REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND ENERGY TRANSITIONS

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Two kinds of regional communities at the pointy end of change

Communities facing coal phase-outs (at different rates)

Communities facing new renewable projects

Opposition to utility scale solar correlated with:

Place attachment

Procedural injustice

Distributive injustice

Table 3. Multivariate Logistic Regression Estimates Predicting Opposition to Utility-Scale Solar

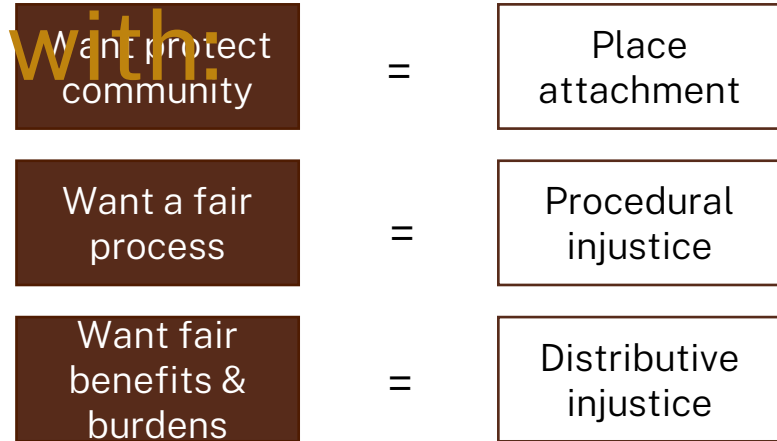| Dependent Measures	Model 1 Odds Ratios	Model 2 Odds Ratios
Education	1.18	1.15
Age	1.00	0.99
Gender (male)	0.84	0.77
Political party	1.20*	1.07
Rurality	1.07	1.11
Climate change belief	0.83	1.37
Familiarity	0.94	0.90
West	0.82	0.78
Place attachment		1.81***
Procedural injustice		2.05***
Distributive injustice		2.27***
Model estimation sample	290	271
Model Pseudo R-square	0.04	0.23
Prob > chi2	0.35	0.00***
AIC	270	213
BIC	303	256

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$.

Source: Nilson, Roberta S and Richard C Stedman 2023 "Reacting to Rural Burden: Understanding opposition to Utility-Scale Solar Development in Upstate New York", *Rural Sociology*, *Vol 88(2)*

Opposition to utility scale solar correlated with:

Want protect community	=	Place attachment
Want a fair process	=	Procedural injustice
Want fair benefits & burdens	=	Distributive injustice

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Same three concerns in Australia

Donnelly, Kate. 2023, "Imagined Futures in the Context of the Energy Transition: A Case Study from the Central Highlands Region of Queensland, Australia." *Energy Research & Social Science* 103

Marshall, Sean, and Rebecca Pearse. 2024. "Reading the Room: Developing a Practical Justice Politics of Regional Energy Transition." *Environmental Politics*. April 1-22
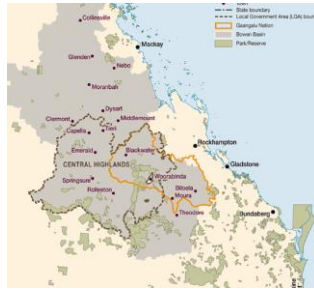
Hay Shire Council, 2023, Fundamental Principles for Successful Renewable Development in Hay LGA

Colvin, R.M., G.Bradd Witt, and Justine Lacey. 2016. "How Wind Became a Four-Letter Word: Lessons for Community Engagement from a Wind Energy Conflict in King Island, Australia." *Energy Policy* 98 (November):483–94

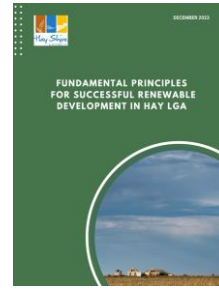| Want protect community | | |
| Want a fair process | | |
| Want fair benefits & burdens | | |

Blackwater QLD 5 coal mines (metallurgical)

Gladstone QLD Rio Tinto major employer and a renewable energy zone

Hay NSW Renewable energy zone 2022

King Island TAS Wind power proposal in 2013/2014 that didn't proceed

Same three concerns in Australia

Want protect community

Want a fair process

Want fair benefits & burdens

"It's not obvious what a future in rural environments looks like…how we prepare for that, I don't know'" **[Blackwater]**

"the proposal caused significant social conflict…"

"Local institutions were damaged, and interpersonal relationships broken or strained" **[King Island]**

Same three concerns in Australia

Want protect community

Want a fair process

Want fair benefits & burdens

"It's not obvious what a future in rural environments looks like …how we prepare for that, I don't know"' **[Blackwater]**

"the proposal caused significant social conflict…"
"Local institutions were damaged, and interpersonal relationships broken or strained" **[King Island]**

"Another common feeling is that Blackwater's future is increasingly shaped by outsiders that don't know or value the community"**[Blackwater]**

""It is very important that …renewable energy projects in Hay Shire happens "with" our community, not "to" our community" [Hay]

Same three concerns in Australia

Do not protect community

A lack of a fair process

Want fair benefits & burdens

"It's not obvious what a future in rural environments looks like…how we prepare for that, I don't know"' **[Blackwater]**

"the proposal caused significant social conflict…"
"Local institutions were damaged, and interpersonal relationships broken or strained" **[King Island]**

"Another common feeling is that Blackwater's future is increasingly shaped by outsiders that don't know or value the community"**[Blackwater]**

""It is very important that …renewable energy projects in Hay Shire happens **"with" our community, not "to" our community**" **[Hay]**

"She characterised the scepticism the community feels as 'why are all these industries here profiting off of us, destroying our environment, and we're getting absolutely nothing in return?' **[Gladstone]**

"**Avoiding a boom/bust cycle** for the community – impacting housing affordability and availability, services and inflationary pressures…" **[Hay]**

A recent past of narratives portraying the energy transition as **being driven by outsiders** and **against the interests** of regional communities

The coal and gas industry:

[Framed the energy transition] "==as being driven by "the "radical" agendas of environmentalists=="

"emphasised a rhetoric of regional development and job creation…==linking the interests and identities of regional communities with the industry=="

Source: Wright, Christopher, Daniel Nyberg, and Vanessa Bowden. 2021. "Beyond the Discourse of Denial: The Reproduction of Fossil Fuel Hegemony in Australia." Energy Research & Social Science 77 (July):102094.

Vital transitions involve **trusted** people with **local legitimacy**

"the unconventional advocates <mark>attribute their persuasiveness</mark> within their constituency <mark>to being 'on the same side' as their constituency</mark>, which means they can craft messages they think will resonate with the group".

"It's just the fact that <mark>the messenger is the message</mark>, right?"

Source: Boddington S; Colvin RM; Stanley S; Fielding K, Louis W, "Unconventional Climate Advocates: Broadening Support for Climate Policy", with journal for consideration

What is needed...

1. Protect what is valued in communities

2. Processes are seen as fair and legitimate

3. Led by people who are trusted

4. Alleviate burdens associated with big industries, a bigger share of the benefits

THANK YOU

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