Topic

"Geography of green discontent and social acceptance of renewable energies: theories and methods"

Goals

Acquire a structured understanding of why local opposition/support emerges around renewable energy projects, and how to study it with a rigorous geographical lens combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Competencies

- Understanding key concepts of social acceptance (perceived benefits/risks, community impacts) and how they relate to environmental justice (distributive, procedural, interactional/recognitional dimensions)
- Mobilising political geography lenses to interpret " green discontent" and its territorial expression
- Designing mixed-methods research strategies: qualitative content analysis (interviews, press) and causal quantitative designs to estimate local impacts
- Interpreting results for policy and stakeholder-facing recommendations (participation, trust, territorial integration)

Contents

- Theoretical foundations: green discontent; social acceptance; environmental justice; exit/voice/loyalty; proximities and territorial governance (geographical vs organised proximity)
- From findings to action: beyond "NIMBY"; role of attachments to place, public participation quality, and perceived fairness; translating evidence into operational recommendation

Applications

This lecture applies to any renewable energy or infrastructure project where outcomes are territorially situated and politically salient: wind and solar deployment, biogas/methanisation, grid and storage projects, and broader "green transition" conflicts. It is also relevant for studying electoral backlash and local political preferences linked to perceived transition burdens and voice.

References

Bourdin, S., Molica, F., & Marques Santos, A. (2025). *Too much or not enough? The dual nature of green discontent and its geography* (No. 04/2025). JRC Working Papers on Territorial Modelling and Analysis.

Bourdin, S. (2026). *The Social Acceptance of Renewable Energy Projects.* Edward Elgar Publishing.

Instructor

Sébastien BOURDIN
Full Professor of Economic Geography & Environmental Management
European Chair of Excellence "Circular Economy & Territories"
Email: s.bourdin@ieseg.fr
Website: https://sebastienbourdin.com

Biographical note (max. 200 words)

Sebastien Bourdin is a Professor of Economic Geography and Environmental Management at IESEG School of Management. He holds a PhD in Geography and an Accreditation to Supervise Research (HDR). His research focuses on regional development, the social acceptability of ecological transitions, and environmental management, with a particular emphasis on the circular economy and its territorial implementation. He also pays close attention to European public policies, notably Cohesion policy and public policy evaluation. His work combines quantitative approaches—including spatial econometrics and modelling—with qualitative methods. Sébastien Bourdin has led and contributed to numerous European, national and regional research projects addressing major contemporary challenges, particularly in the fields of renewable energy, biogas, and the circular economy.