

Abstract for IAS-STS work-in-progress workshop, 3rd March 2011.

A tale of Two Communities: Mutual and Overlapping, or Divergent and Confused?

This paper addresses two ‘community’ initiatives in the transition to low carbon futures: a Carbon Conversations course, and SOSO. It is based on original, empirical data gathered on many such initiatives, in Edinburgh, Scotland. At the outset it outlines the particular origin, nature and mode of operation in these two case studies. To advance the analysis an exploration of the wide and varied use ‘community’ plays in these two examples is undertaken.

One initiative – a Carbon Conversations course – where participants meet weekly, envisions a ‘community’ of mutual support and motivation to meet individual carbon footprint targets. The other, SOSO, a bespoke project targeting one particular urban street, envisions a ‘community’ primarily based on location. In the ensuing discussion, issues of communities of place and of interest are teased out. Alongside this is the role played by concepts of place, scale, territory and location in the envisioning and practicing of ‘community’.

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