

Science Funding

SCIENCE POLICY RESEARCH UNIT

Climate Change

Innovation Systems Energy Sustainability

Growth Development Emerging Technology

‘Fracking’, framing and effective participation

Summary of findings, 2nd ANNUAL SCIENCE MEETING, 17.9.20

Socio-technical Systems Transitions Food

Poverty Low Carbon Infrastructure In

Inclusive Growth

Creative Industries

US
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Digital Training

Biomedical Urban

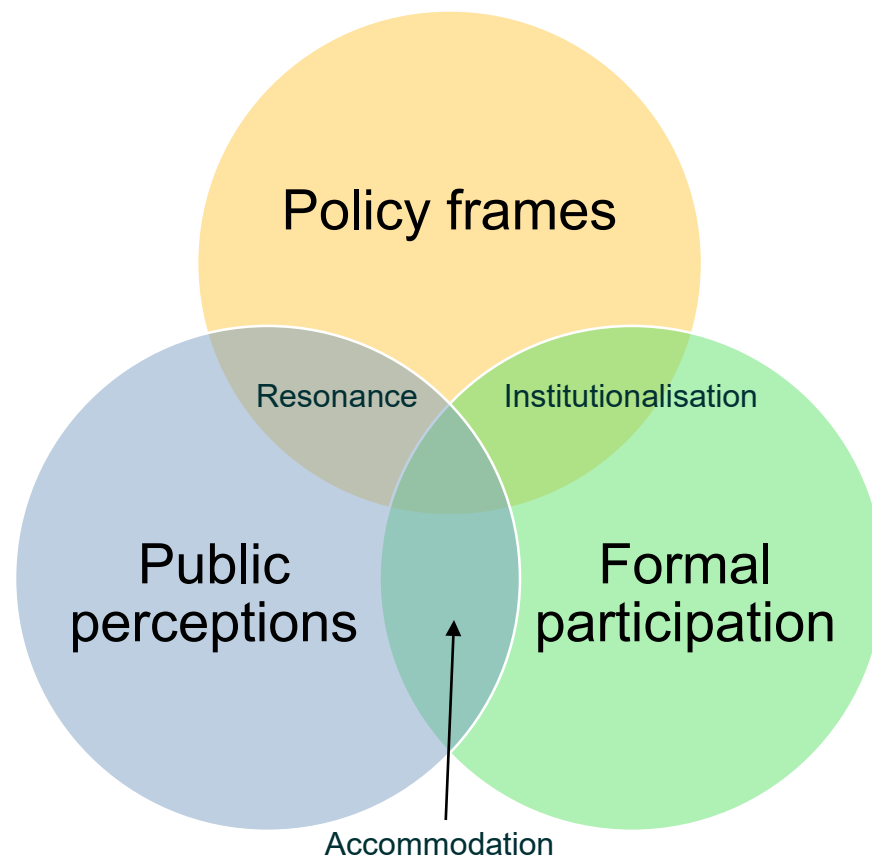
Project overview

3 core WPs

- WP1: Public perceptions
- WP2: Policy frames
- WP3: Processes of formal public participation

3 key relationships

- How resonant are policy frames with the public?
- Is formal public participation an avenue through which public views can be registered and influence policy and decisions (i.e. accommodation)?
- Do dominant policy frames shape formal participation (i.e. institutionalisation)?



Project progress

WP2 (which oddly started first):

- Frame analysis complete and published in *GEC* and *Environmental Politics*
- Imaginaries paper under review at *Journal of Economic Geography*

WP1 (ongoing, in the middle):

- Community interviews complete, paper submitted to *Local Environment*
- Round #1 of survey completed
- Survey results being analysed
- Paper on the resonance of policy frames currently being written
- Round #2 survey planning

WP3 (ongoing, just started):

- Analysis currently underway, scheduled to be complete by end of June and writing to commence thereafter



The discursive politics of 'fracking': Frames, storylines, and the anticipatory contestation of shale gas development in the United Kingdom

Laurence Williams^a, Benjamin K. Sovacool

^aScience Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Shale gas
Hydraulic fracturing
Fracking
Frames
Storylines
Framing

ABSTRACT

How contested sources of energy such as shale gas are perceived in frontier countries considering their development is incredibly important to national and international climate policies. The UK shale development case is of particular interest currently as the Government attempts to position the UK as a pioneer of European, safe, sustainable shale gas development. We conduct a mixed-methods analysis of the UK policy debate on shale gas development involving 30 stakeholder interviews and 1557 political documents. This empirical focus extends the existing literature by identifying the use of frames in and through the institutions and practices of formal UK politics. We identify nine key frames and their associated storylines, analyse their use over time, and compare these findings with other national case studies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given most UK Governments within our timeframe have supported shale development, pro-shale development frames dominate in the policy debate; however, we also find a high level of anti-shale development frame use, suggesting a deep and ongoing framing

ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2020.1740555>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 OPEN ACCESS 

Energy democracy, dissent and discourse in the party politics of shale gas in the United Kingdom

Laurence Williams^a and Benjamin K. Sovacool

^aScience Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

ABSTRACT

Drawing from an extensive content analysis of the UK parliamentary debate over shale gas, we use the UK shale gas case to explore how energy democracy themes are used and countered in the framing strategies of discourse coalitions in national political sites. Furthermore, we explore the extent to which these national political sites and discursive strategies are effective as institutions and practices through which to achieve energy democracy. We achieve this through an analysis of the success of the UK anti- and pro-shale gas development discourse coalitions in recruiting national political figures and influencing thinking and decision-making in parliament. In doing so, we bring together the literatures on discourse coalitions and energy democracy. We conclude with implications for both national policy as well as critical inquiry into environmental politics.

KEYWORDS Energy democracy; shale gas; hydraulic fracturing; frames; discursive coalitions; party politics

WP1 - Overview

- WP1 concerns public and community attitudes towards and perceptions of shale gas development
- WP1 also assesses how resonant the policy frames identified in WP2 are with public audiences
- Mixed methods approach to frame resonance
 - 31 interviews conducted between April-June 2019 including recruitment from Rural Fylde (incl. Roseacre & PNR), Coastal Fylde (Blackpool, Lytham), and Wider Region (e.g. Preston)
 - 2,148 completed surveys included UK citizens aged 18 and older, stratified into demographic groups which were closely representative of the UK population by country, region and socio-demographics



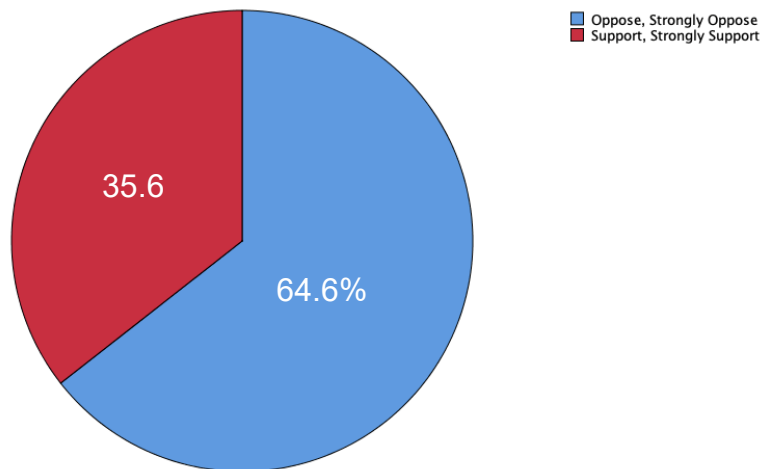
WP1: Lived experiences

Valence	Name	Illustrative quote(s)
Negative	"Horrendous" inquiries and collective trauma	<p>"Fighting a public inquiry is horrendous"</p> <p>"The planning system is good but it's not, you know, for Joe Public to do it."</p> <p>"It's like an emotional rollercoaster. No one will understand how much it's affected us. It's been horrible"</p>
Negative	Community divisions, "abuse" and "threats"	<p>"It was the worst thing I've ever endured ... I needed police protection"</p> <p>"I can't tell you how many abusive and threatening emails I've had."</p> <p>"It's caused a lot of stress in the community, a lot. People's nerves have been frayed"</p>
Negative	Disillusionment, disenfranchisement and "disgust"	"It's disgusting what the central government has done"
Negative	New vulnerabilities, earthquakes and "ruining" lives	<p>"Nothing will make me feel safe about this, I don't want it here full stop."</p> <p>"No one understands how much stress you're going through. It's completely, it's ruined my life"</p>
Positive	Social cohesion and "gelling" together community factions	<p>"What shale gas has done is gelled the community together."</p> <p>"I'm thankful almost that this industry's woke me up to the fact that you can create strong communities"</p>
Positive	Enhanced multi-level environmental "awareness"	"The thing that's changed dramatically ... I now have a growing awareness of climate change and it's made us more aware about fossil fuel extraction"
Positive	Everyday energy security and gas as a "bridging fuel"	<p>"People are not gonna turn their central heating off in the winter. The community needs the energy."</p> <p>"England's not going to survive on wind and solar power tomorrow morning when we all wake up."</p>
Positive	Local labor landscapes and "quality full time jobs"	<p>"We've lost all those quality full time jobs. ... So we need jobs, it's that simple, we need jobs for me."</p> <p>"It is about becoming a center of excellence if you will. So that people could come in and learn."</p>
Dynamic ambivalence	Living with traffic and "vehicles going past the house"	"The road kept getting shut with the protestors and it was just getting causing a nightmare getting to work, that was probably the main memory I've got of it. It was probably only after that that then I think the campaign started against I probably became more aware of the environmental issues"
Dynamic ambivalence	Living with perceived inauthenticity, and "diverted" community resources	<p>"The level of disruption they were causing to local people was just massive."</p> <p>"The protestors have created a lot of negativity on themselves and the kind of disruption they've caused if I'm honest."</p>

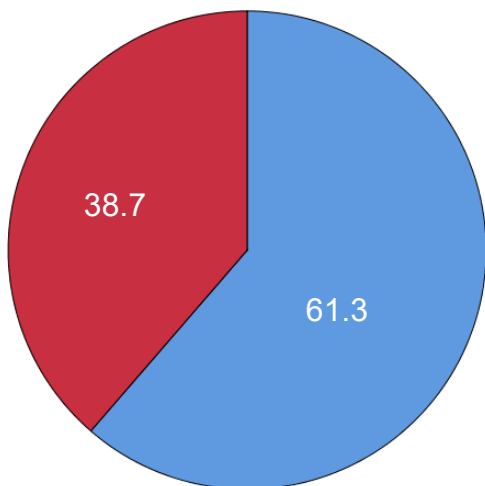
WP1: UK Survey of Public Views on Energy

Attitudes towards shale gas development

North West (n = 312)



UK (n = 2148, weighted by region)



Survey #1: Data Analysis


- Descriptive statistics of public views on:
 - UK heat & electricity sources
 - Natural gas sources (frame resonance questionnaire)
 - Trust in expert sources
 - Police and fracking protestors
 - Authority & participation in energy policy
 - Priorities for the UK's energy future
 - Values & lifestyle
 - Demographics
- Factor analysis
- Linear regression

Survey #2: Planning

- Comparative (UK, US, AR)
- Attitudes towards different energy transitions, including unconventional gas and hydrogen
- Citizen perspectives on authority, expertise and participation in energy policy-making

WP1: Which frames resonate?

Percent of respondents who indicated the claims of a frame to be “probably true” or “definitely true”.

Resonance	Frames (Sample prompt from questionnaire: “Shale gas development/fracking ...	
 <p>Strong</p> <p>Weak</p>	Industrialise the country-side ...will increase traffic in the countryside.”)	72.3%
	No repeat revolution ...will not make gas any cheaper for UK consumers.”)	66.6%
	Bad gas governance ...has been approved by overriding local decisions.”)	61.1%
	Dirty fossil fuels ...will keep us dependent on fossil fuels.”)	57.8%
	Elusive threats ...threatens the health and safety of local communities.”)	57.5%
	Wealth and Security ...makes us less reliant on other countries for gas.”)	53.0%
	Low-impact development ...will cause disturbances that are typical of any construction project”)	50.5%
	Manageable risk frame ...is unlikely to cause damage from tremors due UK regulations.”)	37.9%
	Lower carbon fuel ...will help address climate change.”)	33.1%

WP3 – Public participation

- Analysis currently underway
- WP3 is focused on formal, 'invited' forms of public participation
- Consultation on general policy and regulatory decisions, participation through the planning system, local industry and regulator engagement
- Key questions include:
 - What are the rationales underpinning these participatory opportunities?
 - How are these processes designed and conducted?
 - What is the scope for public influence? Which issues are on the table?
 - How are they perceived and experienced by publics?
 - According to the identified rationales, are they effective?



Science Funding

SCIENCE POLICY RESEARCH UNIT

Climate Change

Innovation Systems Energy Sustainability

Growth Development Emerging Technology

Connect with us

www.sussex.ac.uk/spru



spru@sussex.ac.uk



[@spru](https://twitter.com/spru)

Socio-technical Systems Transitions Food

Poverty Low Carbon Infrastructure In

Inclusive Growth

Creative Industries

US
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Digital Training

Biomedical Urban