

**POWER AND WIND POWER: EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF
RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANNING PROCESSES IN
SCOTLAND**

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Abstract:

Energy use and production have become highly salient within both national and international policy. This reflects an international recognition of the need to cut emissions in order to mitigate the threats of climate change. Within the UK there is significant policy support for renewable energy development generally, and wind power in particular. Nevertheless, the UK is not expected to meet its targets for renewable energy production. This is often portrayed as being the result of localised public opposition to particular proposed developments. However, this thesis challenges the notion that local objectors are powerful actors within renewable energy deployment. A detailed, multi-method case study of one planning application for a wind power development was conducted in order to explore how the planning process is experienced and perceived by various different actors involved (i.e. representatives of the developers, local objectors, local supporters). The findings refute the assertion that localised opposition presents significant obstacles for the development of renewable energy; they instead highlight the limited influence of objectors. In order to understand the many different forms of power which may be exercised the research employs Lukes' *three-dimensional view of power* as a framework of how the concept is to be understood. Through this framework, the thesis does not only consider the power of objectors, but also of prospective developers and the forms of power that are found within the structures of the planning system. Power is considered to be visible not only in the outcomes of decision-making processes but also in the processes themselves. It is shown that whilst planning processes are presented as being public and democratic, considerable power is exercised in controlling the participation that is allowed and ultimately the range of outcomes which can be achieved.

Key Words: Renewable Energy, Science and Technology Studies, Planning, Power,
Participation, Public Interest

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