DESTRESS

Demonstration of soft stimulation treatments
of geothermal reservoirs

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Olivier Ejderyan (D-USYS TdLab/SCCER-SoE, ETH Zürich) researches the socio-political dimensions of geothermal energy. His focus is on how social perception and discourses shape deep geothermal energy development. He participated in several interdisciplinary research projects on geothermal energy and conducted or supervised research on the social dimensions of geothermal energy in Switzerland, UK, Chile, and South Korea.

The social life of geothermal energy projects: Understanding project acceptance and rejection

Taking into account the social dimensions of geothermal energy projects has gained importance among geothermal energy developers. There is an increased recognition that such projects have consequences on local communities: they might provide benefits, but they also bring some risks. Early social science studies have focused on the acceptance of geothermal technology by local communities, focusing on communicating its risks or finding trade-offs and mitigation measures.

However, existing studies have highlighted that the acceptance of projects does not simply depend on the balance between benefits for a community and the risk this community might have to bear. Rather, project acceptance is strongly linked to the perception that local stakeholders will have of a geothermal project and how this project relates to the local context.

This talk will provide an overview of the main findings of social science research carried out in the DESTRESS project. It is based on results from media analyses, qualitative cases studies and survey research. We identified three categories of factors affecting the development of geothermal energy in Europe:

- Territorial factors linked to the embeddedness of the project in a locality
- Social and political factors linked to pre-existing social issues and the institutional setting

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- Communicational factors linked to the framing of the project by the media but also by the developers.

Taking into account these factors can help project developers to anticipate potential issues affecting project development. The talk will summarize the main DESTRESS recommendations to address such issues.