand to differentiate from the existing model and propose a completely different structure and management of the public energy corporations with democratic and social control.

For more information on PPC, the largest corporation in Greece, and an alternative model for it, please refer to Yannis Efstathopoulos' paper: "Energy Democracy & the Future of Public Power Corporation (PPC)".

The current deadlock of the Renewables sector

Green Economy (i.e. the development of the Renewables) has been one of the major development plans for Greek capitalism in the last decade. On economic terms, it was seen as the only way to "refuel the locomotive of the Greek economy", the construction sector. On ideological level, Green Economy was used by the dominant political forces in order to obtain consensus by large parts of the petty bourgeoisie (both on the side of ownership and on the side of project execution: from farmers and land and house owners, to engineers and small construction companies).

On nominal terms, the project has reached its targets: the current national target for the development of Photovoltaic installations for 2020 (2,2GW installed power) has already been reached.

On social, economic and political terms, though, the situation is completely different: Leaving the development of the sector to the forces of the market and introducing the highest FITs in Europe led to an unplanned boom of the renewables. The sector has now collapsed due to the inability of the system to pay the producers. As a result, the licensing process has now been suspended until further notice.

More importantly, passing the cost of renewables to all consumers through their electricity bills and the lack of transparency and democratic control of the process of licensing and implementing large-scale renewable projects has created great discontent in the public.

It is not a coincidence that many, if not all, of the major social movements around energy issues that have been developed in Greece in the last decade are local initiatives against the construction of large-scale renewable projects in their area. Despite their contradictions and generalisations, all these movements raise the issue of democracy (or the lack of it) in the decision-making process. Many of these large-scale projects have been licensed and constructed through "fast track" procedures, i.e. by bypassing the existing environmental and spatial planning legislation.

An alternative model for the development of renewables as part of a wider social emancipation process

From a leftist perspective, it is obvious that the capitalist plan for the development of the Green Economy project was not an environmentally or socially driven decision. It was seen as another investment opportunity for the over-accumulated capital. Greece is a great example of this trend, as Green Economy coexists in the same plan for capitalist growth with the other great national idea of our times, what I would call Black Economy, i.e. new exctractivism and exploitation of potential oil and gas reserves.

Within this dominant context, the role of the Left is crucial. It has to clarify that the ecological transformation of the Economy is not a tactical decision, as it is for the capitalists,

but a strategic goal which is directly linked to the wider concept of social emancipation. In that sense, an alternative model for the development of the renewables and the gradual reduction in the dependence on fossil fuels is not perceived solely as a technological change, but as part of a deeper transformation of the production process. Creating the legal, economic and social framework for the promotion of small-scale, local and decentralised renewable projects, the introduction of new economic and ownership structures (e.g. cooperatives), the democratic and social control of public energy corporations and energy resources should be seen as part of this process.

Alexis Charitsis, SYRIZA Energy Department, Greece

Energy democracy and the Public Power Corporation (PCC) in Greece

Yannis Eustathopoulos (Athens)

Introduction

This short note outlines a set of possible measures and reforms for the modernization of PPC. Overall, four major complementary fields of action can be distinguished:

- Modernization of PPC's public service mission (energy as a right/public service).
- Introduction of democratic procedures for PPC's management (how the expectations of the various internal and external stakeholders are taken into account into PPC's strategy and missions?).
- Improvement of PPC's productive efficiency (efficient use of resources in a period of fiscal and economic crisis is a democratic expectation - citizens and society expect public enterprises to be efficient both from a social and an economic point of view).
- Upgrading of PPC's contribution to the establishment of a sustainable -both socially as environmentally- new economic development model.

1. PPC's public service mission

Firstly, it should be mentioned that the term "public service" which is widely used in several countries in Western Europe, is not widely used in the public debate in Greece. This is due to the fact that Greece chose an 'organic approach' for energy public services (i.e. the public service mission was almost entirely assimilated with the existence of the electricity public enterprise).

Greece has experienced in recent years, a drastic increase of energy poverty due to various factors such as the collapse of households' purchasing power (which is estimated at 50 % in average) and to the continuous rise in energy prices (including electricity prices). The government has disregarded fundamentals provisions of the European legislation on public services (services of general economic interest) by including a significant property tax in electricity bills. At the same time, the government threatened consumers – through PPC- that their access to electricity will be ended in case that this tax was not paid.

Overall, current economic and social conditions impose immediate action in order to struggle against energy poverty, though, in an environmentally responsible way. Again, 4 lines of action can be proposed:

a/ *Establishment of a Right to Energy* which will ensure that no individual suffers from energy deprivation. This could take the form of a free basic amount of energy for each individual / household suffering from extreme poverty and social exclusion.

b/ Improvement of the scope and efficiency of *existing social tariffs* (e.g. more beneficiaries, less bureaucratic procedures).

c/ *Introduction of specific support units for assisting consumers who are experiencing problems as regards the payment of their electricity bills* (i.e. specific call-free phone number, putting an end to electricity cuts with the introduction of a 'provisional maintenance of energy provision' status, personalized payment settlements, information about financial support aiming at lowering households 'energy consumption and improving their energy efficiency, establishment of a specific fund for the payment of bills for persons in extreme poverty situation).

d/ *Establishment of a Solidarity Fund* in order to finance the above mentioned measures and mechanisms. This fund will receive economic contributions from all businesses participating in the energy electricity market.

- Note 1: In the medium term, the goal should be to lower the cost of energy for all households and not through special social tariffs for vulnerable only individuals. This realistic goal can be achieved through the reorganisation of the electricity market and the implementation of a genuine democratic long-term energy planning. In the short-term however, the use of social tariffs is needed, as a tool for struggling against energy poverty.
- Note 2: Social policy in the energy sector should not tolerate waste of energy from part of consumers. The notion of Climate Justice should be implemented strictly in all PPC's activities. This notion should allow the implementation of 'socially responsible environmental policies' and 'environmental responsible social policies'.

2. Introduction of democratic procedures

Various actions can be implemented concerning the democratic functioning of PPC including the clarification and enhancement of the missions mentioned in the company's charter and its foundation law or/and concerning the procedures for the nomination of the Board of Directors and the executive council.
Another potential reform of major importance could be the establishment of formal institutions aiming at the highest possible consultation and implication of PPC's stakeholders in its management. A formal committee of PPC's stakeholders (Committee of Social

Consultation) could be in charge of collecting and promoting to the board expectations towards PPC's of a wide number of stakeholders (consumers unions, environmental organisations, local authorities, research institutes and energy experts, professional chambers, trade unions, etc). This Committee will produce a report which will be taken into account from PPC's board and will be presented at the parliament and publicly. On-line consultations tools will be needed also for enhancing the capacity of PPC to gain as much as possible social legitimatisation against privatisation advocates.

3. Improvement of PPC's efficiency and capacity for external evaluation

Ensuring that all public enterprises are run in an efficient way is a democratic expectation. Waste of funds as well as corruption has proved to be key-arguments of privatisation advocates. Thus, restoring back transparency and productive efficiency should be included in debates for energy and economic democracy. Moreover, improvement of efficiency could help financing public service missions.
Introduction of Performance Contracts (Contrats d'Objectifs ou de Service Public in French) represent a first step towards this direction. Detailed contracts can be signed between PPC's management and the competent public authorities (i.e. Ministry of Energy), according to the existing international experience (see EDF's case). These contracts will have duration of 1 to 2 years and will define the social, economic and environmental goals of PPC as well as the economic resources available for their implementation and the indicators which will be used to assess their level of achievement from the Government, the Parliament but also the Committee of Social Consultation and the society more generally.

4. Contribution of PPC to the introduction of a sustainable (both socially as environmentally) new development model for the Greek Economy

Briefly, the following orientation can be mentioned:

a/ Compliance of PPC's strategic plan and performance contract to the long-term democratic energy planning (the strategic plan lasts 5 years and the performance contract is used for its year by year implementation).

b/ PPC will support the development of dispersed renewable energy generation, providing both infrastructures and expertise on energy issues. Support of energy cooperatives should be also included as a top priority. PPC will have also to invest in renewable energy itself, by choosing the best locations for its investments both socially and from an economic point of view (e.g. offshore wind farms?).

c/ In the long term, drastic reduction of lignite in PPC's energy mix is needed both in terms of climate change mitigation and public health. In the medium term, PPC will need to build new plants for the withdrawal of older, less efficient and thus and more polluting ones.

d/ Investment in electricity networks will be achieved according to democratic energy planning (present investments are market-driven and do not serve General Interest).

Final comment

The above proposals for the modernization of PPC can be implemented if only the architecture and functioning of the electricity market is revised. PPC, as it is already the case to some extent, will encounter major financial-competitive problems, if trying to implement measures for enhancing its social efficiency alone and against purely profit-driven competitors. This is due to the fact that the mandate of the energy regulation authority (RAE) and the goal of energy private corporations differ from PPC's general interest mission. In consequence, introduction of a democratic energy planning and the transition from a competition-driven regulation to a 'social regulation' of the electricity market do represent two crucial (and highly uncertain) conditions for a democratic, accountable, environmentally-friendly and socially-oriented Public Power Corporation.

Yannis Eustathopoulos, Athens

Power to the people -
The referendum on energy in Berlin

Michael Below (Berlin)

Introduction

Berliner Energietisch (= Berlin roundtable on energy): Coalition of 55 organizations: Attac, NGOs, teachers' union, local initiatives, radical left. Organizations' issues: Ecology, social justice, globalization.
Campaign for a referendum on energy, founded 2011. Slogan "New energy for Berlin – democratic, ecological, social".

Goals

- Return the electricity grid to public ownership
- Create a public utility to generate and sell 100% renewable energy
- Ensure democratic control and transparency
- Take measures against energy poverty
- Promote energy saving and support generation of renewable energy

Situation in Berlin

- Electricity grid privatized in 1997, among other privatizations and public-private partnership (PPP) projects
- Grid bought by Vattenfall: one of "big four" in German electricity market. Lignite strip mining and generation, one nuclear power plant remaining
- High-profile scandals in Berlin PPP projects: state bank, water utility
- Wassertisch (=roundtable on water): 2011 successful referendum to publish the secret PPP contracts for the water utility, follow-up difficult
- Average electricity prices for households nearly doubled since privatization (14 ct/kWh in 2000, 26 ct in 2012)
- Energy poverty: 18.978 power cuts for Berlin households in 2012, mainly for unpaid bills
- Vattenfall concession for the electricity grid ends 2014
- Invitation to tenders, 7 participants, e.g. Vattenfall, State Grid Corporation of China, State of Berlin

Our Model

- Referendum creates two public-law institutions (Anstalt öffentlichen Rechts): one for the grid, one for energy generation and sale (EU unbundling rules)
- Responsibilities: generate and distribute 100% renewable energy, promote energy saving, take measures against energy poverty, guarantee current standard of employee's rights
- Board: 15 board members per institution. 7 elected by employees, 6 elected by Berlin residents, 2 sent by the state government (Senat), for five years
- Resident's right of initiative: 3000 to be heard by board
- Each year public assemblies on policy, to be heard by board
- High standards for transparency

Public debate

- Rising energy prices meet ecological consciousness: Vattenfall with image problems, campaigning for disinterest ("it just works")
- Ecological goals of referendum widely accepted, but concerns about cost
- Debate about energy poverty getting stronger
- Senate's critique initially focused on the provisions against energy poverty. Lately on direct elections for board. Progressive press: direct elections "democratic revolution"
- Declarations of support for energy referendum by 4 out of 5 parties in the state parliament
- Successful initiative for a referendum, signed by 9,2 % of eligible voters

Outlook

- Probably referendum at the date of federal elections, September 22. Poll shows 62% in favor. Important decision factors for 80% price, 61% ecology, 44% democratic participation
- Public utility as a framework for further struggles
- Conflict on initial financing, price of grid. Vattenfall asking price € 3 bn, previous government estimated € 400 M. Conservative press reports: Senator for the Environment considering guarantees up to € 6 bn for the budget 2014/2015
- Conflict on policy: revenues for the general budget vs. further goals
- Making democratic control work: board, public assemblies
- Creating an example: many grid concessions in Germany end until 2014, interest in other cities
- Extending the scope: democratic control of basic services, water, public transport
- Sharing knowledge: importance of international experiences, e.g. Sacramento SMUD
- Building consciousness: public perception of energy politics, possibilities and limitations of democratic control. Similar referendum in Hamburg, possible strong public statement

Michael Below, Für eine linke Strömung (FelS)

Energie – Konzerne – Demokratie. Beispiel Vattenfall

Dirk Seifert (Hamburg)

Vattenfall ist ein zu 100 Prozent schwedisches Staatsunternehmen in der Form einer Aktiengesellschaft. Es ist als viertes großes Stromunternehmen auf den deutschen Markt getreten, als um das Jahr 2000 herum durch die Liberalisierungsregelungen auf EU-Ebene in Deutschland sich aus den bislang "kleineren" Stromkonzernen die Unternehmen E.on, RWE und EnBW bildeten. Die Fusion von zuvor etwa sieben großen Unternehmen wurde nur unter der Bedingung zugelassen, dass es einen weiteren vierten Player gibt: Diese Rolle übernahm Vattenfall durch die Übernahme von drei regionalen Stromerzeugern in Norddeutschland. Außerdem war es Strategie von Vattenfall, die Nr.1 im gesamten Ostseeraum zu werden. Das Unternehmen expandierte seit Anfang der 2000er Jahre daher auch in Polen, den baltischen Staaten etc., aber auch in Belgien, England und den Niederlande. Seit etwa 2012 ist diese Strategie jedoch gescheitert. Mit Ausnahme von Deutschland und Niederlande hat sich Vattenfall mit Verlusten aus diesen Ländern wieder zurückgezogen.
Das Unternehmen soll heute etwa 20 Mrd. Euro Schulden haben und hat angekündigt, 2.500 Arbeitsplätze abbauen zu wollen, davon 1.500 in Deutschland.

Seit etwa dem Jahr 2000 hat Vattenfall im Zuge der Liberalisierung der Strommärkte durch die EU-Kommission in Deutschland die bisherigen drei regionalen Unternehmen Hamburgische Electricitäts Werke (HEW, Hamburg), die Berliner Energie Werke AG, (BEWAG) und die ostdeutsche Braunkohle (Tagebau und Kraftwerke) übernommen. Außerdem kleinere Energieversorger in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Vattenfall ist damit in Deutschland zum drittgrößten Unternehmen im Strombereich geworden. Vattenfall hat die Übernahme in Deutschland wesentlich durch die Rückstellungen für die Atomenergie der HEW finanziert. Nach dem Kauf der HEW wurden diese Rückstellungen als Eigenkapital für die Expansion in Berlin und Ostdeutschland genutzt.

HEW und BEWAG waren vor der Übernahme von Vattenfall zu 100 Prozent öffentliche Unternehmen und unterlagen bis dahin der Kontrolle durch die Landes-Parlamente. Allerdings waren auch HEW und BEWAG als Aktiengesellschaft organisiert. Sie wurden unter großen Protesten an Vattenfall verkauft, weil angeblich aus den Erlösen Haushaltdefizite reduziert werden sollten.

Die als Privatisierung verstandene Liberalisierung der Strommärkte führte dazu, dass die Energieversorgung als normale Markttätigkeit eingestuft wurde. Damit wurde in Deutschland ein grundlegender Wandel vollzogen: Die Energieversorgung wurde nicht länger zum Kernbereich der so genannten Daseinsvorsorge/ Gemeinwohlorientierung gezählt, sondern als normale Wirtschaftstätigkeit. Grundsätzlich wurde mit der Liberalisierung die bislang bestehenden Gebietsmonopole beseitigt und der Wettbewerb zugelassen.

Die vermeintliche EU-Marktöffnung führte zu mehr Konzentration bei den bisherigen Stromkonzernen innerhalb Deutschlands und dazu, dass vor allem die RWE und E.on eine Expansion nach Europa massiv ausbauten. Die Propaganda der EU-Liberalen, dass mehr Markt zu mehr Konkurrenz und damit zu Preissenkungen führen würde, hat sich nicht bestätigt. Das Gegenteil ist der Fall.
Allerdings: Mit der Liberalisierung ist auch verbunden, dass neue Stromerzeuger in den Markt eintreten konnten. (Erneuerbare Energien)

Nach dem Verkauf und den damit verbundenen Umstrukturierungen innerhalb des Vattenfall-Konzerns zeigte sich:

Im Zuge der Liberalisierung und des Shareholder Value hat der Eigentümer Schweden hohe Renditeerwartungen als Ziel für die Unternehmensführung festgelegt, die deutlich über 10 Prozent lagen. In der Folge holte Vattenfall erheblich höhere Gewinne aus den übernommenen Unternehmen, als bis dahin von den alten Eigentümern.

Die Übernahme zuvor öffentlicher Unternehmen durch Vattenfall ist verbunden mit:

a. Demokratie-Verlust: Keine direkte Steuerung des Energieversorgers (Erzeugung und Vertrieb) mehr auf regionaler bzw. Landesebene durch die Parlamente. Damit auch Schwächung der Steuerung in wesentlichen Fragen wie Klimaschutz, Art der Stromerzeugung, Strompreise, Infrastrukturpolitik etc..
Da das Energierecht in vielen Bereichen von der Bundesregierung bestimmt wird, gibt es nur begrenzte Möglichkeiten auf Landes- bzw. Regionalebene mit rechtlichen Maßnahmen den Verlust dieser Steuerung zu kompensieren. Damit verbunden ist insgesamt, dass ökologische oder soziale Ziele weder direkt noch indirekt unterstützt oder verstärkt werden können. Klimaschutz und ähnliches wird dadurch erschwert.

b. Informationsverluste/mangelnde Transparenz: Waren bislang zumindest in wesentlichen Dingen über parlamentarische Anfragen in den Landesparlamenten etc. eine gewisse öffentliche Kontrolle möglich, fehlten diese nach der Übernahme. So waren viele Informationen über die Energiepolitik, ihre Ziele oder über einzelne Vorgänge (Störfälle in Kraftwerken etc.) nicht mehr über das Parlament aufklärbar. Das Parlament und die Öf-

fentlichkeit erfuhren nur noch über die Pressestelle des Konzerns, was dieser mitzuteilen gedachte.
Die Umstrukturierungen innerhalb des Konzerns und die Bildung zahlreicher neuer Unternehmenseinheiten führten auch hinsichtlich wirtschaftlicher Daten und der Kostensituation zu fehlender Transparenz. So ist es bis heute nicht möglich, zu sagen, welche Gewinne der Konzern in einzelnen Bereichen wie Wärmeerzeugung, Stromverkauf, Stromerzeugung etc. in Hamburg und Berlin macht oder wie die Kosten der Stromerzeugung und des Vertriebs tatsächlich aussehen.

c. Blockade Energiewende/Struktureller Wandel/Investitionshemmnis: Im Zuge der Dominanz des Shareholder Value hat Vattenfall in den Jahren 2000 - 2010 große Gewinne realisiert und an den Eigentümer (Schweden) abgeführt. Ein Faktor dafür waren hohe/überhöhte Strompreise, eingeschränkte Investitionen in z.B. Infrastruktur und Netze. Die hohen Anforderungen an die Rendite haben eher eine kurzsichtige Energiepolitik gefördert und die Möglichkeiten für einen strukturellen Umbau deutlich verschlechtert. Statt sich z.B. den sich abzeichnenden Veränderungen durch den verstärkten Einsatz erneuerbarer Energien anzupassen und entsprechend umzusteuern, hielt Vattenfall (wie auch die anderen) an der zentralen Stromerzeugung auf Basis von Kohle und Atom fest. Nicht erst Fukushima - in Deutschland mit dem Ergebnis, dass acht Atomkraftwerke abgeschaltet wurden und die Laufzeit der anderen nicht mehr verlängert wurde, führte nun dazu, dass diese massiven Strukturprobleme deutlich sichtbar wurden.

c. Innerbetrieblicher Demokratie-Abbau/Spaltung der Belegschaften/Sinkende Löhne: Der Druck auf die Beschäftigten im neuen Konzern wurde erhöht.
Teilweise wurde infolge der Fusion und dem Konzernumbau zahlreiche Arbeitsplätze beseitigt. Die Tarifstrukturen wurden ausdifferenziert: Neue Beschäftige wurden zu immer schlechteren Bedingungen eingestellt, Auslangerungen von bisherigen Tätigkeiten an externe Dienstleister etc. So konnten die Lohnstrukturen massiv differenziert werden (Spaltung der Belegschaften) und strukturelle niedriger Löhne durchgesetzt werden. Auch Mitbestimmungsrechte der Belegschaften wurden durch die Umstrukturierungen massiv eingeschränkt. Besonderheit: Für die Beschäftigten bei Vattenfall gilt eine Besonderheit: Hamburg ist bei der IG Metall, Berlin bei Ver.di und die Lausitz ist bei der IG BCE organisiert. Die drei Gewerkschaften stehen auch in Konkurrenz zueinander und sind durch erhebliche "kulturelle Unterschiede" geprägt.

Thesen

Privatwirtschaftliche Konzerne sind gewinnorientiert und nicht demokratisch:
Energieversorgung als "Grundrecht" darf grundsätzlich nicht an Gewinnen orientiert sein. Die Energieversorgung ist ein Bestandteil von grundlegenden menschlichen Bedürfnissen (Wasser, Straßen, Schienen). In diesem Sinne ist sie nicht mit anderen Wirtschaftsgütern gleichzusetzen.

Privatwirtschaftliche Konzerne mit dem Ziel der Gewinnerzielung haben grundsätzlich im Bereich der Energieversorgung nichts zu suchen.

Staatliches Handeln in der Energieversorgung auf die Schaffung von Rahmenbedingen durch Gesetze und Verordnungen (Leitplanken) zu reduzieren reicht nicht aus. Um die Chancen für Transparenz und demokratische Mitbestimmung, zu verbessern, ist der staatliche Besitz von Energieversorgern eine Grundbedingung. Eine allein parlamentarische Kontrolle reicht aber nicht aus. Auch vor der Übernahme durch Vattenfall haben die vorherigen Konzerne Umweltschutz missachtet, Atomenergie betrieben etc.

Die Kontrolle und Lenkung regionaler Energieversorgung muss künftig neue Formen der Bürgerbeteiligung in den Unternehmensstrukturen und ggfls. den parlamentarischen Gremien zulassen. Dabei geht es darum öffentliche bzw. gemeinnützige Interessen zu stärken: Demokratie-Ausbau, Transparenz, Umweltschutz, soziale Gerechtigkeit, Verbraucherschutz etc.

Nicht alle Bereiche der Energieversorgung müssen staatlich organisiert bzw. in seinem Eigentum sein: Angesichts der heutigen technischen Entwicklungen bei den (dezentralen) Erneuerbaren Energien ist die private Stromerzeugung grundsätzlich sinnvoll, sofern diese unter Berücksichtigung sozialer und Umweltbelange und unter Beteiligung der Betroffenen erfolgt. Diese "Regulierung" ist jedoch Sache des Staates.

Die dezentrale Energiewende ist technisch und gesellschaftlich ein massiver Umbau, in dem potentiell jeder Bürger zum Energieerzeuger werden kann. Damit bricht das bisherige Geschäftsmodel der großen Stromkonzerne zusammen und macht diese überflüssig. Neue wichtige Aufgabe wird vor dieser wachsenden Dezentralität der Umbau der Energienetze und die Steuerung von Erzeugung und Verbrauch.

Auch wenn der Einsatz erneuerbarer Energien grundsätzlich gegenüber Kohle und Atom ein Gewinn für Umwelt, Klima und Menschen darstellt: Auch im regionalen und lokalen Bereich müssen Aspekte von Umweltschutz und Sozialverträglichkeit beachtet und geregelt werden. Hierfür braucht es lokale Beteiligungs- und Mitbestimmungsformen, auf Basis staatlicher Vorgaben.

Die Energiewende stellt insofern eine Demokratisierung da, als das jeder und jede grundsätzlich über Genossenschaften, über die Kommune oder direkt selbst zum Stromerzeuger wird und damit Unabhängigkeit gegenüber zentralen Strukturen/Konzern entsteht. Allerdings ist die Energiewende finanziell betrachtet eine Sache des Mittelstands.

Mit der Dezentralisierung der Energieversorgungsstrukturen verlagern sich auch Umweltweltprobleme - sie werden kleinräumiger und häufiger. Dies erhöht auch die Anforderungen, mit den unterschiedlichen Interessen und Bedürfnissen lokal und regional umzugehen. Auch dies ist nur mit einem "mehr" an Transparenz und Mitbestimmung

sinnvoll gestaltbar, um die Bereitschaft (nicht nur Akzeptanz) für die Energiewende und damit für Klimaschutz und Nachhaltigkeit zu fördern. Auch dies ist mit gewinnorientierten Konzernen nicht möglich.

Dirk Seifert, Energiereferent, Robin Wood, Hamburg