

Going Nuclear? Reflections on a Renewal

Final Report:

**Going Nuclear: Exploring the multi-level
politics of nuclear energy**

Stirling / Liverpool / Cambridge

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The seminar series "Going Nuclear: the multi-level politics of nuclear energy" consisted of three events in Stirling, Liverpool and Cambridge. All three events were aimed at both an academic and practitioner audience. We also invited and secured the attendance of postgraduates from related masters and PhD courses at Scottish and English universities. Demand for participation and audience was high with all three sessions filling capacity. We used the first seminar in Stirling to provide an international energy comparative context for the seminar series. In Liverpool, we focused primarily on detailed selected and invited discussions on the central theme of nuclear energy in the UK. We developed, thirdly, a seminar on the specific theme of energy subsidies and the nuclear industry in light of recent events surrounding the strike price agreed at Hinkley Point C . We outline below the main activities carried out throughout the duration of the grant.

The Stirling seminar: Policy Delivery on Low Carbon Energy Generation Infrastructure, Friday 5th April, 9.30 am – 5.30 pm

The Stirling seminar was held as a one day conference around the theme of low carbon energy infrastructure. Around 60 people in total attended this event which was structured in lecture room based presentation format. The sessions focused on the key challenges for low carbon energy investment, the comparative energy experiences (primarily on gas) in then UK and EU, academic insight into lessons from other European countries. The final session concluded with both practitioner and academic insight into policy delivery in the UK.

The Liverpool seminar: Nuclear Energy in the UK context, Friday November 1st, 9.30 am- 5.30pm

The Liverpool seminar was held as a one day seminar in a different format to Liverpool. We invited 12 academic and practitioner speakers with an additional 10 selected individuals from both social and physical science. This allowed for more intense discussion among the selected participants. We based the day around informal talks with more time for deliberation after each session. The sessions focused on presenting on the scientific uncertainties around the nuclear energy policy choice, the economics and politics of nuclear energy in the UK as well as the systems based issues of nuclear, with regards to mining and waste. Selected postgraduate students presented an overview of the day.

Subsidies in the UK Energy Sector until 2020, 7 February 2014, Trinity Hall, Cambridge

The Cambridge conference finalised the seminar series with a thematic conclusion on the role of subsidies in the energy sector in light of discussions on Hinkley Point C. The format returned to a more open lecture based presentation style. Around 50 people attended the conference from academia, practitioner and general publics. Sessions covered, firstly, the nuclear context of subsidies in historical context to, secondly, the role of subsidies in fossil fuel energy sources.

The seminar series benefited from some modest additional funding from the EPSRC ARCC Arcoes project (Plater PI, McCauley and North Co-I) as well as internal funding from Stirling and Cambridge universities. Please see ROS details on outputs.

Exploitation Routes

We identify three targeted routes for achieving the maximum potential impact

1) Books and Papers: We have submitted an edited book to Cambridge University Press on 'Energy Infrastructure and Justice'. Twelve paper givers were invited to submit a book, chapter on this targeted theme. The book project builds on three already published short papers on the topic directly resulting from the seminar series (McCauley et al. 2013, Heffron et al 2013, Heffron and McCauley 2014). Other book projects are on-going.

2) Follow-up Grants: We have developed two follow up grant proposals from the seminar series. Firstly, we have applied for a large Carnegie grant to set up a Scottish centre for energy justice at St. Andrews. This idea to build capacity in Scotland directly emerged from our seminar in Stirling. We are secondly building a proposal for Horizon 2020 on the basis of the participants of the seminar series. Both projects are on-going.

3) Non-academic impact: We, firstly, set up a website to make available all the presentations of the seminar series. We sent this to all non-academic participants in the seminars with the stated aim to include further information on the website including a twitter and news feed. We, secondly, expanded an already existing network of practitioners on the nuclear issue (lead by Paul Dorfman). This network includes monthly emailed newsletter to London based nuclear companies and public representatives. We are, thirdly, preparing a policy brief for DECC.

Use In Non-Academic Context

We set out to achieve impact upon three primary non academic user groups: policy practitioners, business groups and the general public. Our work has suggested a fourth user group could be added: the practising legal profession. We briefly outline the the potential use of our seminar series and associated work for each of the four user groups.

Policy practitioners: DECC is an organisation that has developed an interest in our work from their participation in the seminar series as well as our EPSRC ARCC Arcoes grant. We aim here to emphasise both the social and physical implications of whole nuclear energy systems in the UK

Business groups: We were not able to achieve the consistent buy-in from private business in the nuclear industry. This was due to the demands of Hinkley Point C at the time, as well as a more general reluctance to engage in public debates. There is less potential here.

The general public: The Liverpool and Cambridge events were specifically designed to be more engaging with this user group. This objective actually became somewhat of a hindrance to securing some speakers giving then highly contested nature of nuclear. There is some targeted potential here for future engagement.

The legal practice: We identified significant potential for user engagement with this group (specifically practicing law firms). The debates and research presented at the seminars offered insight into various considerations from a European and international perspective. We seek to construct an engagement strategy built around the emerging concept of 'energy justice' and the exploration of legal implications from a whole systems viewpoint.

Sectors

Climate Change, Communities, Construction, Economy, Energy, Environment, Manufacturing, Politics & Democracy, Security & Conflict, Waste, Other