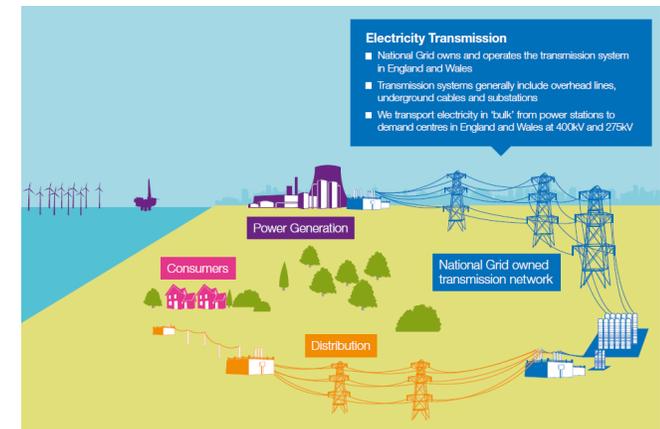


The seldom-heard voice:
*Exploring public disengagement from
proposed overhead power line
consultation processes through a
Bourdieuian lens.*

Catherine Queen
caq201@exeter.ac.uk

- A fully funded PhD studentship: ESRC, National Grid;
- Case Study based approach using a current project;
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) – a high voltage (400kV) Overhead power line.



The background to the research



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Planning Act 2008:

Guidance on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
and Housing

‘In consulting on project proposals, **an inclusive approach** is needed to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are **not disadvantaged in the process**. Applicants should use a range of methods and techniques to ensure that they **access all sections of the community** in question’ (DCLG, 2008)



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Planning Act 2008:
Guidance on the pre-application process

‘Because they live, work and socialise in the affected area, **local people** are particularly well placed to comment on what the impact of proposals on their local community might be’ (DCLG, 2008)



Localism Act 2011

CHAPTER 20

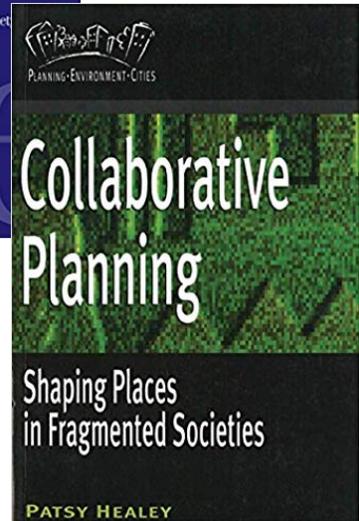
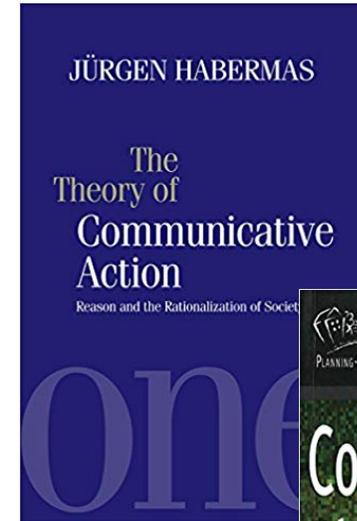
Localism Act 2011 – ‘**Community empowerment**’

The Applicant is required to prepare a consultation programme that is **tailored to the needs of the communities** likely to be affected by a Proposed Development (PINS)



Consultation for infrastructure – the Policy context

- Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action
- Pre-suppositions for communication
- Collaborative planning (Forester, 1993; Healey, 1997)
- Collaborative planning for infrastructure



nationalgrid

Feedback Form
North West Coast Connections

National Grid owns and manages the electricity transmission network in England and Wales to which different energy sources are connected. We link people to the energy they use.

We are developing the North West Coast Connections Project (NWC3) to provide a connection to Moorade, the proposed new nuclear power station that will be built near Saldon in West Cornwall.

We are inviting you to take part in our consultation that will run for 12 weeks from 4 September to 28 November 2014. We will use your feedback to help us decide how and where we build the new connection needed.

Please use the feedback form to tell us what you think we should consider alongside our own assessments when deciding the path a connection for Moorade will follow.

Complete as many sections of the form as you would like and send it to **FREEPOST NG NWCC**. We will also accept feedback by email, letter and phone.

Alternatively go to our website www.northwestcoastconnections.com where you can submit feedback online once you have registered your details.

If you would like any information about the Project, or help completing this form you can contact us by:

- Calling **FREEPHONE 0800 876 6990**
- Sending an email to nationalgrid@northwestcoastconnections.com
- Writing to **FREEPOST NG NWCC**

The deadline for responding is 28 November 2014. **Please ensure you return the full feedback form even if you do not respond to all questions.**

We cannot respond to individual comments and questions we receive. We will address all the themes and issues raised in a consultation feedback report that will be published when we announce the outcome of the consultation.

There will be a further stage of consultation that will give you the opportunity to comment on our proposals as they evolve, and before we submit an application for consent to the Planning Inspectorate.

About you

Please provide the information requested below.

Title* First Name* Surname*

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation? Yes No

If yes, which organisation?

Address

Postcode

Mobile sign up for text alerts about the project

E-mail

Age range: 16 and under 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 over 65

Did you attend an exhibition event? Yes No

Public Consultation for infrastructure: the theory

Disengagement, social capital and power

- Appalachia – Gaventa, 1980, 2016; Bell, 2009, 2016

Peripherality and marginalisation

- Geographical – Mackenzie, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2006.

Hard-to-reach

- Community - Joseph Rowntree

Situating the research in planning (Howe and Langdon, 2002)



<http://mountainroadshow.com/gallery/>



http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/quarry_briefing.htm

Building on previous knowledge and drawing together social capital, power relations, etc

Exploring 'ways of understanding' using ethnographic methods informed by the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu.

Habitus is 'a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations' (Bourdieu, 1990:53).

In simple terms, habitus can be described as a sense of one's place and role in the world of one's lived environment and is a combination of a cognitive, as well as an embodied, sense of place (Hillier, 2005).

Theoretical foundation for this research

- The theory - practice gap
- Limited research into disengaged publics
- The real world problem of engaging wider publics
- Achieving substantive solutions



Pylons <http://powerwithoutpylons.org.uk/>

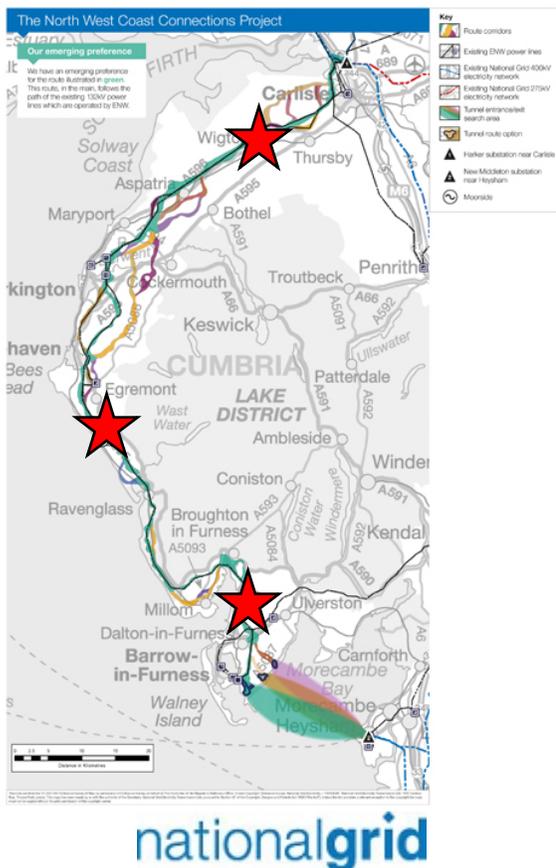


The research problem



The Case Study: North West Coast Connections

North West Coast Connections is a 212km high voltage overhead power line, between Carlisle and Lancaster, to connect and export the electricity generated by the proposed Moorside nuclear power station in West Cumbria.



	2014				2015				2016				2017			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
National Grid original project timeline									Stakeholder consultation and preferred route surveys.			Public consultation events				Prepare and submit DCO
National Grid revised project timeline			Public consultation events				Community information events					Public consultation events				Project is put on hold pending NuGen outcome
	Stakeholder engagement															



Images courtesy of Friends of the Lake District

Locating the research in time and place

‘National Grid is committed to engaging extensively with stakeholders, interested parties and local communities throughout the project development process so their views can be taken into account when making early decisions about the Project’ (NG, 2014)

National Grid Consultation 2014:

- Minimum 1km consultation buffer expanded in populated areas where appropriate
- Newsletter mailed to over 136,000 addresses within consultation buffer zone
- 1,700 people attended 33 exhibition events (1.25%)
- 500 individual enquiries and requests through project telephone line and email address
- 1,200+ submissions to the consultation (<1%)

NWCC Stage 2 respondents



NWCC 21-1-2015: Stakeholder Reference Group Summary Report

Whose voices were heard in the consultation process?

- population segments that **cannot, or do not**, usually participate
- publics ... characterised by an **'inability'**, **'disinterest'** or **'lack of motivation'** to contribute or become involved (ISR, 2007)
- disengaged people who are **disillusioned** with, or feel **disconnected** from, the political process. (Brackertz et al. 2005)



Who are the seldom-heard and disengaged publics?



Ethnography
Event ethnography
Participant observation
Semi-structured interviews
(Media search)
(Grey literature)



Methods of engaging the disengaged

Forms of habitus

- Collective habitus
- Individual/multiple habitus (personal identity and belonging)
- Institutional habitus (domination)

Cross cutting themes

- Distinction and marginalisation
- Relationships to place
- Memory and nostalgia
- North-South divide



Preliminary findings 1: habitus

- ‘This influx of people that’s come in, they have different opinions and different attitudes to life than (we) do.....’ (Mike)
- ‘Everything is in the west around Sellafield and we’re forgotten about’ (Jenny)
- ‘there’s a bit of a divide I think between north and south o’ Cumbria and by about Prospect, just the other side of Aspatria, that’s them out there and Aspatria and us are this way like’ (Mike)

- ‘The north is effectively an industrialised environment. You get to Sellafield and upwards, it’s a much more blue-collar environment... it doesn’t look ‘out’ whereas, you know, if you look down, there are people who are generally a lot of professional people’ (Tim)

Power and powerlessness

‘(Local people) have been made to feel that nothing they ever do will ever make any difference... They’ve been disempowered and that is terrible... If anything, this is their heritage... This is their landscape... This is what they come from. It’s where they belong’ (Pam)

Process driven consultation

‘They used the process to avoid the conversation’ (Tim)

Playing the Game

‘There’s lots of things that people do in a collective way but if you actually go to their space, rather than it being your space.... We always determine where they should come to and what they should do by setting out the rules of the game’ (Tim)



Preliminary findings 2: process

‘if we’ve designed legislation, guidance and processes in such a way that they’re designed for a certain class of people, there’ll only be a certain class of people that can ever engage with the process; those who are reasonably articulate, reasonably engaged and certainly can express themselves written or orally... and it’s those people who can engage in a consultation process’

(Tim)

Preliminary findings 2

- Present the findings to National Grid and other TSOs in 2020;
- Explore the transferability of the findings and collaborate with other research areas;
- Develop a bespoke toolkit.

Where next?



Thank you

‘All I have is a voice’

W. H. Auden, 1939