

Energy Policy, Media Representations, and Public Perceptions of Nuclear Power in the UK and Japan after the Fukushima Disaster

Birt Acres Lecture Theatre, Bute Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, 19-20 September 2013

SEMINAR PROGRAMME		
THURSDAY, 19 September 2013		
12.00-13.00	Lunch	
SESSION 1: RISK PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION		
13.00-13.45	Wouter Poortinga Cardiff University	Welcome + Public attitudes to nuclear power and energy futures in The UK and Japan
13.45-14.30	Nick Pidgeon Cardiff University	Fukushima: a normal accident?
14.30-15.15	Midori Aoyagi NIES, Japan	Changes of Public attitudes towards climate change and energy choices in Japan
15.15-15.30	Tea/Coffee	
15.30-16.15	Pablo Figueroa Waseda University	Risk communication of the Fukushima disaster. An anthropological approach
SESSION 2: ENERGY POLICY		
16.15-17.00	Shunsuke Managi Tohoku University	The impact of Fukushima on the Japan energy sector and economy
FRIDAY, 20 September 2013		
08.30-9.00	Tea/Coffee	
SESSION 3: MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE		
09.00-09.45	Karin Wahl-Jorgensen Cardiff University	The Fukushima disaster and the media
09.45-10.30	Mikihito Tanaka Waseda University	Building agenda from diversity: Public responses to legacy and social media after 3.11
10.30-11.15	Graham Walker University of Essex	How and why Fukushima did not change British energy policy - a political discourse perspective
11.15-11.30	Tea/Coffee	
SESSION 4: ENERGY POLICY		
11.30-12.15	Antony Froggatt Chatham House	The impact of Fukushima on the European energy sector
12.15-13.00	Kenichi Oshima (TBC) Ritsumeikan University	The real cost of nuclear power
13.00-14.00	Lunch	

Presenter Biographies and Abstracts

Biography: Wouter Poortinga, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK



Wouter Poortinga is a Reader in Environmental Psychology at the Welsh School of Architecture and the School of Psychology at Cardiff University. His research interests are in sustainability and environmental behaviour, and published extensively on the topics of environmental risk perception and trust in risk regulation. His work on public perceptions of climate change and energy futures focused specifically on public responses to nuclear power in the context of climate change and energy security. In 2012 he was awarded a JSPS Invitation Fellowship to compare public perceptions of nuclear power in the UK and Japan following the Fukushima accident. He recently conducted a comprehensive UKERC funded British survey on public attitudes to nuclear power, which was coordinated with a similar survey in Japan.

Abstract: Public attitudes to nuclear power and energy futures in The UK and Japan

The threats posed by climate change call for strong action from the international community to limit carbon emissions. Before the Fukushima accident that followed the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011, both Britain and Japan were considering an ambitious expansion of nuclear power as part of their strategy to reduce carbon emissions. However, the accident may have thrown nuclear power as a publicly acceptable energy technology into doubt. This presentation uses a series of nationally representative surveys that were conducted at different stages before and after the Fukushima accident to show how public perceptions of climate change and energy futures have changed in the two countries. The implications for energy policy are discussed.

Biography: Nick Pidgeon, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK



Nick Pidgeon is Professor of Psychology at Cardiff University, where he directs the Understanding Risk Research Group. He is PI on the UKERC project 'Transforming the UK energy system – Public values, attitudes and acceptability'. His research looks at risk perception, risk communication, and public engagement with environmental and technological risks. Currently a member of the Chief Scientist's independent Science Advisory Group at DECC and also vice-Chair of the Defra-DECC social sciences expert panel. Co-editor with Roger Kasperson and Paul Slovic of *The Social Amplification of Risk* and with the late Barry Turner of the 2nd edition of *Man Made Disasters*. He is a Fellow of the Society for Risk Analysis and an Honorary Fellow of the British Science Association.

Abstract: Fukushima: a normal accident?

Most academics and practitioners in engineering quite rightly focus their attention on the science and performance of physical structures and systems, but delivering and operating engineered systems in an effective and safe manner has always depended on society and human beings. People, organizations, and ultimately their cultures are all involved in decisions about the design, building, and management of complex engineered systems. The official Japanese inquiry into the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident acknowledges this with its description of the events as a "man-made disaster" or "normal accident". In addition to the human element, failures of complex engineered systems are rarely due to a single technical or environmental cause. The inquiry report highlights other important contributory factors and concludes that this chain of events should have been foreseen and prevented.

The site's vulnerability to loss of power in a major tsunami had been identified several years before the accident, but the report documents an insular and defensive attitude on the part of the plant's operator, combined with a culture of deference and a cosy relationship with regulators, meant these and other safety warnings were not given sufficient priority. The result was a failure, over a number of years, to either properly examine the risks to the plant or improve safety measures. In this talk I describe contributions of research in the social and engineering sciences to understanding of so-called socio-technical or man-made disasters and its relevance for our understanding of Fukushima.

Biography: Midori Aoyagi, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES), Tsukuba, Japan



Midori Aoyagi was born and raised in Nagano, and studied Agricultural economics and rural sociology at Kyoto University (Doctor of Agriculture at 1992 from Kyoto University). After graduation, she became a researcher at the National Institute for Environmental Studies. Midori is now the chief of the Environmental Planning, Social and Environmental Systems Centre at the Institute, and also an adjunct professor of Tokyo Institute of Technology and a Member of Science Council of Japan (agriculture and sociology).

Abstract: Changes of Public attitudes towards climate change and energy choices in Japan

Public attitudes towards climate change and energy choices have changed after the Fukushima accident. In this presentation, I will talk about (1) changes in Japanese attitudes towards the most important issues in Japan and the world since 2005, (2) a comparison of focus group discussions that took place before (2006 to 2008) and after (2012 to 2013) the Fukushima accident, and (3) briefly discuss the reason for the observed changes in public opinion between those two periods by looking at changes in mass media coverage.

Biography: Pablo Figueroa, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan



Pablo Figueroa is an Assistant Professor at Waseda University in Tokyo. A cultural anthropologist specialized in Japanese Studies; his research interests include nuclear politics, natural and man-made disasters, and the communication of risk during catastrophic accidents.

Abstract: Risk communication of the Fukushima disaster. An anthropological approach

The Fukushima nuclear disaster highlighted the relevance of effective risk communication for catastrophic accidents. Poor risk communication was evidenced during the March 11 nuclear crisis and its aftermath. The government's mishandling of radiation issues caused widespread anxiety among Japanese citizens. Based on anthropological research, I will argue that among the most harmful consequences of the government's inability to deal with public fears are the citizens' uncertainty and ongoing distrust toward the government, the safety regulators, and the nuclear industry. I will also suggest that such pernicious effects can be mitigated by enhancing transparency of the decision making process and by implementing participative programs where policy makers, stakeholders, and representatives of the public can jointly discuss energy production schemes.

Biography: Shunsuke Managi, Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan.

Shunsuke Managi is the Associate Professor at the Tohoku University, Japan. He is an editor of Environmental Economic and Policy Studies and on the associate editorial of Resource and Energy Economics, a lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and is the author of 12 books and 100 academic journal papers. He has published in peer reviewed journals such as Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, and Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control.

Abstract: The impact of Fukushima on the Japan energy sector and economy

In this presentation I will discuss the impact of Fukushima on Japanese economy and energy sector considering supply side change, people's perception change, and direct and indirect effect from earthquake and tsunami. My topic includes upcoming policy changes in Japan in addition to priority of different policy options by people.

Biography: Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Karin Wahl-Jorgensen is Professor in the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural studies. She is the author of three books, most recently Disasters and the Media co-authored with Mervi Pantti and Simon Cottle, and also Journalists and the Public and Citizens or Consumers? co-authored with Justin Lewis and Sanna Inthorn. She is currently writing Emotions, Politics and Media for Polity Press. She is editor of the Handbook of Journalism Studies with Thomas Hanitzsch, and Mediated Citizenship. She was recently the Principal Investigator on the BBC's Breadth of Opinion Review, responsible for a large-scale media content analysis on the range and diversity of views in broadcasting.

Abstract: The Fukushima disaster and the media

This presentation considers how the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, followed by the Fukushima nuclear disaster, was reported in English-language media (1) in the two weeks following the initial earthquake, and (2) in coverage during one week immediately following the 2012 and 2013 anniversaries of the disaster. The presentation draws on an analysis of key frames in the coverage to suggest that the initial reports followed broader trends in the coverage insofar as they focused on the horror and grief of the disaster, and its impact on innocent victims. Nonetheless, the disaster was quickly framed in a very distinctive way as coverage focused on the geopolitical importance of Japan, including the ways in which the disaster would impact the global economy, and shape debates on nuclear risk. Constructions of Japan as a technologically advanced and independent nation, and essentialist discourses around a perceived Japanese stoicism contributed to an emphasis on understanding the disaster in terms of its consequences for the international community, rather than for Japan and its citizens. By contrast, the 2012 and 2013 anniversary coverage frequently drew on the experience of victims of the disaster – including those relocated from the Daiichi nuclear plant exclusion area – as well as the contexts of particular events and policy debates – such as power loss at South Korea's Busan plant, and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission hearings on plant safety - to raise larger questions about nuclear risk in a global context.

Biography: Mikihiro Tanaka, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Mikihiro Tanaka is an Associate Professor of Science and Media Studies in the Journalism Course at the Graduate School of Political Science, Waseda University, Japan. He received his B.A. in Liberal Arts from the International Christian University and his M.Sc. & Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from Tokyo University. Following a post-doctoral position at the National Institute of Neuroscience, he joined the Master of Arts Program for Journalist Education in Science and Technology at Waseda University as faculty. He also has more than 20 years of experience as a writer/journalist. His current research area includes issues between science and society, and web journalism. He is a founding member and research manager of the Science Media Centre of Japan.

Abstract: Building agenda from diversity: public responses to legacy and social media after 3.11

March 11th, 2011. An enormous earthquake and tsunami hit the north-eastern area of Japan, triggering a nuclear disaster. This complex disaster led to disorder in Japanese society, and the disputation are still continuing. The main argument points are about the media malfunction, and the crisis of confidence toward scientists. Such arguments brought some plausible myths, such as information in legacy media was 'spinned' by the government and TEPCO, and showed uniformity, the truth was only found in social media, or Science in Japan is now facing a 'crisis of confidence' (similar to what the UK experienced in the 1990's). But these discourses are also controversial. Did a public sphere exist in the media ecosystem? Was public engagement of science diminished? Now facing debt after 3/11, like land decontamination or low-dose radiation effects on public health, we must analyse the problem more objectively. According to our quantitative and qualitative studies, legacy media took the lead in opinion diversity concerning scientific arguments in public, but scientists lost their confidence by their paternalistic comments on uncertainty. On the other hand, social media functioned well as an interactional media between experts and lay-experts, but it also catalysed "echo-chamber" formation and directed the dichotomy on public debate.

Biography: Graham Walker, University of Essex

Graham Walker is currently completing his PhD thesis in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. His work investigates the role ideology and discourse have played in decisions over nuclear power in the UK context, paying particular attention to articulations of modernism and environmentalism in energy policy. He has also contributed to the Essex Ecocultures project, examining the resilience of different human communities. His broader research interests include energy policy; political theory; environmental politics and social movements; and social complexity.

Abstract: How and why Fukushima did not change British energy policy - a political discourse perspective

The Fukushima nuclear accident is often perceived as having had a chilling effect on the so-called 'nuclear renaissance'. Across the world, build programmes were reconsidered, many orders were cancelled, and in some countries already operating reactors were closed permanently. In the UK, however, governmental support for new nuclear build has remained undimmed. Indeed one notable British green commentator, George Monbiot, saw Fukushima as a reason to announce his support for nuclear. Using political discourse theory (PDT) to analyse responses to Fukushima by the energy policy community and the mass media, this presentation will show the strategy used by a policy coalition involving government and industry to prevent Fukushima derailing British nuclear policy. Furthermore, by examining the recent political history of nuclear power in the UK, the presentation will provide an interpretation of why the UK government was prepared to stick with nuclear while other countries were abandoning it.

Biography: Antony Froggatt, Chatham House, London, UK

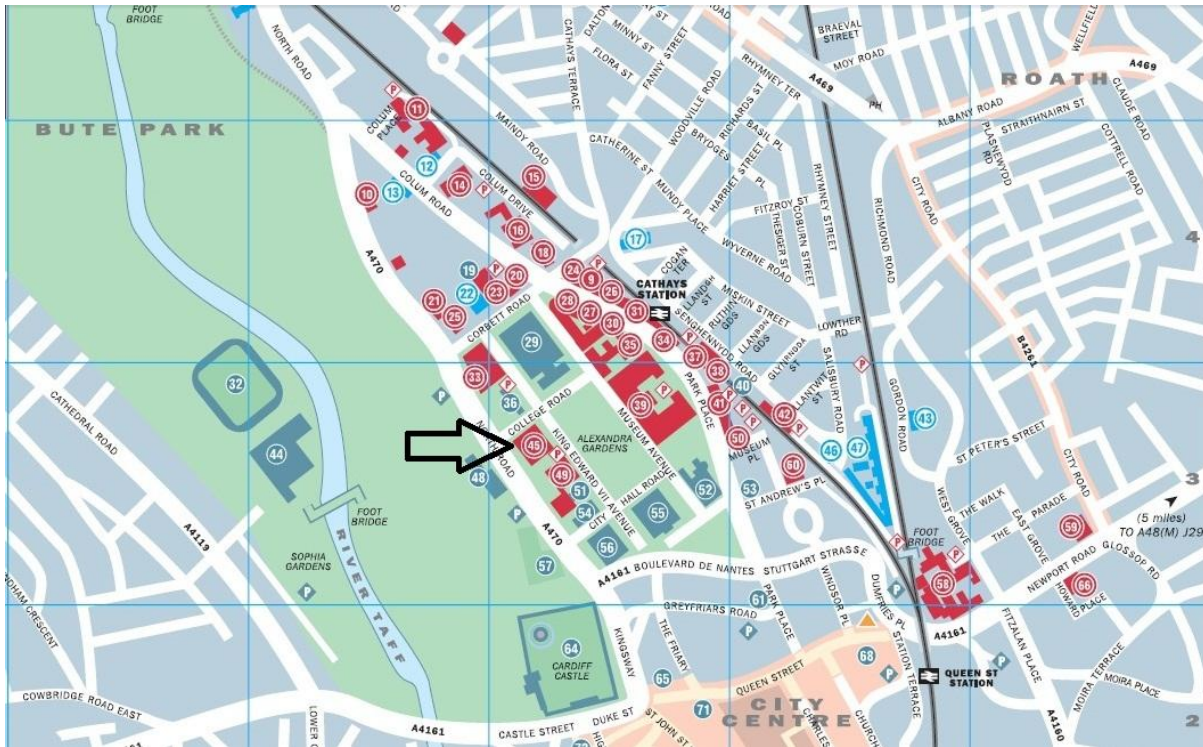


Antony Froggatt studied energy and environmental policy at the University of Westminster and the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University. He is currently an independent consultant on international energy issues and a Senior Research Fellow at Chatham House (also known as the Royal Institute for International Affairs). At Chatham House he has specialised on global energy security and European electricity policy. He has worked as a consultant for 15 years with environmental groups, academics and public bodies in Europe and Asia. Since 1992 he has been the co-author of the World Nuclear Industry Status Report, a now annual independent review of the nuclear sector.

Abstract: The impact of Fukushima on the European energy sector

Across Europe views on nuclear power vary considerably. It was therefore to be expected that in the EU there would be different political, regulatory and public responses in and of Member States to the events at Fukushima following the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. Within a few months a number of countries, including Belgium, Germany and Italy had moved against nuclear technology, while others, such as the Czech Republic and the UK, made clear their intentions not to alter their generally supportive approach. The presentation will look at these immediate responses as well as discuss possible impacts on the electricity sector across the Union.

Seminar Venue:



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