

Management Summary

The Swiss electricity sector aims to have a future that is greener, cheaper, fairer and more reliable. With the approval of the new Energy Act (EnA), politicians and society anticipate a more participative role of Swiss households concerning such major energy-related aims. However, the question arises whether such expectations are actually justified.

This thesis relativizes major expectations regarding a more participative attitude of Swiss householders living in low-density suburban areas. Despite a broader range of energy-related decision-making being linked to energy prosumption and new organizational forms of energy provisions, such as local Energy Communities, the research results show that Swiss householders do not intend to significantly change their contribution behaviour towards common energy goals. Moreover, there seems to be no current alternative than to reward/incentivize energy-related contribution; oblige participation in energy transition, although beneficiary for everyone, seems not a promising energy governance approach to tackle energy-related challenges.

However, refined research results also suggest that individual variables (Social Value Orientation), social variables (group composition of Energy Communities) and the interaction of these variables influence energy-related contribution intention. Thus, expectations regarding increased Swiss households participation are only justified when controlled for different social psychological variables.

The energy transition is anything but self-driven. It requires fundamental knowledge on how individual and social variables interact and finally affect participation in energy transition. The thesis suggests that market and governance designs actively should amplify participation-enhancing attitudes. The thesis also provides insights on the role of energy service providers and on how they provide services to households engaging in energy transition.

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