Political ecology as perspective in analyses of crises in sustainable transition: The case of on-shore wind power in a front runner country

This paper investigates the societal implications of Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) at the local community level on the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. SEAP is based on the Covenant of Mayors that is the mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources on their territories. By their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO2 reduction objective by 2020. However, the local governments have trouble in managing this crucial goal because they have to combine it with the improvement of quality of life, wellbeing and local economic development. Moreover, the complexity of political strategies are increased by specific budget requirements, considering in particular the presence of different budget constraints at the local level (e.g. internal stability agreement) and the reduction of the budget available due to the economic crisis. For this reason there is a need to develop tools able to assess the effects of environmental and energy policies on the socioeconomic system and to assist policymakers in identifying the most effective choices.