



Tourism and discourses of uncertainty in conflicts over offshore wind farms

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Title: Tourism and discourses of uncertainty in conflicts over offshore wind farms

Abstract:

Offshore wind farms are considered to become a keystone of energy transition for securing the energy supply and tackling climate change simultaneously. However, recent efforts to put offshore wind farms in place have demonstrated that these are far from being conflict-free, evoking confrontations with a number of other stakeholders' interests. Such real-life evidence implies a *Reductio ad Absurdum*, as offshore wind farms are widely supposed to be less contested than the ones onshore, and therefore more convenient for local communities.

When reframing the reasons that cause resistance to, opposition to or a lack of acceptance of offshore wind farms as being determined by space-related conflicts, a different perspective is provided to address the alleged 'social gap'. Such a perspective that inquires into space-related conflicts facilitates the evasion of simplistic portrayals which have no explanatory value, such as NIMBYism. It rather focuses on various overlapping and contrary interests and uses that are aimed at the same area in order to point out multi-level conflict dimensions. So this approach allows for the individual examination of different conflict lines that involve various clashing stakeholder interests as well as the structural framework.

The paper is embedded in such a conception and explores a particular conflict line reflecting the clash of economic interests of tourism and the deployment of offshore wind farms. Besides environmental impacts, adverse effects on local and regional tourism seem to create a crucial discourse that informs a fundamental conflict over offshore wind farms. This paper seeks to illuminate the iterating storylines, narratives and reasoning by representatives of coastal communities that produce and underpin this conflict line. By drawing on two case studies in Scotland and Germany, the paper will also show to what extent these perceived negative consequences for the tourist industry contribute to an overall uncertainty resonating through the planning procedures and decision-making processes. It will then be concluded that not only conflicts involving interests of tourism bear perceptual uncertainty, but that other conflict dimensions are likewise grounded in uncertainty and insecurity which defy the siting of offshore wind farms.