

Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies

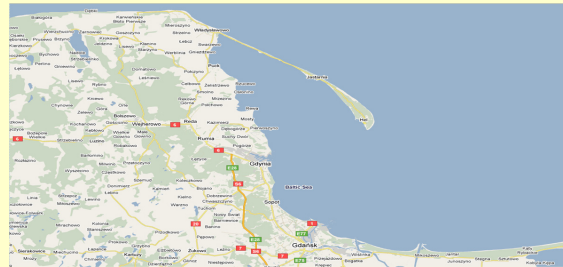
Nuclear Power, the Politics of Scale and Energy Governance in Poland

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Project Summary

This research examines historical and contemporary debates surrounding the introduction of nuclear power in Poland. The project examines planning structures and energy governance. It focuses on social and environmental opposition to nuclear power in Poland, both in terms of local community action and wider national and international debates. In addition, it looks at the construction of a nuclear power plant with regards to regional economics, employment opportunities created by the industrial complex and social and environmental justice.

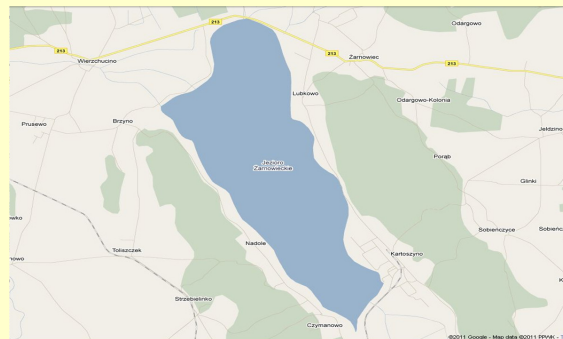


Project Background

Poland is an interesting case study of the international discourses and conflicts experienced when attempting to find solutions to energy supply challenges. The implications of this research are not solely limited to a discussion of nuclear power, but relevant to wider debates surrounding centralised vs. distributed energy systems and movements towards the energy systems of the future.

The introduction of an environmentally controversial technology which harnesses the potential to have significant negative repercussions concentrated at a regional level on the grounds of national energy security and sustainability poses a number of questions relating to equity and environmental and social justice. At the same time it highlights both the disparities between 'global', 'national', and 'local' definitions of energy security and the nature and limitations of the planning system.

Through an examination of the planning processes surrounding the Polish nuclear energy industry and the debates within and between various scales of decision making and activity, it is possible to identify the power struggles which are present within the existing political system with regards to energy governance.



Images: Inicjatywa AntyNuklearna

Żarnowiec

This research comprises a detailed case study of historical and contemporary experiences of nuclear energy development in Poland. The focus of the case study is Pomeranian Voivodeship (See map: Top left). During the 1980s, significant opposition to the construction of Poland's first nuclear industrial complex on the shores of Lake Żarnowiec developed in the region. Demonstrations took place throughout the country, but opposition was concentrated within Gdańsk.

In modern-day Poland, opposition has once again arisen in Gdańsk in response to modern nuclear energy debates. Żarnowiec is, once again, the number one most likely location for the construction of Poland's first nuclear power plant. (See map: Bottom left).

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to identify and examine the discourses and conflicting interests which are present and played out within and between various scales of governance and society through discussions surrounding the use of nuclear power in a nation's fuel mix.

The research looks in depth at planning structures and energy governance within and between scales. It seeks to identify the various actors, their interests, concerns, limitations and attitudes towards civic engagement.

The research also examines the concerns of regional and national social and environmental movements. It seeks to understand both the benefits and limitations of the planning system through an examination of perceptions of national and international debates from the grass roots level.

In addition, the research considers regional socioeconomic and environmental circumstances and how these interconnect with, support, and conflict with nuclear and industrial developments in Pomeranian Voivodeship.



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Outcomes and Impacts

Whilst this research focuses on the controversial decisions surrounding the introduction of nuclear power in Poland, it has wider implications for environmentally and socially contentious developments elsewhere, both within the sphere of energy and more widely with regards to industrial developments within unrelated sectors.

This research will contribute to the growing body of literature on the politics of scale and the complex set of challenges involved when transitioning towards sustainable energy systems. It aims to highlight the importance of place and regional socioeconomic and environmental considerations within wider national and international energy debates.



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