RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DISCOURSES OF OBJECTION: TOWARDS DELIBERATIVE POLICY-MAKING

SUMMARY OF MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

Geraint Ellis, John Barry and Clive Robinson
Queen’s University, Belfast

June 2006
Abstract

This paper provides a summary of some of the key elements of a year-long study into the nature of objection to wind power in the UK. In particular, it challenges use of the term NIMBY, suggesting that it is an opinion poll perpetuated myth, unhelpful in understanding the wider environmental debate, derogatory to those who are labelled by it and misleading in its simplistic stereotyping. This investigation takes the informed decision that peoples’ values, rather than their opinions or attitudes, are the driving force behind environmental behaviour. As an alternative, it adopts Q-methodology, a long standing method of analysis which, through the investigation and analysis of peoples’ subjective understandings, makes explicit peoples’ ‘true’ understandings of the environment and the place of future development within it. By taking the case of the Tunes Plateau offshore windfarm proposal off the North Coast of Northern Ireland, the year long study intensively investigated the public debate surrounding the proposal, and through a series of interviews gained an understanding of the personal insights of a number of key actors. In a process, driven almost entirely by the inputs and motivations of those who took part, the investigators deduced 50 statements which summarised the subjective viewpoints of those involved. These statements were then organised by participants into an order of preference and those preferences were analysed using a factor analysis programme. The results, which are very different from the percentages and statistics expected of positivist research methods offer deeper understanding of the world views of those who have taken part. They show that commonalities exist between those opposing and supporting the project. It also shows that by objecting to certain developments at particular locations objectors can be acting out of environmental stewardship whilst also being sceptical of the technologies and policies behind the proposal. Those in opposition ask whether decisions are being taken for the right reasons and question the notion that science, policy makers and economists are necessarily working exclusively for the public good. In many other environmental disputes, local opposition is the only stalwart against exploitation and environmental degradation, however when opposition forms around projects framed within climate change and local sacrifices for global gain, the qualities of the sceptic are portrayed as somehow deviant and contrary to the common good. The research was framed within a wider rhetorical analysis of a sample of texts from government policy documents, developer’s promotional material, opposition campaign material and local and national media reports, to provide a fascinating overview of the devices and rhetoric employed on all sides of what is a public conflict over the future of UK energy provision. The conclusions and recommendations of this research sit firmly within the ethos of sustainable development but more specifically within the need to put social sustainability on an equal footing with the publicly accepted environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development.
RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DISCOURSES OF OBJECTION: TOWARDS DELIBERATIVE POLICY-MAKING

1. Introduction

This paper provides a summary of some of the key elements of a year-long study into the nature of objection to wind power in the UK. It describes the approaches adopted and some of the main findings emerging from the study. The project complements other research being undertaken on renewable energy and establishes a new agenda for studying the role of communication, values and subjectivity in the development of sustainable technologies.

The research consists of two main parts. The first is a detailed analysis of a sample of texts that frame public debate on wind energy, such as government policy documents and campaign material produced by wind farm objectors. The second is a detailed examination of the discourses deployed in the debate around a specific offshore wind farm proposal off the North Antrim Coast in Northern Ireland, the Tunes Plateau. This paper describes the findings from each of these elements, explains the overall methodology adopted in the project and points to a number of implications the findings have for renewable energy policy and other environmental disputes.

The paper also includes a number of appendices that give further details of the research, including background material on the Tunes plateau schemes and some of the statistics upon which the findings are based.

The research project is also supported by a website and additional information will be posted on this as it becomes available: http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/REDOWelcome/

This research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)\textsuperscript{2} and its support is gratefully acknowledged.

2. Project background and objectives

This research has been undertaken at a time when debates over climate change, energy security, carbon emissions, the resurgence of nuclear power and the concept of peak oil are becoming prevalent in public discourse. The UK Government has seen renewable energy as part of its strategy to address all these issues and has established a commitment to increase renewables by 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2020, with wind power playing a major part in meeting these targets. Although the Government has established a number of mechanisms to ensure that these commitments can be met in full, it has recognised that barriers remain in the form of fiscal arrangements, distribution networks and the planning system. This latter issue is a particularly relevant in relation to wind power where one of the key obstacles appears not to be technological or even economic, but primarily socio-political in the form of local concerns and the failure of planning to reconcile these concerns with the national and global public interest.

While much government effort is being made to clarify the regulatory and fiscal environment for wind energy and heighten public awareness of its benefits, there is virtually no attempt to directly confront the root issue of the public acceptance of renewable energy projects - which many commentators see as being one of the main obstacles to expanding the renewables sector.

Against this backdrop, this research project has explored the discourses of opposition and support for wind power, with the aim of understanding the arguments, values and elements of subjectivity that contribute to debates on renewable energy. It is suggested that by generating a more sophisticated understanding of the deeper motivations of stakeholders, it may become

\textsuperscript{1} This is sometimes spelled “Tunnes”, but this paper will use “Tunes”.

\textsuperscript{2} Grant Ref: 000-22-1095
possible to clarify the preferences and priorities of those engaged in wind power debates with the aim of improving communication and potentially identifying areas of common ground upon which more productive dialogue can begin. The research described below attempts to establish this as a new way of looking at wind power disputes.

The research is based on a number of initial assumptions that have guided the strategic direction of the research. It is important that these be made explicit and they include:

- The recognition that we live in an era of competing truths and scepticism over knowledge, particularly increased questioning of the authority of science (the so called “post-normal science”).
- It is also recognised that there has been a failure in the models of environmental governance that have suggested that competency to deal with energy and environmental issues was the preserve of “experts”.
- There is a paradox of an increasingly technologically dependent society becoming more sceptical of technological innovation and developments.
- In this context, the issue of “trust” between citizens, public institutions, the scientific community and business becomes a central issue for the development of successful environmental policy.
- One symptom of the erosion of trust has been the prevalence of the term “NIMBY” to label those objecting to wind power schemes as being deviant and acting counter to the public interest. This is regarded here an invalid and unhelpful concept.
- An implicit strategy of government and the wind energy industry is that a means of overcoming opposition to wind farms is to provide more information on the benefits of wind power - suggesting that this will overcome the ignorance of objectors. There is little evidence to support his view.
- Increased understanding of the deeper values and motivations of objectors and supporters is the starting point in overcoming current conflicts and addressing the apparent impasse in the expansion of renewable energy sector.

3. Framing Debate on Wind Energy: UK Policy Discourses

As part of the wider examination of the wind power debate, a sample of key texts were analysed to establish some of the prominent discourses on this issue at a variety of geographic scales (national, regional local) and from a variety of stakeholders – government, developers, opponents, media. This analysis is based on the principle that views of renewable energy are articulated in a variety of discourses, each of which rests on certain assumptions, values and judgements about the world. This post-empiricist tradition is grounded in the awareness that language does not simply mirror the world, but instead actively creates and constructs the world as we see it. The use of language thus carries power in the way in which discourses can suppress or advance different interests. This becomes particularly evident in the context of policy debates, when different stakeholders engage a whole range of discursive strategies to further their arguments, to persuade others of their position or to undermine, ridicule or otherwise weaken the positions of others.

The chosen texts represent archetypal examples of policy argumentation and as such can be analysed and interpreted through a study of the rhetoric they employ. A rhetorical approach views language as an expression of argument and persuasion, so that any discourse will show how its originator sees the world and attempts to persuade others to adopt similar standpoints. Rhetoric helps identify this process of argumentation by clarifying the resources the originator deploys in putting her message across, the creativity of language, the understanding of context and the claims she makes on rationality, the justness or rightness of her argument and the unjustness or irrationality of the position of others. As such, this view is ideal for understanding how different stakeholders contest the issues around wind farm development, with the variety of discourses deployed over such developments saying much about the different interpretations of
wind farm development, and the power held (or assumed) by the different stakeholders engaged in the debate.

The texts selected for this analysis are:

a) Policy documents produced by government and regulatory agencies dealing with windfarm development:
   - Text 3: Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment Northern Ireland (2001), 

b) Promotional material issued by developers and supporters of windfarm proposals:

c) Campaign material developed by those opposed to windfarm development:

d) Local and national media reports relating to windfarm development:
   - Text 10: Leake, J. ‘Invasion of the Wind Farms’, The Times (24/4/05)

The results of this analysis are summarised below.

3.1. Opposition Discourse Themes

There are a number of themes we can identify in the discourses of opposition in the examined text. These include:

- **Sacrifice and disempowerment.**
  This discourse places strong emphasis on place-based local values (including both a sense of the importance of local sea and landscape, and associated community identity associated with those). It sees these values and the physical environment and the social/community practices upon which they are based as being scarified for national or global ends. There is a strong sense of local interests being (relatively, though not completely) powerless against large centralised and impersonal forces of central government or big business.

- **Lack of trust in government, regulatory and windfarm developers.**
  Throughout the analysed texts there is a common theme of a lack of trust, varying from mild scepticism to outright mistrust of the public institutions involved in windfarm promotion or regulation and the motives and intentions of windfarm developers. In some discourses (such as the Country Guardian document) there is also scepticism about the science and economics behind not just wind energy, but also climate change. This involves recourse of alternative ‘authoritative’ knowledge and science, pragmatic appeals to common sense and the deployment of the language of rights and democratic participation to claim that wind farms cannot simply be ‘imposed’ from outside on unwilling communities and citizens. Part of this distrust in public institutions is
discursively presented as the government actively supporting (via subsidies) or being forced to support (via its commitments to EU and global climate change policies and treaties) the ‘urgent’ development of wind energy. This is portrayed as being a ‘wind rush’ which creates the artificial commercial environment for quick profits at the expense of other solutions and the local communities and environments affected.

- **Language of war, conflict and defence.**
  Objector discourses also have recourse to the language of conflict, reflective of the intensity of feeling around the opposition. Phrases such as ‘Invasion of the windfarms’ are common while other phrases expressing this discourse include ‘three armed invaders’; ‘phalanx of turbines’; and the need to ‘defend’ valued local areas. Some texts talk of ‘waging a war against turbines’ and aspects of this discourse sometimes shade into a quasi anti-colonial trope in terms of this local war and defence being waged against ‘outside’ and centralised agents. This is expressed not just in written form but also through the use of photomontages which portray wind farms or individual turbines as huge, threatening, unnatural and out of place in natural settings. The of threat (though what constitutes the ‘threat’ is understood in different ways) is interesting in that it is pervasive in both objector and supporter discourses and its common usage can be explained by the fact that the identification of a ‘common threat’ both helps mobilise people and bring them together – the ‘us’ and ‘them’ rhetoric is common in the discourses of warfare, civil defence and conflict.

- **Foreignness, aliens and anti-colonial rhetoric.**
  The rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ is also commonly seen in discourses of migration and colonialism and these are also strongly represented in debates around wind farms which portrays them as alien and foreign. Examples include highlighting turbines as a ‘Danish invention’ transplanted to another and inappropriate place or the expression ‘they don’t belong or fit in here’. One interpretation is that wind farms are seen as ‘pollution’, in the sense that pollution is ‘matter out of place’. That is, if pollution is some substance or entity which is not in itself ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’ but as a consequence of an unnatural, it is possible to link the anti-wind farm discourses of ‘pollution’ (a very good example of this is the *Derry Journal* article) and ‘foreignness’. In some texts there is also a nascent ‘anti-colonial discourse’ or sub-text, in the sense that aspects of the objector discourses deploy similar other rhetorical devices that are found in anti-colonial arguments. There is the clear drawing of firm boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’; the unwillingness or inability to concede anything positive about ‘them’; the classification of ‘them’ as coming from either some foreign land (Denmark) or from the ‘centre’ within the country (London or Belfast in the case of official government agencies and developers); the firm belief that the intentions of ‘them’ are malign and that these outside forces are intent on exploitation and expropriating the local environment and destroying the local community and its values. In the texts reviewed we find statements about Scotland being ‘cleared’ and sacrificed for energy users in South of England. In the case of the Tunes Plateau, there is a feeling that the local community is portrayed as a rural, peripheral and consequently being sacrificed for central government or business interests, while the symbolism of the Crown Estates issuing the lease to the developers is not lost on Nationalist and cross-border interests.

- **Industrialisation and commercialisation of the environment**
  This discourse depicts windfarms as destroying areas of beauty and tranquillity, turning the ‘rural’ or ‘wilderness’ into an outdoor industrial energy production plant. Here the emphasis is on undermining the notion of ‘farm’ which has rural, pastoral, ‘safe’ and ‘unthreatening’ connotations and in its place the projection of such developments as industrial factories. From this perspective windfarms are the 21st century version of William Blakes’ description of factories as ‘dark satanic mills’ in early phase of industrialisation and therefore invoke a romantic-based and environmentally-based defences of the rural and the natural from the industrial and unnatural. A related
discourse here is that not only do windfarms represent the industrialisation of local environments, but also the main benefits of this are private not public. This constitutes the commercialisation of the environment in that it is for private profit that windfarm development takes place. Drawing on further analogies with the early phase of industrialisation, there is a strong sense that what windfarm development represents is a form of ‘enclosure’ and ‘privatisation of the commons’. That is, the commercial aspect of windfarm development is viewed as the taking of what was once publicly owned and/or enjoyed into private ownership and control. A clear example of this is in John Vidal’s article ‘An Ill Wind’ noting that “Cameron McNeish, the president of the Ramblers Association in Scotland, says wind power is the biggest threat Scotland has faced since the Highland clearances”.

- **NIMBY rebuttal**
  A final, strong narrative within discourses opposed to windfarms is the countering of the perception of objectors as expressing parochial concerns or based on ignorance of windfarms, renewable energy, climate change and the need to move to a low carbon economy. That is the discourses of objection tend to be characterised by a self-understanding of objectors not as ‘ignorant locals’ or climate change deniers, but sceptical of ‘non-local forces’ (state and business) coming in and trying to pull the wool over their eyes with PR stunts.

### 3.2. Supporter Discourse Themes

There are also a number of themes we can identify within the support discourses from the selected texts:

- **The Assumption of Consensus**
  There is a commonly used assumption of consensus/agreement within supporter discourses. This consensus both relates to the reality and threats of climate change and the urgent need for renewables as part of the transition towards a low-carbon economy. This discourse begins with an assumption of overwhelming agreement on need for wind power – hence a pro-development presumption that challenges its opponents, noted in the questions ‘Why Wind? Why Not?’ posed by the British Wind Energy Association. Further examples include the DETI Northern Ireland report noting that wind energy as a ‘non-negotiable element of future energy use in Northern Ireland’. The presumption in favour of wind farms is based on the pressing challenges of climate change and energy security (established by science, government and international agreements), which should naturally led to a consensus around their development. In Northern Ireland both the B9 outline proposal and the DETI Northern Ireland report highlight other aspects of the consensus around wind energy – we are told that the promotion of wind energy is based on cross-party Assembly support as well as co-operation between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland government agencies. An interesting countering discourse here is around ‘dissensus’ – not just between local opponents and supporters, but also how the issue of windfarm development has split otherwise cohesive interests such as the environmental movement – with most environmentalists supporting windfarms but some prominent ones such as James Lovelock against them and supporting nuclear energy.

- **Rational, knowledge-based, scientific**
  Supporters of wind farms appeal to existing evidence bases for research to overcome objectors’ claims over noise, visual impact and house price grounds. In both official government and developer texts much effort is made to display the rigour with which development of sites are chosen – feasibility studies, environmental and other impact assessments, local community consultation, robust regulatory framework and guidance etc., and the rational basis and framework upon which decisions are made.
- **Overcoming opposition**
  There is a split in the texts on how they analyse opposition to wind farm development and how to engage in changing the minds of those who object. On the one hand there is a dominant discourse which holds that more knowledge about the need and impacts of wind farms will persuade local opposition – suggesting that the basis for opposition is ignorance or a knowledge gap, which suitable information from government, developer and other sources will fill. A dimension of this discourse sees opposition to windfarms as ‘old-fashioned’ and/or a localised inability or unwillingness to ‘get with the programme’ regarding the need to develop wind energy. On the other hand, while there is a shared preference in windfarm supporter positions for ‘win-win’ approaches to local community involvement and participation, there was also a minor discourse (particularly in the Sustainable Development Commission Report) that recognised that this may not always be possible. This discourse holds that given the subjective nature of the strongest objections to windfarms (visual/aesthetic impact), it is not possible to make recourse to any ‘fact-based’ argument to settle the matter. Therefore, there will have to be an acceptance of ‘dissensus’ and continued disagreement around their development in particular areas. This is related to another common narrative in pro-windfarm positions around the claim that local communities cannot exempt themselves from ‘doing their bit’ for national, global and future goals, objective and common interests. In some respects this is viewed in the selected texts as a form of ‘social learning’ for these communities now faced with the prospect of ‘hosting’ windfarms, given that the greatest potential for windfarm development in the UK is often in areas that have never had any large industrial presence or energy generating technology and hence explain greater levels of resistance. However, this minor discourse, which could be labeled a ‘tough decisions’ position, is clear that while it understands and can explain local opposition, it should not be used as an excuse and suggests that aesthetic judgments alone cannot be used to prevent windfarms being developed. Another theme emerging from debates on opposition is the idea that promoters of wind farms are ‘emissaries’ from wider contexts than the local; national (UK government CO2 targets and energy policies); European (Directives); Global (climate change, international treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol, claims of global justice and ‘one planet living’); and the future (targets for 2020 and 2050 are commonly used as well as more general appeals to think about ‘future generations’).

- **Urgency and threat of climate change and low carbon transition**
  A constant feature of all the supporter texts is the threat of energy insecurity and climate change and the immediacy of wind as a business opportunity. The sense of urgency is developed through the common use of the argument that we need to act now in order to have any chance of making future benefits. In some of the official texts there is a view that there is a ‘small window of opportunity’ for the UK to develop an international leadership position in wind energy and also to make the necessary infrastructural, economic and public opinion changes necessary for a smooth transition to a low carbon economy. While all supporter discourses of wind energy stress urgency and threats, it is particularly common to quote Chief Scientist Desmond King’s view that climate change is a bigger threat than global terrorism. However, in official texts there is no discernable sense of panic or crisis in regard to either the ‘problem’ (climate change and energy insecurity) or the ‘solution’ (rapid and widespread development of windfarms). The official discourse can be summarised as holding that ‘Climate change and energy insecurity are problems, but we’re working on it, know what we’re doing and while more needs to be done, we’re going in the right direction’. Thus the sense of urgency and threat identified is countered by a reassurance that the state and its agencies are addressing these threats and therefore protecting us and our future.

- **Ecological modernisation**
  In official texts and media coverage there is an ‘ecological modernisation’ framing of windfarm development. Climate change and energy insecurity are not simply threats but also opportunities. Ecological modernisation essentially holds that the ‘old’ opposition
between ‘environmental protection’ and ‘economic growth’ has been overcome via technology, such that we can ‘de-couple’ energy and environmental impact from rising material standards of living and a competitive economy. Wind farm development is presented as an exciting and a central 21st century, modern, technological innovation that can help in the ‘greening’ of the economy as we shift away from fossil fuels. This is in contrast to an emphasis on energy efficiency and reduction (i.e. demand side or consumption focused) – in its place is the stress on wind energy as a supply-side and production-based policy that will not harm UK competitiveness or economic growth. All pro-wind farm discourses tend to stress the ‘continual improvements’ in design of turbines to minimise aesthetic, noise and other negative impacts and the dynamic improvements in the electricity generating capacity of wind turbines. The flexibility of wind energy in the decentralised energy infrastructure of the future and the potential to decommission wind farms at some future date, unlike conventional fossil fuel or nuclear power stations also stress the modernisation elements of the discourse.

In contrast to the view of objectors that commercial profit-making is the real aim of windfarm development, supporter discourse tends to holds that the commercial exploitation and development of wind energy is a means (private profit making via technological innovation and government support) to an end (the public interest in security of energy supply, tackling the threat of climate change and benefiting future generations). Thus, this discourse displays the value-basis for supporting windfarms – they are in the common good, there is a concern for future generations who are vulnerable to our decisions today. Wind farm development is portrayed as being not just about profit making but also about combating climate change and the transition to ‘one planet living/global justice’. Official texts highlight wind energy as a way of addressing geopolitical instability and conflict around securing energy supplies and a mechanism for securing energy for the most vulnerable in society. This is close to the ‘Triple bottom line’ discourse of sustainable development where windfarms are presented as making environmental (combats climate change), social (concern for future generations) and economic sense (opportunities and ensures energy security).

3.3. Common Rhetorical Devices Employed in both Objector and Supporter Discourses

In addition to the themes highlighted above, it is also interesting to highlight some of the rhetorical devices used by either side of the debate to strengthen their argument. These include:

- **Trinities (implying a religious connection):**
  - Supporters – consensus between state, market and community, ‘triple bottom line’ – social, environment and economic dimensions; levels – local, national/European and global dimensions
  - Opponents – ‘land, sea and air’ threat of wind farms; or as pollution to landscape, eye and ear.

- **Strategic silences:**
  - Supporters – issue is not about making money but saving the planet, concern for future, contributing to UK international obligations etc.
  - Opponents – grudging acceptance (if that) of the viability of wind farms, but even if accepted as ‘clean and renewable and a ‘good thing’ quick to move onto their costs and downsides.

- **Contested use of ‘naturalness’:**
  - Supporters present windfarms as natural, green etc while opponents object to use of wind ‘farm’ as masking the industrialisation and commercialisation of nature/land/seascape. Windfarms as ‘pollution’ and ‘polluting’ (to the eye, hearing,
and a ‘blot’ on the landscape) undermining the association of wind energy with ‘naturalness’ and non-polluting. This also includes the use of the active verb ‘polluting’ rather than passive ‘pollution’ to stress the on-going, dynamic threat.

- **Visible/invisible threats:**
  - Supporters – windfarms as visible but doing no ‘harm’ against ‘invisible’/abstract threat of climate change which will have dramatic physical effects on the landscape. Supporters are keen to insist that the impact of climate change on landscape ought to be the context for looking at the visual impact of wind farms.
  - Opponents stress the very visible harm (to local tourism, visual and aural pollution, the local environment etc) of windfarms while proposing alternative approaches to addressing climate change, from energy efficiency, nuclear or other renewable energy sources.

- **Appeals to ‘trusted’ sources of authoritative information/knowledge:**
  - Supporters rely on science – clear threats of climate change and energy insecurity, and social science – surveys showing support for wind etc.
  - Opponents also rely on science and economics to undermine case for windfarms as well as appealing to ‘common sense’, ‘tradition’ and ‘community’.

- **Linking of renewable in general and wind in particular with nuclear power:**
  - *Pejorative*: opponents of windfarms and wind energy seen as ‘pro-nuclear’ or being funded by nuclear industry (Bernard Ingham as lobbyist for BNFL and prime mover behind the anti-windfarm Country Guardian). Therefore being pro-wind means one is anti-nuclear power. Here the issue seems to be the ‘threat’ of wind energy in general (and offshore wind in particular) as the most viable and competitive renewable energy source as a competitor for nuclear as a non-carbon source of energy.
  - *Energy/Climate Change*: pragmatic view that we need to shift to low carbon energy but that nuclear rather than wind power is currently a better bet for energy security (Country Guardian, Government Chief Scientist) and reducing CO2 emissions.

- **Exaggeration:**
  - Opponents – translation of metres into feet – has the effect of numerically increasing the size of turbines and thus their impact and threat, or using the upper level of proposed turbines ‘50-85’ becomes ‘up to 85’, again increases the impact; so not lying, but presenting their case in the strongest possible light, while supporters minimise opposition as either the frantic activity of a ‘vocal minority’ whipping up public opposition or as a temporary problem that will be either won round (through knowledge and understanding) or not allowed to ‘opt out’ of ‘doing their bit.

- **Use of photomontages:**
  - Opponents use these to emphasise the visual impact of windfarms stressing the intrusive, alien and inappropriate scale and siting of them, while supporters more often use real photographs portraying wind turbines in at least three settings – i) ‘community’ – images of people/local community gathered round a turbine ii) ‘natural’ – images of windfarms which ‘fit into’ the land/seascape – sometimes taken from particular angles and iii) aesthetic – images of sunsets and turbines.
4. Researching Objection: Values, Opinions and Meaning

A distinctive theme that emerges from the analysis of the texts above is that both sides of the energy debate utilise attitudinal research such as opinion polls to support their position, yet there is widespread suspicion of any findings if it is suggestive of support for the ‘other’. As such, it is suggested that the opinion poll represents a clear example of some of the problems in the way in which policy on renewable energy is framed and discussed.

The opinion poll was born of the 1936 US elections when George Gallup first predicted with confidence the results after interviewing a limited number of people. He established the principle of the ‘opinion poll’ based on questionnaires, structured interviews, closed questions, statistical analysis and graphical diagrams. Noting that it was born of, and the methodology is still largely, a tool for political analysis, this research questions the suitability of opinion polling as an adequate tool for the understanding of public attitudes and values in relation to environmental disputes such as proposed wind farms. This situation provided stimulus for adopting alternative methodologies for this research.

In order to support this position, 45 public opinion or attitude surveys from the UK and Ireland were reviewed as part of the research project (see Appendix 2). The profile of the samples surveys covered the following:

- 35 (78%) employed quantitative methods, 8 (18%) qualitative and 2 (4%) a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.
- It was possible to obtain 28 full reports, the remaining being summaries only.
- 12 (27%) reports were attributed to government, 12 (27%) to industry, 9 (20%) to the media, 7 (16%) to NGO’s, 2 (4%) to independent researchers and 3 (7%) were not directly attributable.
- Sample size ranged from 3 to 4119 and a total of 26,207 people took part.

The review of the content of these surveys suggested that a recurring structure within surveys was to move from a generalised theme and ‘proving’ an understanding of climate change and establishing within the questionnaire the ‘need’ for renewables’ per se. The surveys then typically attempted to establish whether respondents accept wind energy as part of a renewables strategy, before moving onto issues of location, siting and tolerance towards wind turbines. This line of questioning often appears to highlight a difference between the expressed support for the idea of wind power and the actual support given to specific local schemes, which some researchers have designated as being accounted by a “belief-action gap”, a seemingly illogical or deviant situation.

The review of the opinion polls also indicated that the most ‘shallow’ form of research comes from industry, whose surveys tended to use oversimplified questions (e.g. “Do you agree that wind farms are ugly and a blot on the landscape” – thus providing no definition of type or size of turbines and facility, one subjective term ‘ugly’ and no specific reference to type of landscape), with issues over-generalised and results over expressed. Industry also tended to present the findings by using edited highlights that can be rapidly disseminated. This is essentially aimed at reducing key nuggets of information to bite sized chunks for the busy consumer, yet with little regard for the implications of poor quality content. Indeed during interviews for this research, a recurring criticism voiced by objectors was towards the way that statistics were banded about, taken out of context and used as a tool to portray those with legitimate concerns over land use proposals as deviant and ‘NIMBYs’. It thus appears that the way in which this information was (mis)used was a key point of contention and frustration, acting as a barrier to more productive debate.

Given these substantive criticisms, it is interesting to reflect on why there is a continuing reliance on this way of predicting environmental behaviours and understanding the disposition of a population towards specific land uses such as wind farms. To comprehend this, it is useful to
highlight that human understanding consists of values, attitudes, opinions and beliefs. From these, values have the most longevity, being the most consistent over time and some would argue, having the greatest impact on human behaviour. Attitudes have an evaluative function and facilitate our understanding and interpretation of the environment, opinions however are more transient in nature and can be formed relatively quickly without much knowledge or experience of the issue in question. Beliefs have two functions; the belief system links directly between ones values, attitudes and opinions by means of predisposing one in a certain direction – yet as part of our cognition of information and being more ‘matter of fact’, beliefs tend to be more open to question and challenge.

Psychological studies have suggested that while individuals openly express attitudes or opinions, it is a persons’ values and life goals which are more likely to influence their behaviour in regard to environmental actions, especially, when they perceive a threat (or reward) inherent within the action. This suggests it is values that decision-makers should focus on in understanding public acceptance of wind farms, not just the evidence of opinion polls.

The approach adopted in order to test whether an emphasis on values can provide more insightful perspectives on debates over wind farms, this research adopted an approach known as Q-Methodology, designed to deliver a scientific study of subjectivity.

5. Q – Methodology and Cognitive Associative Network Mapping

Q-methodology was developed by psychologist William Stephenson in the 1930’s, with the aim of enabling researchers to present peoples’ views and perspectives whilst mitigating for researcher bias. Q-Method is intended to identify subjectivities that exist in relation to the topic of investigation, specifically seeking to understand people’s thoughts on the issue. Q does not attempt to capture this information from across a whole population, but focuses on a small number of well-selected subjects rather than a sample percentage of the wider population. Q analyses the intimate relationship between the interviewee and the topic rather than large data sets of cursory information (e.g. gender, age etc), therefore having the greatest potential to highlight the values of those involved and give the most meaningful analysis.

It is important to highlight that Q-Methodology is not regarded as a panacea for understanding wind farm disputes, but it is claimed that in association with other techniques it can form an important bridge between the more conventional research methods (e.g. opinion polls) and those that seek to uncover deeper psychological determinants of behaviour.

In this example, the research has sought to combine the information generated by Q-methodology with a psychological technique of Cognitive Associative Network Mapping, which is capable of displaying a wealth of extra qualitative information. This approach has been developed as part of this specific research project and will be referred to as Q+CAN. The relationship between these techniques is shown in Figure 1.
The process shown in Figure 1 begins with the identification of a topic for research, followed by a literature review that points the researcher in the direction of key individuals. It is usual to initially conduct a series of unstructured interviews during which individuals with key insights into the topic discuss what they believe are the most important issues related to the topic. Such interviews are repeated until data saturation is achieved i.e. when no new arguments or issues are being presented.

At this stage, data analysis begins, but unlike other forms of research, Q does not require the formulation of a hypothesis before studies are undertaken, rather Q bases the analysis on the nature of the gathered data. The first stage in the analysis involves separating out the value and non-value items raised by the interviewees – collectively these constitute the main discourses on the topic under examination. Those issues and statements that are regarded as reflecting values of participants are then inputted into Q-Methodology (Loop 1 in Figure 1) while the non-value issues and statements are inputted into Loop 2 to form the CAN map (see Figure 2).

The CAN map notes all the non-subjective issues raised by the interviewees. Those issues highlighted in green suggest a positive attribute of wind farms, while those in red indicate a negative attribute.

The value statements set aside for the Q-Method exercise are then classified according to the sample grid shown in Figure 3, before being further condensed by identifying the most succinct statements that describe a particular discourse topic. In this case, where such a rich discourse was present, 50 final statements were deduced by this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Power</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Impacts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3: Matrix for sampling statements from Interview Material for Q-methodology
Depending on the number of statements selected, a grid is developed over which the statements can be sorted according to relative agreement or disagreement. The grid used in this study is shown in Figure 4 and demonstrates the requirement of the methodology to follow a forced normal distribution curve. Although it is arbitrary in shape, it is recommended for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, a quasi-normal distribution curve is backed by many years of psychometric testing that shows that sorting procedures like Q result in distributions of this kind. Practically, a standard symmetrical distribution of this kind constrains responses and forces participants to make decisions and prioritise their responses therefore increasing the likelihood that their implicit thoughts will be made explicit.

The 50 statements are then printed on sticky labels to allow each participant the opportunity to rearrange their sort before deciding on their final standpoint and adhering the statements to their assigned rating, thus creating a permanent record and reducing recording error. Suitable participants are then asked to sort their preferences for the selected statements. Once the Q- Sorts have been completed the data is entered into a Q software programme, in this case PQMethod a freeware programme (See Figure 5).
• Step 1 (STATES) is to input the 50 statements
• Step 2 (QENTER) to enter each individual sort
• Step 4 (QPCA) to perform a principal components factor analysis which gives a value for each factor based on its relative contribution to the overall discourse
• Step 6 (QVARIMAX) a rotation is performed for each factor identified in step 4 until there is sufficient dispersion to make the story clear – the maximum number of factors where N≥ 2. In this case (see Figure 6) 4 factors were identified in the supporter discourses, hence four typologies of supporters. A similar result was obtained in the objector discourses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS FOR ROTATION</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N=12</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N=7</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=11</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N=7</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=16</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N=14</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N=26</td>
<td>N=7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 6: Rotation of Factors for supporters

• The final stage of the programme is to run step 7 (QANALYZE) which produces a series of data sets for each factor type which are correlated with the various statements (see Appendices 2 and 3), facilitating identification of various typologies of supporter / objector, described in the next section.

6. New insights into objection and support for wind energy: The Case of the Tunes Plateau

For the purposes of this study, a range of supporters and objectors identified in the debate over the proposed Tunes Plateau offshore wind farm (see Appendix 1 for a description of the proposal) participated in a Q-methodology exercise, as described above. This included a total of 71 people which resulted in 53 completed sorts. 33 of whom ascribed themselves as supporters, 20 as objectors and 1 as neutral towards the Tunes Plateau proposal. Interestingly, four individuals initially identified by the researchers as being objectors completed the Q-sort and self-ascribed themselves as supporters, hence the imbalance between supporters and objectors. It is also important to note that Q-methodology does not require large numbers of participants to create valid results - it does not claim to be representative of the whole population, but presents a useful aggregation of those involved in the research. The statements used in this study and the resulting ranking for the identified factors are listed in Appendices 2 and 3 and only summary descriptions of the factors are included here – a detailed account of this element of the research will be included in an extended academic paper, which will soon be available on the REDO website.

In the Tunes Plateau case study, the Q-Methodology produced the following findings for objectors and supporters:

6.1 Tunes Plateau Q-sort: Supporters

Q-method identified four factors for supporters that collectively explain 64% of the total variance within the data. The four discourses are summarised below:

• Factor A – Rationalising Globally - Sacrificing Locally

3 http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/REDOWelcome/
4 Numbers in parenthesis refer to statement numbers, which are listed in Appendices 2 and 3.
This explains 17% of total variance.

*Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos:* 3, 26 (-4); 6, 9 (+4); 16, 22, 32, 46 (-3); 2, 11, 23, 31 (+3)

This discourse is characterised by a belief in scientific rationality and its application to the challenge of climate change. While recognising the value of the North Coast, it accepts any impacts on this as a necessary sacrifice to achieve greater goals of sustainability.

- **Factor B - Local Pastoralist – Developer Sceptic**
  This explains 7% of total variance.
  *Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos:* 3, 50 (-4); 8, 6 (+4); 9, 26, 37, 44, (-3); 6, 15, 21, 49, (+3)

  This discourse is characterised by reluctant supporter of the TP scheme, being unhappy about potential impacts on the North coast, but ultimately recognises that this may be necessary for the pursuit of sustainable development. This is based on a rather traditional, pastoral environmental outlook, a belief in local needs and community activism and a strong level of scepticism over the intention of the wind farm developers plus.

- **Factor C - Embrace Wind**
  This explains 28% of total variance.
  *Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos:* 26, 16 (-4); 6, 11 (+4); 3, 14, 18, 39 (-3); 2, 4, 13, 37 (+3)

  This discourse is characterised by a very strong belief in wind power, it is future-orientated and holds the developers in a very positive light. It is disparaging of objectors and appears very uncritical of the proposal and for this reason has been named after the British Wind Energy Association’s promotional campaign; “Embrace Wind”.

- **Factor D – Site Specific Supporter – Energy Pragmatist**
  This explains 12% of total variance.
  *Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos:* 26, 45 (-4); 4, 31 (+4); 14, 16, 30, 32 (-3); 6, 9, 11, 28, 37 (+3)

  This discourse is characterised by its high level of concern with energy issues, a pragmatic approach and its site specific support for the Tunnies Plateau scheme that includes an aesthetic appreciation of turbines themselves.

**Consensus between supporter discourses:**

In addition to the great differences between the identified discourses, it is worth noting that there were a significant number of statements that attracted a high degree of consensus amongst all factors. An analysis of these suggests that:

- Supporters are strongly motivated by their awareness of climate change and the need to do something about it (6) now and are not too concerned of any longer legacy issues of the wind farm (20).
- They strongly believe that Northern Ireland should play its part in accommodating an expansion of renewable energy and sees offshore wind as part of such a strategy (26).
- In contrast to this, supporters strongly believe that objectors are taking a short term view of what are the most important issues facing society. Aligned to this, they see objectors working against the public interest and against the view of the majority (47, 42).
- The positive perception of wind farms overrides any issues connected to the actual developers (28), although overall most see the developers to be acting in good faith and acting in an open and honest way (25, 29).

**Disagreement within supporter discourses:**

The analysis of the statements over which there was most disagreement within supporter discourses, which suggests that:
- There is a difference between supporters that see that the issues of climate change as being so urgent that it overrides any other environmental concern (9), while other believe there is room for compromise on this issue.
- Some supporters are naturally suspicious of the developers (5, 50), perhaps reflecting a more traditional outlook associated with environmentalism.
- There is a division amongst supporters in how they view the environment – some take a very naturalistic and even romantic perspective (23), some gain spiritual sustenance from the seascape (31) and some prioritise a more pastoral, bucolic idea of the environment (8). This is a source of reluctant to supporting the wind farm, overcome by the priority of climate change. Others have a more pragmatic and scientific view of the environment, some even seeing beauty on wind turbines – for these, support is less contested.
- Some see the scale of this wind farm as being a positive addition to the renewable sector, others believe renewables should be expanded at a smaller, more devolved scale (45).
- It seems that some supporters view themselves as solely bearing the label of “environmentalist”, others see that objectors as sharing this and as such, are more negative on this as a wider discourse (46).

6.2. Tunes Plateau Q-sort: Objectors

Q-method identified four factors for objectors that collectively explain 62% of the total variance within the data. The four discourses are summarised below:

- **Factor A – Anti-Wind Power - Local Resister**
  This explains 17% of total variance.
  Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos: 1, 38 (-4); 6, 15 (+4); 2, 3, 9, 13 (-3); 4, 5, 34, 40 (+3)
  This factor is characterised by a strong anti-wind power view, concerns with the broader local impacts of the scheme and shows a determination and confidence that the project can be resisted through local activism.

- **Factor B – Wind Power-Supporter - Siting Sheriff**
  This explains 21% of total variance.
  Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos: 1, 26 (-4); 6, 24 (+4); 3,18, 30, 50 (-3); 4, 31, 41, 49 (+3)
  This discourse is characterised by a greater support for the idea of wind power than other discourses, an engaged with wider environmental discourse and major sitexspecific concerns related to this proposal.

- **Factor C – Anti-Developer – Pragmatic Localist**
  This explains 14% of total variance.
  Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos: 1, 48 (-4); 25, 33 (+4); 13, 38, 44, 50 (-3); 5, 15, 20, 35 (+3)
  The discourse is characterised by a strong anti-developer perspective that is informed less by the strategic issues of climate change and energy security or aesthetic concerns, but by concerns over tangible local impacts of the TP scheme.

- **Factor D – Economic Sceptic- Siting Compromiser**
  This explains 10% of total variance.
  Statements with strongest agree/disagree nos: 1, 38 (-4); 33, 35 (+4); 3, 9, 18, 23 (-3); 12, 24, 25, 45 (+3)
  This discourse is characterised by a concern with shorter term, more focused impacts of the proposed scheme and it appears to apply a more reasoned, economic rationale to evaluating the proposal and the options for preventing it going ahead or locating it to an alternative site.

- **Consensus between objector discourses:**
In addition to the great differences between the identified discourses, there were a significant number of statements that attracted a high degree of consensus amongst all factors. An analysis of these suggests that:

- Most objectors are very aware that the notion of renewable energy is a progressive one and that it does the cause no good to be seen as anti-renewable (1) – all objector discourses strongly stress this. Indeed, one needs to accept that they are all genuinely pro-renewable, although clearly not all pro-wind. Although a number of the specific discourses highlighted great sensitivity to how objectors were perceived, there was no consensus on any of the other statements that noted such issues.

- All objectors’ discourses are keen to distance themselves from climate change deniers (3), but there is less consensus on prioritising climate change and the need to address it (6).

- There also appears to be consensus around the notion that objection to the Tunnes Plateau wind farm is a principled one and as such, there is little scope for debate or compromise. As such all objector discourses disagree with the fact that they could be persuaded by increasing the local benefits of the proposal (44) and tend to shun the notion that objection to wind farms is socially constructed – hence some agreement over the rejection of statement 14.

- There is consensus however on the need to be vocal about opposition to the wind farm (42). This may suggest an understanding that the mainstream view is probably pro-wind and pro-renewable and therefore they recognise the need to vocalise any opposition, should it be lost in this conventional wisdom. Complementing this, it could also suggest a suspicion of how government promote wind energy so there is a need to be vocal about opposition, should government take advantage of the silence.

- All objector discourses feel strongly that wind power is not an adequate cause to sacrifice the visual quality of the north coast (9) and all value the seascape as a thing of beauty with some spiritual value (31). When one looks at the individual factors it is clear that this is based on a variety of underlying reasons – some place over riding priority on the coast and will not accept any encroachment on its natural beauty, while with others this view is based more on a scepticism of wind power in general or this project specifically.

- It is also clear that most objectors view the proximity to shore as being the main single issue related to this particular scheme (32) and this is linked to the way in which most objectors agree that the developers made a mistake in releasing the photomontages of the proposal (29). This may suggest that it was the photomontages that actually stimulated their own opposition to the scheme and made them realise the visual impacts it may have. It should also be noted that, if the developers had not made public any visual impression of what it would look like, it is possible that they would have been criticised for being furtive.

- Although not scoring that high, all objector factors express some tension with broader environmental discourse in the sense that they resent that visual concerns are sometimes sidelined by more strategic environmental debates focussing on climate change etc and that they believe environmentalists to be dogmatic. Interestingly, some objectors try to project their concerns as an environmental one, whilst others align themselves with other outlooks.

- There is some agreement that the objectors hold developers with some scorn and are aggrieved by the presentation of the scheme as being in the public interest, rather than as a scheme for private profit.

---

**Disagreement within objector discourses:**

An analysis of the statements over which there was most disagreement within objector discourses, suggests that:

- Some objectors oppose the scheme because of its site, some because they are against the principle of wind farms (26, 13).
While all discourses are concerned about visual impacts, others are also opposed to the scheme for wider reasons, including local economic impacts (33).

Some discourses are future looking and therefore concerned of long term impacts, others more focussed on more immediate impacts (20).

As noted above, some discourses are more sensitive than others about how objectors are perceived by others – particularly in terms of being in the minority (48, 21).

Some objectors see both sides as engaging in misinformation, others just see this to be a tactic used by the developers (41) – suggesting that objectors are distributed across a realist-conspirator continuum. This fact is also reflected in the faith objectors have in the way government will make the decision on the proposal (35).

6.3. Areas of consensus and disagreement between objectors and supporters

A final layer of analysis was applied by running a joint Q-sort analysis on all individual responses to produce two idealised discourses. These corresponded almost entirely with objectors in one factor and supporters in the other. Only three individual sorts did not fit into this pattern – two people that ascribe themselves as objectors are allocated to the Factor dominated by supporters and one person ascribing themselves as a supporter is allocated to the Factor dominated by objectors.

The statements that attracted the highest levels of consensus between these two factors suggest that:

- Both objectors and supporters strongly recognise that climate change is a major issue facing humanity that needs to be addressed now – all participants appear keen to disassociate themselves with those that deny the existence of climate change.
- All participants agree that the seascape is an important aesthetic asset. It is suggested however, that there is a wide range of opinion that come from this – while objectors tend to see this as pristine and disturbed by an off shore wind farm. On the other hand, supporters recognise the beauty of the existing seascape but generally see wind farms as being complementary, indeed some see turbines as things of beauty in themselves.
- There is a consensus around the notion that it is inappropriate that wind farms should go into built up areas – however there may be a range of reasons on why this may be so.
- There is some consensus that the scale of the project is an important element in the debate over the proposed scheme (17).
- There is some mild disagreement across the board that both sides in the debate have resorted to scaremongering and misinformation – not it is suggested because they regard the debate to be open and fair, but often because they only see the other side of the debate as resorting to those tactics – thus highlighting an underlining distrust of those holding contrary views.
- There are a number of issues that neither supporters nor objectors regard as being important – this appears to include concern over the veracity of impact studies of the scheme (27) and the implications this has for a precautionary approach; concern over the fact that government may have to impose the scheme on the local area – thus casting doubt on the democratic credential of the authorisation process; and the fact that any compromise would be seen as a buy off, which could either suggest a dogmatic view on the part of the objectors or alternatively an expression of principle on the part of objectors.

The statements that attract the highest level of disagreement between these two factors suggest that:

- Above all, there is disagreement that the visual quality of the North coast should be compromised to facilitate more sustainable lives. This reflects a difference of the value placed on aesthetics and heritage (34), differing weight placed on climate change and whether participants see turbines as a thing of beauty, or of visual disturbance.
- There is a fundamental disagreement over the value of wind energy and its ability to make a major contribution to the country’s energy needs (15).
- There is strong disagreement on the fact of whether ratepayers’ money should be used to oppose the scheme – essentially reflecting how the participants see the public interest being defined.
- There is strong disagreement over the perception of the developers and their motives and interests (5, 50).
- There is strong disagreement that opposition to this scheme is indicative of a broader anti-renewable stance, implying a range of other associated views.
- There is strong disagreement over the economic benefits of the scheme (33) and the message that the scheme would give to the wider world (13).

7. Implications for Policy and Process

The findings of this research suggest a number of implications for policy and the debate around renewable energy and wider patterns of environmental governance. These have been brought together under three main categories:

7.1 Implications for understanding environmental disputes

- Public engagement and discursive practice are now entrenched as a normative ideal for a range of public policy making, yet it is clear that there are major problems in how effectively this is actually operationalised in practice.
- While discursive practice is a suitable aspiration for policy making, it is important that it should not be led by the naïve notion that consensus will be possible in every case of environmental dispute.
- There is a tendency to marginalise and denigrate oppositional voices to schemes that are portrayed as being environmentally progressive. This fails to grasp that positions on any individual development are informed by personal and collective values – for example an enduring scepticism of technology dependency. These values are deeply held, aspirational and often well intentioned.
- It is critical to recognise that people of good faith should be allowed to disagree and that a process that best facilitates critical engagement with a range of perspectives is at the root of a more sustainable form of environmental governance.
- This research has highlighted that the manner in which different stakeholders engage in environmental disputes is just as important as the substantive issues addressed in such debates.
- It is suggested that the way in which regulators and developers engage the public with proposals for sustainable land use projects is founded on poor theory and while there are many examples of good practice, this has not be aimed at addressing and understanding the issues of most concern to objector interests.
- It appears that there are few trusted third parties in a position to best facilitate critical engagement in environmental disputes.
- These general observations have direct implications for how environmental governance should attempt to accommodate diverse voices and suggests the need for participative methods that can highlight the role of subjectivity and values in framing positions in environmental disputes.

7.2. Implications for the wind power debate

- The virtues of objection need to be more adequately accommodated and can be used to provoke alternatives and critical evaluation.
- There appears to be substantial problems at a national and local scale of how debates on wind energy are framed. Both sides of this debate engage in this debate with a lack of sensitivity that does much to further fuel conflict. For supporters, they often come across
as self righteous and evangelical. In contrast, objectors are seen to be overly defensive and dogmatic. These do not create the conditions for an adequately discursive debate.

- Renewable energy gains much from being couched in the principles of sustainable development, yet promotional strategies do not adequately tackle one element of the three key principles of SD – social sustainability.
- It is regrettable that the debate over renewable energy appears to be increasingly framed as an alternative to nuclear, rather than fossil fuels.
- A dominant strategy for overcoming opposition to wind farms often relies on awareness-raising, based on the assumption that objectors need to be educated out of their ignorance. It is suggested that this is unlikely to be an effective strategy and may even be counter-productive.
- Support for wind energy projects in not always unconditional – indeed some discourses express reluctance in supporting such projects and developers clearly need to be cognisant of this.
- There is a need to develop a research agenda for understanding the role of subjectivity in wind energy debate.
- A central issue in the wind energy debate is trust, or a lack of it – it is essential that this is acknowledged and a greater range of initiatives adopted to promote mutual trust. Examples of this may be downstream engagement, citizen juries and as shown in this study Q+CAN.
7.3. Implications for offshore wind energy proposals

While there was no intentional aim to generate specific examples for offshore wind energy proposals, the research has uncovered the following issues relevant to this more specific topic:

- A significant proportion of opposition is stimulated by dissatisfaction over the authorisation process for offshore wind and the way in which they are consulted on such proposals. Key relevant issues here are:
  - Unlike the “currency” of land use planning, the authorisation for marine-based schemes is poorly understood and results in frustration for not knowing how to effectively influence the process.
  - There is a great deal of suspicion of the DETI, who are viewed by many objectors as both the proposers and the regulators for offshore wind schemes.
  - There is significant potential for misunderstanding due to the tentative nature of much of the communication used by regulators and proposers.
  - There are concerns over the rigour of how such schemes are evaluated and the ability of government to engage in genuine consultation on such schemes.
8. Research Team and Contact Details

The research team involved on this project includes:

- Geraint Ellis (Principal Investigator), School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Queen’s University, Belfast.
- John Barry, (Co-Investigator), School of Politics, Queen's University Belfast.
- Clive Robinson, Research Assistant

The research team can be contacted through the Principal Investigator:

Geraint Ellis  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering (SPACE)  
Queen's University, Belfast  
David Kier Building  
Stranmillis Rd  
Belfast  
BT9 5AG  

Tel: 028 90974370  
e-mail: g.ellis@qub.ac.uk

9. Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by:

- All the residents of Coleraine, Portrush, Portstewart and surrounding areas who contributed to this research.
- The residents of Inishowen who contributed to this research.
- All the Politicians, Councillors and Civil Servants who contributed to this research.
- All members and staff of Non Governmental Organisations who contributed to this research.
- The staff at The Lodge Hotel Coleraine who facilitated the Coleraine focus group.
- The staff at Greencastle Community Centre (Donegal) who facilitated the Greencastle focus group.
- The staff at the Lodge Hotel Castlerock who facilitated a dissemination meeting
- B9 Energy for providing a comprehensive media archive.
- Dr Peter Doran (QUB) for his assistance and local knowledge of Inishowen.
- QUB Hospitality Services for food and drink.
- Our partners and children who put up with our periods of absence and erratic working times.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Outline of Tunes Wind Farm Proposal
Appendix 2: Attitudinal Surveys/Opinion Polls reviewed as part of
Appendix 3: Idealised Discourses of Supporters of the Tunes Plateau Wind Farm Proposal
Appendix 4: Idealised Discourses of Objectors to the Tunes Plateau Wind Farm Proposal
Appendix 1: Outline of Tunes Wind Farm Proposal

1. Introduction

The proposal for Northern Ireland’s first offshore windfarm originated with a joint report into offshore wind resources around the Ireland of Ireland by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Public Enterprise (Republic of Ireland) in 2000. This identified the Tunes Plateau as an area with potential for an offshore wind farm, leading to the Crown Estates selecting a consortium in 2002, to take the project forward. The consortium, now comprised of local energy company B9 Energy Offshore Development Ltd and Renewable Energy Systems Ltd have proposed a scheme of between 150 to 250 MW comprising of between 50 85 turbines. The consortium is currently undertaking a range of impact studies on the site.

2. Location

The area identified for the proposal lies off the coasts of County Antrim (Northern Ireland) and Donegal (Republic of Ireland).

3. Assessment

The assessment of the proposal is designed to ascertain the optimum size and location for the wind farm, therefore no specific numbers or capacity of turbines have been firmly established. The assessment is based on the range of 150 to 250 MegaWatt capacity. The proposed location of the assessment extends from 5km to 10km offshore in water depths of around 12 metres (see below).

The assessment also includes a number of Environmental and Technical Studies

- A Landscape / seascape and visual impacts study
- An Ornithology study
- A marine ecology study
- An acoustic and vibrations impact study
- An archaeology and cultural heritage study
- A coastal processes and seabed study
- A water quality and flood defences study
- A fishing and fisheries study
- A shipping and navigation study
- An electromagnetic interference and air traffic study
- A health and safety study
- An air and climate study
- A socio-economic study

(The assessment process is still ongoing)

4. The legislative process

The legislation governing the implementation of the proposal is covered by:

- The Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992
  Under article 39, the construction of a generating station requires the consent of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. Applications must be accompanied by an

---

5 This has been compiled from publicly available information from the developers, a media archive and information provided during the interviews for this project.
Environmental Statement and the department will also carry out independent consultations as part of the review process.

- **Food and Environment Protection Act 1985**
  This legislation is intended to protect the marine environment and those who use it. The Environment and Heritage Service regulates the issue of licences based on its own consultations and the information submitted by applicants.

5. **Operation**

At this stage it is anticipated that the wind farm will operate for approximately 25 years, at which point decommissioning of the facility will entail removal of all equipment to a point just below the seabed. Financial guarantees to cover the expense of decommissioning will be incorporated into the Crown Estate lease.

6. **Public opposition**

While there has been a relatively low level of opposition to onshore wind farms in Northern Ireland, this proposal has met with a well organised campaign of opposition that has included individuals from the North Antrim coast and Inishowen, a campaign group formed specifically to object to the scheme, COAST SOS and a number of local authorities bordering the scheme, led by Coleraine Borough Council. Coleraine Borough Council agreed to dedicate £80,000 of public money to fund the opposition campaign which it has used to produce 100,000 leaflets, develop a website and secure endorsement of the campaign by local celebrities such as James Nesbitt and Darren Clarke.

7. **Tunes Wind Farm Proposal Timeline**

A full appreciation of the details of the public debate over the scheme is shown in the following timeline, compiled from press coverage of the proposal:

- **October 2000**
  DETI and Department of Public Enterprise IE assessment of offshore wind energy resources in ROI and NI, Interreg II identified and named area now known as tunes Plateau

- **February 2002**
  Crown Estate began process to select suitable assessment and potential developers for the sites

- **June 2002**
  B9 Energy Offshore Development Ltd, Powergen Renewables Developments Ltd and Renewable Energy Systems Ltd offered the lease of the site
  B9 consortium begin public information programme contacting Coleraine, Derry, Donegal County, Limivady and Moyle district councils, MLAs, MPs, MEPs and TDs and local media

- **July 2002**
  860 mail drop to community interest and individuals
  Cecilia Keavenay TD (Moville) begins representations to the Irish Government over the nationality of the proposed site

- **August 2002**
  Stand on the Strand 300 people gather to voice their opposition at Portstewart Strand

- **September 2002**
  Formation of COAST SOS at the Edgewater Hotel in Portstewart
  DETI gives go ahead to B9 to carry out impact assessments and feasibility studies
  North Coast Visitor Survey (MRNI)
  COAST SOS produce leaflet

- **October 2002**
  DETI confirms possibility that part of the Tunes Plateau could fall in Irish Jurisdiction

- **November 2002**
  B9 photomontages released
  Coleraine Borough Council toughens up opposition releasing a statement outlining objection to the proposal "in light of the councils careful
consideration over several months“ it would register “its strongest objection to
the development”

December 2002  COAST SOS postcard campaign begins ‘Save the Causeway Coast’
January 2003  Limavady, Moyle and Donegal Councils register public opposition to the
proposal. According to the Chairman the vote of the councils who represent
some 230,000 people is a “very strong democratic basis on which to mount a
cohesive campaign of action” to include “political lobbying of decision makers
and influencers, both in Belfast and Dublin; a publicity campaign to harness
the full support of the local community...”(Coleraine Times)

February 2003  Causeway Coast and Glens joins in voicing its opposition
National Trust representative states that “we have after much consideration
decided that the proposal is not appropriate” (Coleraine Times)
March 2003  David McClarty in Belfast Telegraph creates a link between B9 Tunes Plateau
proposal and that of the Ballymoney Lignite mine as an “either / or scenario”
April 2003  B9 accused of “dirty tricks” campaign by offering advice to supporters on how
to make their views known and encouraging them to write letters of support to
local media.

Professor Joe McCormick (UU) [sic] is highly critical of the North Coast Visitor
Survey saying that “there are problems at every stage from sampling to report
writing. One can have very little faith in the findings”

‘Towards a New Energy Strategy for NI’ consultations
B9 extend the period of feasibility studies and impact assessment for a further
12 months

May 2003  Airtricity announce plans for an offshore wind farm off Kilkeel which is
reported as contradicting the claim that the Tunes Plateau was the "only
possible area in Northern Ireland where an offshore windfarm could be
located" (Belfast Telegraph)

August 2003  Coleraine Borough Council uses £80,000 of rate payers money to fund
opposition to the Tunes wind farm proposal producing 100,000 leaflets and
web pages

Coleraine Times publicly supports Coleraine Borough Councils Campaign

September 2003  Golfers Darren Clark and Graeme McDonnell join CBC campaign
Artist Ross Wilson joins CBC campaign
The National Trust publicly supports the CBC campaign, a spokesperson
stating that "Coleraine Borough Councils campaign plays a valuable role in
highlighting the potential damage which a large scale wind farm at the Tunes
Plateau could do to a highly valued coastal landscape (Limavady Chronicle)
North Down Borough Council publicly supports the CBC campaign

October 2003  Jimmy Nesbitt gives full support to CBC’s campaign
November 2003  COAST SOS pledge support to the CBC campaign
January 2004  Derry City Council joins CBC campaign
September 2004  E.ON UK / Powergen withdraws from the consortium citing a high workload
from previous commitments
October 2004  B9 engage Charlton Enterprises Ltd to facilitate interaction with local council

To Date  Assessment of potential impacts continues

8. More information

For more information on the Tunes plateau proposal, visit the following websites:

• B9 energy: http://www.b9energy.co.uk/
• “Stop the wind farm” website, hosted by Coleraine Borough Council:
  http://www.colerainebc.gov.uk/stopthewindfarm/
### Appendix 2: Attitudinal Surveys/Opinion Polls Reviewed as Part of this Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Authors/Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Utility Operating Experience with A 300KW Wind Turbine of UK Manufacture</td>
<td>Unpublished PhD</td>
<td>Andrew McCrea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Public Opinion of Potential Development of Wind Turbine Generators at Bryn Titli</td>
<td>Radnorshire district council</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Review of seven wind farm open days</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Research &amp; auditing services Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Wind Turbine power Station Construction Monitoring Study</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Chris Blandford Associates, University of Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Kirby Moor Wind Farm - Public Opinion Survey</td>
<td>National Wind Power Ltd</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Mynydd Yr Hendre Community Survey</td>
<td>Opposition Group</td>
<td>Opposition Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Cemmaes Wind Farm - Sociological Impact</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Market Research Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Love them or loathe them? Public Attitudes towards Wind Farms in Wales</td>
<td>BBC Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Public Attitudes Towards Wind Power - A survey of Opinion in Cornwall and Devon</td>
<td>DETI</td>
<td>Exeter Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Attitudes of Local people Towards the Wind Farm at Coal Clough, Lancashire</td>
<td>Unpublished Dissertation</td>
<td>Liverpool university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire Residents Views on Environmental issues</td>
<td>Friends of the Earth</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Taff Ely Residents Survey</td>
<td>National Wind Power Ltd</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Novar Residents Survey</td>
<td>National Wind Power Ltd</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Stroud District residents Survey</td>
<td>BWEA, Triodos, Western Windpower, GWEF</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Renewable Energy Consultation – Opinion Survey Results</td>
<td>South Ayrshire Council</td>
<td>Alan McGonickle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The GB public's views on energy issues</td>
<td>RSPB</td>
<td>BMRB International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>North Coast Visitor Survey</td>
<td>B9 Energy</td>
<td>Market Research NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Lambigg residents Survey</td>
<td>National Wind Power Ltd</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Investigation Into The Potential Impact Of Wind Farms On Tourism In Scotland</td>
<td>VisitScotland</td>
<td>NFO System Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Survey on Environmental Issues in Scotland</td>
<td>Scottish Executive, Barkers Advertising</td>
<td>NFO System Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Public Attitudes to the Environment in Scotland</td>
<td>Scottish executive, Social Research: Hinds, Carmichael &amp; Snowling Brook Lyndhurst Ltd, MORI, Upstream Lansdowne Market Research, MosArt Ipsos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Attitudes to renewable energy in London</td>
<td>London Renewables Sustainable Energy Ireland</td>
<td>RBA Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Attitudes Towards The Development of Wind Farms in Ireland</td>
<td>BWEA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>New Power for Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Attitudes and Knowledge of Renewable Energy in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>DETI</td>
<td>COI Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Attitudes and Knowledge of Renewable Energy amongst the General Public</td>
<td>Central Office of Information</td>
<td>TNS Consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Public Attitudes towards renewable energy in the South West</td>
<td>REGEN SW</td>
<td>Mori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Public Attitudes To Windfarms: A Survey Of Local Residents In Scotland</td>
<td>Scottish Executive</td>
<td>Simon Braunholtz: MORI Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Wind Farms Survey</td>
<td>Greenpeace</td>
<td>ICM Polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>National Survey Report</td>
<td>Pollution Probe</td>
<td>Oracle Poll Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Attitudes to Renewable Energy in Devon</td>
<td>REGEN SW</td>
<td>MORI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Action Renewables Quantitative research</td>
<td>Action Renewables</td>
<td>Millward Brown Ulster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The NI Omnibus</td>
<td>Action Renewables</td>
<td>Millward Brown Ulster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Hebridean Windfarm Plans</td>
<td>? BBC Scotland</td>
<td>MORI Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Renewable Energy Survey</td>
<td>Scottish Renewable Forum</td>
<td>NOP World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Wind Farms Wales</td>
<td>BWEA</td>
<td>NOP World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turbines - The Winds of Change</td>
<td>BBC Devon</td>
<td>BBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Farms</td>
<td>BBC Wales</td>
<td>BBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Power in the UK</td>
<td>SDC UK</td>
<td>SDC UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind farm bid fuels a storm</td>
<td>Manchester Evening News</td>
<td>Manchester Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Power: Have Your Say</td>
<td>BBC Manchester</td>
<td>Manchester Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind farm wins green backing</td>
<td>BBC Evening News</td>
<td>Manchester Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Windfarms: a necessary eyesore?</td>
<td>BBC Wiltshire</td>
<td>BBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Farms</td>
<td>BBC Wales</td>
<td>BBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Idealised Discourses of Supporters of the Tunes Plateau Wind Farm Proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If you say you are against the proposal that means you are anti renewables</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Those who oppose renewables are focused on the present day and short term impacts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Climatologists and scientists from all walks of life that have said global warming is nonsense</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>One of the most powerful things you can do in the world is to control energy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>B9 are more interested in making a buck than saving the planet</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am very aware of the issues surrounding climate change and I accept we have to do something about it</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>An electricity supply is not a right, it is a privilege of living in a wealthy country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rural people have a much better idea of how important the environment is than the ocean-gazers with their BMWs and twin exhausts</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Perhaps the loss of a pristine view is one of the sacrifices we need to make, in order to live more sustainable lives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I’d prefer to see the money going into advising the developing world about energy use – that’s where a lot of pollution is coming from</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I think people will be more prepared to embrace renewable energy when it starts hitting them in their pocket</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Two modest development projects like Tunes Plateau and Sandyhedges will not affect the world</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Offshore wind energy can play an important role in signalling to tourists that NI is sincere and resolute about preserving its reputation for clean air and environmental stewardship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>It is better to build wind farms where people have grown up with them, like in Denmark – it is so much easier for them</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>It is as if wind farms are going to be the solution to the energy problem – but they are not</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Putting money into offshore wind farms is like pouring money down a black hole</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wind farms may be nothing more than a fashionable toy to soothe the consciences of people who are consuming too much oil</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Windfarms should go in areas already built up – for example near power stations or in towns and cities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>If you have a windfarm in your area, you should benefit directly from it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I know they say that in 30 years the turbines can be taken away, but who will take responsibility for removing them</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A lot of people are against Tunes Plateau but only a few try and do something about it</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I’m bothered about the noise the scheme will create – it is so tranquil here</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>If you look across the sea you see lots of artificial things crossing your horizon – ships, aeroplanes and Inishowen is covered with bungalows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Siting is absolutely the critical thing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The developers had good PR but when asked real questions they have no real answers</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>There is no place for offshore wind turbines off the NI coast</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>If it hasn’t been done before therefore no-one can possibly know the true impact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The company behind the project is not as important as the objectives of the project</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The developers produced photomontages and I think they will look back and say they made a real mistake there</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>One windmill would spoil it just as much as ninety</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Seascapes are beautiful and it is therapeutic looking out to sea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>We have a big issue about it being so close to shore, 5km is very, very close</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>There will only be six jobs created as a result of this wind farm, but there will be hundreds whose income is damaged or destroyed in the fishing industry alone, never mind the effects on the tourist industry</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Northern Ireland has only one World Heritage site and it must not be compromised, whatever the price</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Government will not get this project approved if they rely on public support, it will have to be imposed on us</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>People are more inclined to object because of more national publicity on wind energy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I am against rate payers’ money being used to fund a campaign of opposition to the TP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>The objectors fostered the notion that everybody spends their entire day looking out to sea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>They want to put the windmills out to sea so that they can avoid having to get planning permission</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>People are not fooled by public meetings, by environmental impact studies and by surveys and are not fooled by mock public consultations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Elements on both sides of the debate have resorted to misinformation and scaremongering tactics</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Any degree of apathy will be taken as a signal of dumb acceptance on the principle that ‘silence is consent’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>The concept of a ‘view’ is not a legitimate environmental issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>It would not make any difference if there were local benefits</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>I think a more sensible approach would be to try to build fewer, smaller wind farms in more locations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Environmentalists are so passionate that they go to any lengths to push their views and they won’t listen to any other view</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Whatever compromise is offered by wind farm companies will be seen as a buy-off</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I suspect this would not be a controversial project if you did not have a very vocal group locally opposing it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Development has to be socially sustainable, local people have to want it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Developers want the same thing as we do – decent planning policies, they want to know where they stand.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Most Agreement</td>
<td>Most disagreement</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A      | • Willingness to sacrifice pristine views for more sustainable lifestyles.  
        • Awareness of climate change and the need for action.  
        • Compensation for local impacts of wind farms. | • Scientific doubt over existence of global warming.  
        • Wind turbines not appropriate for NI coast.  
        • Concerns over local impacts.  
        • Environmentalists as emotive and dogmatic. | Rationalising Globally - Sacrificing Locally. |
| B      | • Rural people have better understanding of environmental issues.  
        • Awareness of climate change and the need for action.  
        • Developers more interested in profit than saving the planet.  
        • The Tunes Plateau may have detrimental local economic impacts. | • Scientific doubt over existence of global warming.  
        • Shared interests of developers and the public.  
        • It would not make a difference if there were local benefits.  
        • The concept of a view is not a legitimate environmental issue. | Local Pastoralist – Developer Sceptic. |
| C      | • Awareness of climate change and the need for action.  
        • People will embrace renewables when it becomes more financially attractive.  
        • Wind energy has important symbolic value in signalling the environmental credentials of Northern Ireland. | • Wind turbines not appropriate for NI coast.  
        • Offshore wind farms are a poor economic investment.  
        • The availability of wind farms is dependent on appropriate locations.  
        • Better to invest in energy use in the developing world. | Embrace Wind |
| D      | • The most powerful thing you can do is control energy.  
        • Seascapes are beautiful and have therapeutic value.  
        • Environmentalists are dogmatic and emotive. | • Wind turbines not appropriate for NI coast.  
        • Better to build smaller wind farms in more locations.  
        • Siting issues are critical. | Site Specific Supporter – Energy Pragmatist |

*Note: Items in italics are distinguishing statement for the factors*
Appendix 4: Idealised Discourses of Objectors to the Tunes Plateau Wind Farm Proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If you say you are against the proposal that means you are anti renewables</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Those who oppose renewables are focused on the present day and short term impacts</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Climatologists and scientists from all walks of life that have said global warming is nonsense</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>One of the most powerful things you can do in the world is to control energy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BT are more interested in making a buck than saving the planet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am very aware of the issues surrounding climate change and I accept we have to do something about it</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>An electricity supply is not a right; it is a privilege of living in a wealthy country</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rural people have a much better idea of how important the environment is than the ocean-gazers with their BMWs and twin exhausts</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Perhaps the loss of a pristine view is one of the sacrifices we need to make, in order to live more sustainable lives</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I'd prefer to see the money going into advising the developing world about energy use – that's where a lot of pollution is coming from</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I think people will be more prepared to embrace renewable energy when it starts hitting them in their pocket</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Offshore wind energy can play an important role in signalling to tourists that NI is sincere and resolute about preserving its reputation for clean air and environmental stewardship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>If you have a windfarm in your area, you should benefit directly from it.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I know they say that in 30 years the turbines can be taken away, but who will take responsibility for removing them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>A lot of people are against Tunes Plateau but only a few try and do something about it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Putting money into offshore wind farms is like pouring money down a black hole</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wind farms may be nothing more than a fashionable toy to soothe the consciences of people who are consuming too much oil</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Windfarms should go in areas already built up – for example near power stations or in towns and cities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>If you have a windfarm in your area, you should benefit directly from it.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I'm bothered about the noise the scheme will create – it is so tranquil here</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>If you look across the sea you see lots of artificial things crossing your horizon – ships, aeroplanes and Inishowen is covered with bungalows</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>String is the critical thing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The developers had good PR but when asked real questions they have no real answers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>There is no place for offshore wind turbines off the NI coast</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>If it hasn't been done before therefore no-one can possibly know the true impact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The company behind the project is not as important as the objectives of the project</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The developers produced photomontages and I think they will look back and say they made a real mistake there</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>One windmill would spoil it just as much as ninety</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Seascapes are beautiful and it is therapeutic looking out to sea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>We have a big issue about it being so close to shore, skin is very, very close</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>There will only be six jobs created as a result of this wind farm, but there will be hundreds whose income is damaged or destroyed in the fishing industry alone, never mind the effects on the tourist industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Northern Ireland has only one World Heritage site and it must not be compromised, whatever the price</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Government will not get this project approved if they rely on public support, it will have to be imposed on us</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>People are more inclined to object because of more national publicity on wind energy</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I am against rate payers' money being used to fund a campaign of opposition to the TP</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The objectors fostered the notion that everybody spends their entire day looking out to sea</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>They want to put the windmills out to sea so that they can avoid having to get planning permission</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>People are not fooled by public meetings, by environmental impact studies and by surveys and are not fooled by mock public consultations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Elements on both sides of the debate have resorted to misinformation and scaremongering tactics.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Any degree of apathy will be taken as a sign of dumb acceptance on the principle that 'silence is consent'</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>The concept of a 'view' is not a legitimate environmental issue</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>It would not make any difference if there were local benefits</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I think a more sensible approach would be to try to build fewer, smaller wind farms in more locations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Environmentalists are so passionate that they go to any lengths to push their views and they won't listen to any other view</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Whatever compromise is offered by wind farm companies will be seen as a buy-off</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Development has to be socially sustainable, local people have to want it</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Developers want the same thing as we do – decent planning policies, they want to know where they stand.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of idealised objector discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Most Agreement with these issues</th>
<th>Most disagreement with these issues</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A      | • Wind power are not the solution to the energy problem.  
      | • Awareness of climate change and the need for action.  
      | • World Heritage site must not be compromised, what ever the price.  
      | • Offshore wind farms is like pouring money into a black hole.  
      | • Wind farms are nothing more than a fashionable toy.  | • Objectors to this particular scheme does not imply an anti-renewables outlook.  
      | • Trivialisation of the visual quality of the area.  
      | • Ratepayers money should not be used to fund a campaign of opposition to the Tunnes Plateau project | Anti-Wind Power - Local Resister |
| B      | • Siting is the critical issue.  
      | • Awareness of climate change and the need for action.  
      | • Both sides have engaged in misinformation and scaremongering | • Objectors to this particular scheme does not imply an anti-renewables outlook.  
      | • There is no place for offshore wind turbines off the NI coast.  
      | • One windmill would spoil the area as much as ninety. | Wind Power-Supporter - Siting Sheriff |
| C      | • The scheme will result in negative economic impacts.  
      | • The developers had good PR but little substance.  
      | • Concerns over the long term responsibility for the site?  
      | • It is not possible to know the full impacts of the scheme | • Objectors to this particular scheme does not imply an anti-renewables outlook.  
      | • There is only a small vocal group opposing this project.  
      | • Both sides have engaged in misinformation and scaremongering | Anti-Developer – Local Pragmatist. |
| D      | • The scheme will result in negative economic impacts.  
      | • The project will have to be imposed n the local population.  
      | • Other pressing local issues need as much attention. | • Objectors to this particular scheme does not imply an anti-renewables outlook.  
      | • Trivialisation of the visual quality of the area.  
      | • People are not taken in by the developer’s public meetings and impact studies.  
      | • The local landscape and horizon is dominated by man-made activity and structures | Economic Sceptic- Siting Compromiser |

*Note:* Items in italics are distinguishing statement for the factors