

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

Participation from all is needed for a renewable energy transition. According to directives in Clean Energy for all Europeans and the Energy Union, the European Union has adhered to civic engagement for its renewable energy transition. There are still some challenges and an anomaly in its implementation which lead to scrutiny to the civic significant contribution. By using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research has successfully analysed the significance of civic engagement in the EU renewable energy transition. This statement is answered by the research question "what are the significance of civic engagement in achieving effective EU renewable energy transition ?" Two forms of civic engagement that answers said question are energy community as an invented participant as well as the non-political form of civic engagement and secondly EU Interreg programme as an invited participant also as the non-political and political forms of civic engagement. The analysis of the contribution and EU conducts are undertaken in the lights of neoliberal institutionalism and green political theory. The theory implies that the political will from EU governance and social will from civic engagement to achieve sustainability has driven a multi-level collaboration and socio-economic benefits to contribute to the EU renewable energy transition.

The research has found that currently the civic engagement from both Interreg programme and energy communities have contributed significantly to the socio-economic aspects of the renewable energy transition and its contribution to the EU renewable energy generation and targets have the possibility to be boosted in the coming years as projected in 2050. This is proven by evidence of direct social and economic benefits gained by the citizens such as economic benefits from citizen investment and social values from helping vulnerable

energy poverty, capacity building for energy management and policy recommendation, participation in solutions to the energy transition, as well as energy democratization. Energy communities have contributed to activities related with energy production, distribution, economic aspects, and social values. Furthermore, Interreg programmes have contributed solutions such as programs that leverage civic engagement, ensuring national authority compliance for the energy transition, and enacting a more inclusive and comprehensive economic framework. Moreover, the writer also finds evidence of these civic contributions that shows a tendency towards socio-economic benefits as well as further findings that support effective civic engagement.

Firstly, the energy community contribution for energy production, distribution, and economic aspects, and social values have contributed to decentralization of the energy system with added power generation from communities intermittent and dispatchable renewable energies. The civic engagement contribution does not reflect in the Eurostat statistic of EU states target achievement in 2018 as stated in the anomaly possibly because of the wide-ranging functions of civic engagement forms that are not only focusing on renewable energy production but also other forms of cooperatives and benefits and thus such services contribution is not accounted for in the national renewable energy target shares. Especially, the evidence of direct socio-economic benefits and social values are stronger as shown in the solidarity programme for energy poverty and poor household, citizen shareholders and feed-in tariff to circulate wealth for the community development, Energy Cafes for energy capacity building, providing green jobs, and investment for community development. Anyhow, the gradual social progress, awareness, and supportive framework from the energy community has the potential to further boost contribution to the energy transition in the coming future, as projected in 2050.

Secondly, the Interreg programme latest yearly report shows that most of the results yielded from the low carbon economy priority are policy improvement, networking and project plan development. This indicates that counting for the total of Interreg projects renewable energy generation apparently has not been a priority despite evidence of Interreg programs for renewable energy transition. Nevertheless, the indicated Interreg programs are shown to be useful to provide transnational multistakeholder partnership as solutions to transition challenges and also giving socio-economic benefits to the EU citizens. The socio-economic benefits are evident in Interreg transnational knowledge-sharing for civic engagement, capacity building with experts to enhance energy management skills, achievement in an increased energy policy professionalism, economic benefits through inclusive shareholders and alleviating energy poverty, as well as disseminating public inputs and cooperation with local authorities. In terms of solutions, Interreg programme has contributed to leverage civic engagement by Interreg *Co2mmunity*, ensure national authority compliance for the energy transition by Interreg MED Ecosystem Transition Unit, and provide inclusive and comprehensive economic framework from Interreg FIREPOL and CAN.

Furthermore, The research has also disclosed several findings that implies effectiveness in the EU renewable energy transition. Firstly, the European Union regional effectiveness is reflected by being on track to reach its regional renewable energy target by 2020 and evidence shows substantial progress has been made to phase out fossil fuel and increase renewable energy usage. However, there is a disparity in member states's achievement for its renewable energy target according to the latest database. Additionally, there are still vast renewable energy potentials left unexplored according to the identified 6 renewable energy sources.

Secondly, It is evident that civic engagement initiatives have been formally acknowledged by the EU regulations as well as institutions and it is an integral part of the EU energy transition as stated. The intricate details of energy community conduct in the regulations has been published only recently in 2018. This may explain barriers and insufficient regulatory efficiency that may be faced by the energy communities in the previous years that correlate with the decline in the number of emerging energy communities in the previous years.

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