

Mapping public participation: the case of the UK energy system

An Inclusive Energy System? Cambridge, June 22, 2017

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Taking a systemic approach

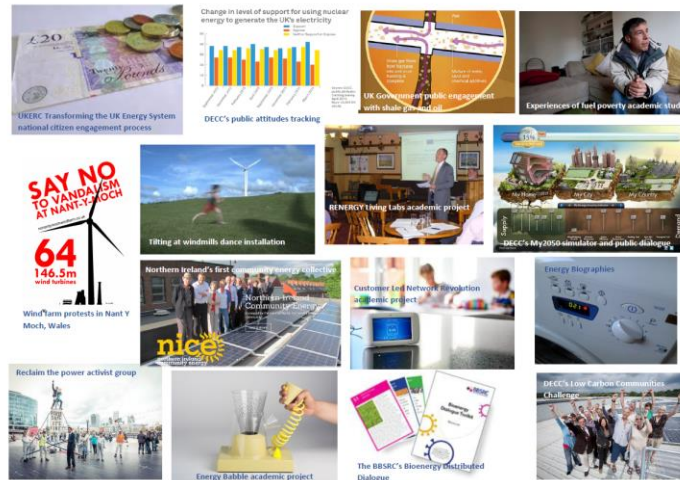
- Systemic participation as ***invited public engagement to elicit select individual public views about energy system transitions***
- Our project takes systemic approaches further in ***mapping diverse practices of public engagement with energy system change***

	'insider'	'outsider'
Issue-oriented	<p>Deliberation / social research (e.g. DECC 2050 Pathways Dialogue)</p> 	<p>Activism/protest (e.g. Climate Camp)</p> 
Action-oriented	<p>Everyday behaviours / practices (e.g. Visible Energy Trial)</p> 	<p>Grassroots innovation (e.g. community energy)</p> 

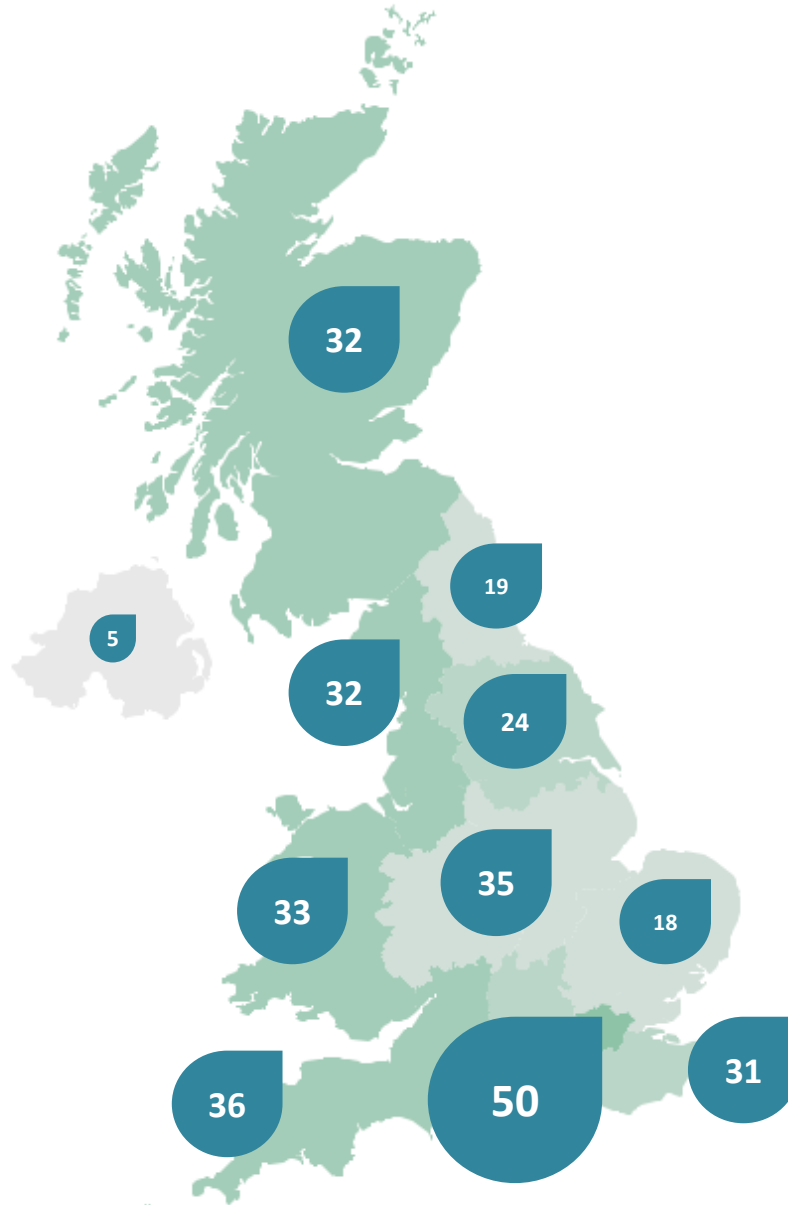
(Chilvers & Longhurst, 2016)

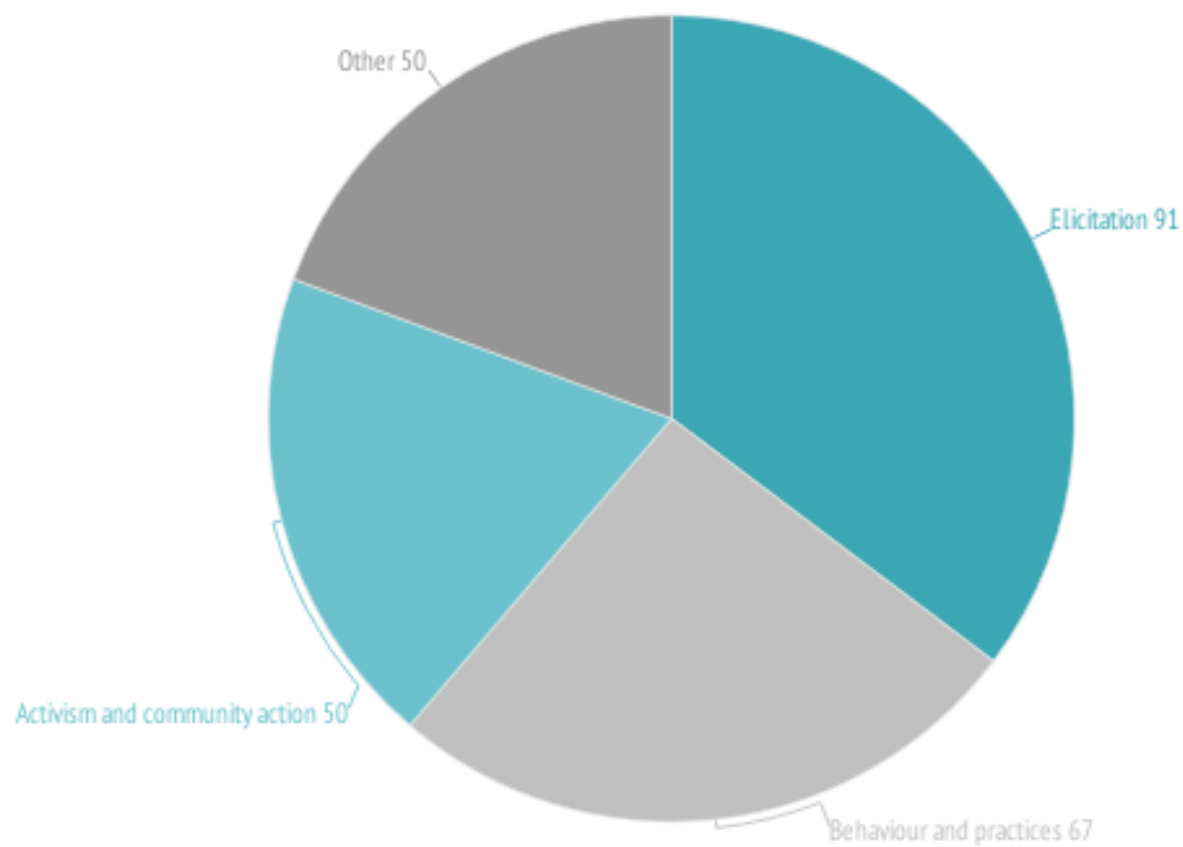
Systematic mapping approach

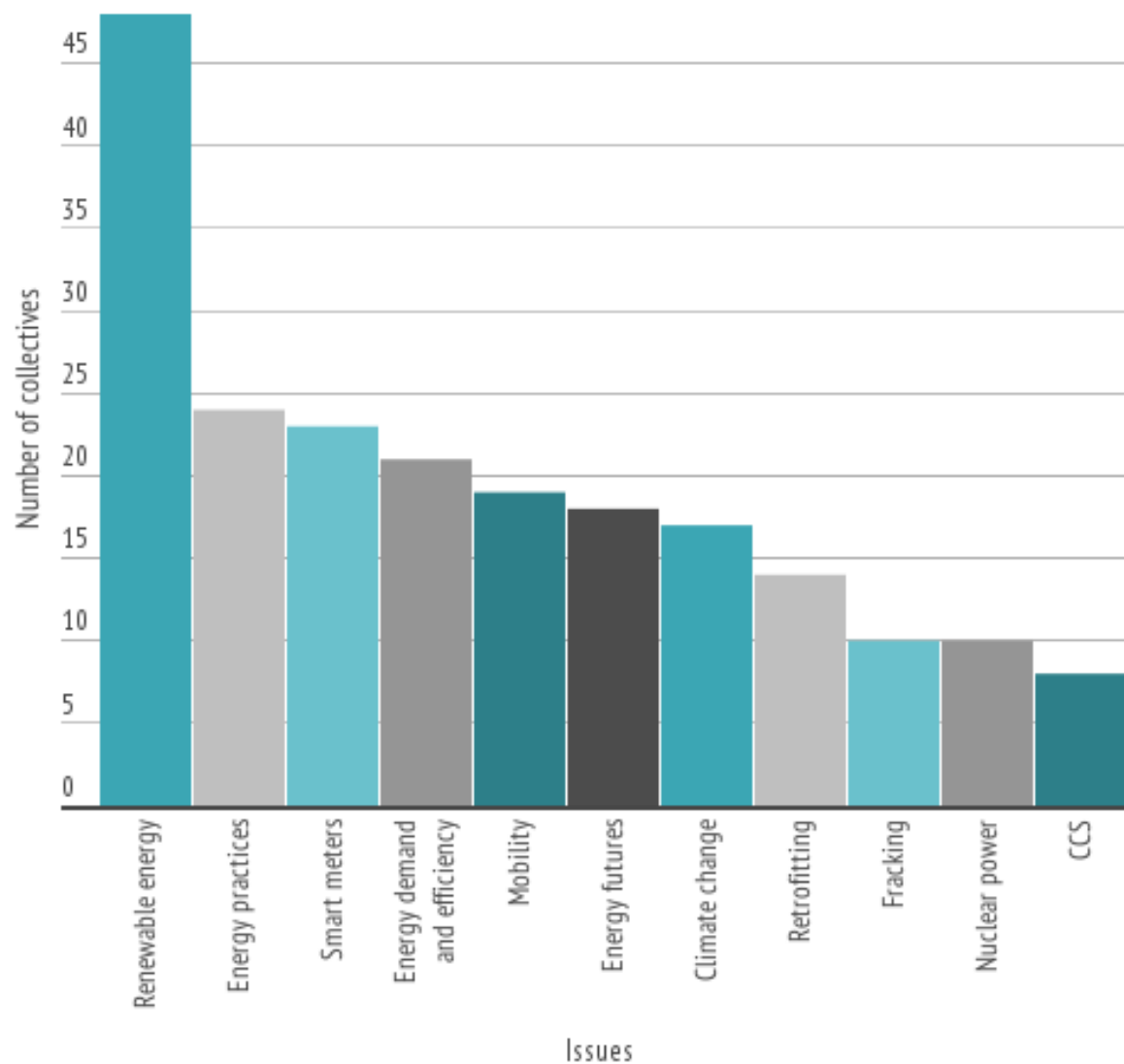
- Systematic review & analysis of **258 cases of public engagement with energy in the UK 2010-2015**
- In-depth analysis of 30 cases
- Expert advisory board made up of academics and practitioners



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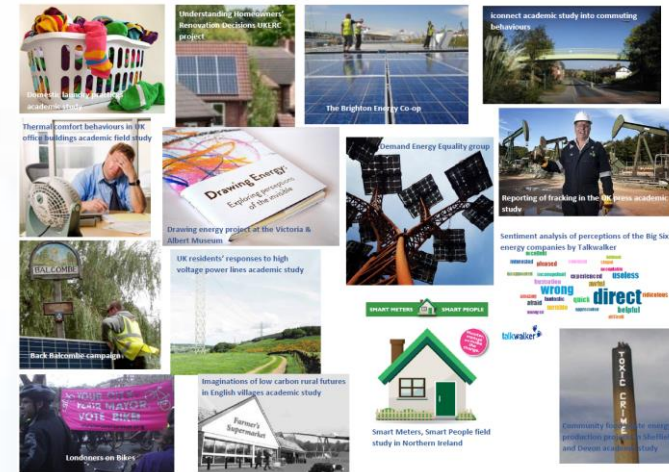




Forms of public engagement with energy are diverse

Public engagement with energy goes beyond behaviour change and social acceptance initiatives led by formal institutions

- **Material commitments** as well as words (e.g. community energy, transition towns)
- **Bottom up and citizen-led** actions (e.g. forms of political mobilization and activism)
- Emerging forms of **engagement that may be going 'under the radar'** (e.g. maker spaces, co-design or arts-based engagement)



Approaches to mapping system-wide public engagement with low carbon transitions can provide a more comprehensive evidence base to inform policy developments, help overcome barriers to action, and identify untapped opportunities for change

Social barriers to the low carbon transition

- Low carbon technologies are essential but face social barriers
- **Dominant approaches** to understanding public concerns (surveys, focus groups, public dialogue) can **miss important aspects of 'social intelligence'** needed to make robust decisions
- For example, **public concerns about renewables and fracking**
 - Not only about risks/impacts to environment and individuals – also about directionality, control, equity (procedural and distributive justice)
- For example, in the case of **smart technologies to address issues of energy demand** in the home
 - Not only about technical feasibility and acceptance; need additional evidence on interactions with competing practices in everyday life



Emergent forms of engagement

Citizen-led engagement is not always a threat, **this energy can be harnessed**

- Community energy groups
- Intentional communities
- Arts-based projects
- Diverse practices in domestic settings



Engagement is interconnected

A whole systems approach provides evidence on interconnections between forms of public engagement which other methods can miss

- All forms of engagement interact in a wider **ecology of participation**
- For example, citizens involved in public dialogues can go on to shift behaviours
- For example, a fracking protest can morph into a community energy initiative



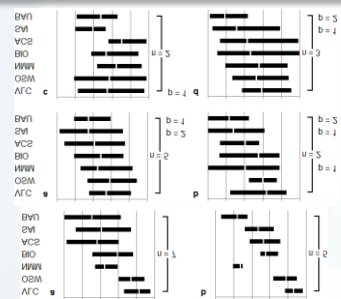
A more systemic and holistic approach can take advantage of productive synergies between currently 'siloe'd' forms of engagement and create initiatives that are more than the sum of their parts

Experiments in energy participation

We are now **conducting a series of experiments** in energy participation **working with policy-makers, innovators and citizens**

Reflexive participatory practices
(Distributed Deliberative Mapping)

Institutional responsiveness
(‘Inside-out participation’)



Let us know if you would like to know more or get involved

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