



Protests and Power:

Diverging perspectives and expectations – The extension of the German electricity grid.
Can there be something „third“?




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Grid Extension Conflict – Two Opposing Coalitions

Contra Coalition (Challengers)

- Local protest initiatives 
- Local politicians and local institutions (local and district councils)
- Political actors on state level (e.g. Bavaria and Lower Saxony)
- Political actors on federal level: green and left party

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Pro Coalition (Incumbents)

- Transmission grid operators
- Federal government (esp. Ministry of Economics)
- Power plant operators
- Dena (energy agency)
- Federal Network Agency
- BDEW (Federal Association of Energy and Water Companies)

Research Questions

Main conflicts?

Central **expectations** and basic **frames** of both coalitions?

Contributions of the **framing approach** for a better understanding of the conflicts?

Contributions of **responsible research** to find good solutions to solve the conflicts?

Conceptual Basics

Strategic Action Fields

Sociology of Expectations

Framing Approach

Methods and Databasis

- Document analysis (around 500 documents)
- Mainly press declarations, public statements, open letters and articles in the regional press
- Additive / (background knowledge): Qualitative interviews and participatory observation
- Identify expectations of actors and sort into respective frame
- Count and compare the numbers of each frame used by the actors to detect which frames dominate the debate
- Note: Only statements in direct speech are considered
- If an actor repeats the same statement during short periods of time, the statements have not been considered

Empirical Analysis – Range and Limits

Incomplete empirical basis:

- Not enough sources on the expectations of involved actors
- Time aspect has been ignored (Expectations of actors do change during time period observed and thereby frames change too.)
- No differentiation of the sources by year (only single cases like „Tennet-Participation-Offensive“ (19 press declarations of 2014 have not been assessed in order to avoid distortions)
- The relative significance of single documents is not considered
- No constitutional function of interviews or other methods of empirical analysis
- **Therefore we do not use any quantitative methods** to prove our results
 1. We talk about the existence of expectations and frames
 2. We try to classify different degrees of relevance in some very significant cases

Empirical Results – Main Frames of the Incumbent Coalition

Frame „Security of Supply“	Frame „Economy“	Frame Adoption „Energy Transition“	Frame Adoption „Participation“	Frame Adoption „Nature Protection“	Frame Adoption „Health Protection“
35	24	47	40	5	1

- In total 89 cited passages (about 80 documents)
- Clear presence of the „traditional“ frames, „Security of Supply“ (39%) and „Economy“ (27%)
- New frames: „Energy Transition“ (53%) and „Participation“ (45%) seem to have become even more important
- Assumption: new frames have been adopted to improve field position
- The assumption that „Nature Protection“ and „Health Protection“ are important topics of the public communication can be falsificated (less than 7%)

Empirical Results – Actors of the Incumbent Coalition

	Actor	Total number of cited passages	Frame „Security of Supply“	Frame-Adoption „Economy“	Frame-Adoption „Energy Transition“	Frame-Adoption „Participation“	Frame-Adoption „Nature-Protection“	Frame-Adoption „Health Protection“
Transmission Grid Operators	Tennet	28	12	4	11	16	3	-
	50 Hertz	11	3	4	5	3	1	1
	(Amprion)	3	-	-	-	3	-	-
	(EnBW)	2	2	-	1	2	-	-
Interest Organisations	Dena	7	4	3	6	2	-	-
	BDEW	10	4	4	6	2	-	-
	(VIK)	3	2	2	2	-	-	-
Federal State Actors	BNA	13	3	3	8	8	1	-
	(Bundesregierung)	2	1	1	2	-	-	-
	(BMWi)	4	-	2	3	3	-	-
	(BMU)	2	-	-	1	2	-	-

Empirical Results: Main Frames of the Challenger Coalition

Frame „Health Protection“	Frame „Participation“	Frame „Energy Transition“	Frame „Nature and Landscape Protection“	Frame Adoption „Security of Supply“	Frame Adoption „Economy“
18	44	17	14	5	14

- In total 61 cited passages (about 55 documents)
- Participation = Predominant frame: 72 % (44 von 61 documents)
- The frames „Health Protection“, „Nature Protection“ and „Energy Transition“ are also important (between 23-30%)
- Challengers adopted the frame „Economy“ (23%) while „Security of Supply“ is not an important topic among the protesters (8%)

Empirical Results – Actors of the Challenger Coalition

Power Line Project	Sources in total	Frame „Health Protection“	Frame „Participation“	Frame „Energy Transition“	Frame „Nature and Landscape Protection“	Frame Adoption „Security of Supply“	Frame Adoption „Economy“
Enlag 1	10	5	5	2	-	1	1
Enlag 2	6	-	6	2	1	-	-
Enlag 3	9	4	8	(1)	4	1	3
Enlag 4	8	-	7	5	2	-	2
Enlag 5	6	3	4	-	-	-	-
Enlag 6	5	3	4	-	2	2	4
HGÜ A	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
(HGÜ C)	4	1	2	1	1	-	1
HGÜ D	7	2	5	5	2	1	2

Interpretation I:

Frames of the Challenger Coalition

„Participation“

„Energy Transition“

„Health Protection“

„Nature and Landscape Protection“

Frame-Adoption: „Economy“



Interpretation II:

Frames of the Incumbents Coalition

„Security of Supply“

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„Economy“

Interpretation III:

Frame-Adoptions by Incumbent Actors

„Energy Transition“ (Early Adoption)

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„Participation“ (Later Adoption)

Results and Conclusions I

Incumbent Coalition

- transferred core beliefs „Security of Supply“ and „Economy“ into the context of grid extension
- Adoption of the Frames „Energy Transition“ and „Participation“ - compatible with the core beliefs
- Strategic Frame Adaption: Improving Acceptance of Grid Extension and reduce legitimacy of protests

Results and Conclusions II

Challenger Coalition

- Aiming for more and „real“ participation – („Not over our heads!“)
- Different protest constellations and predominating frames at regional level:
„Nature and Landscape Protection“, „Health Protection“ and „Energy Transition“

Conclusions and Results III

- Both Coalitions have diverging expectations
- Some frames share the names: „participation“, „energy transition“ and „economy“, but refer to different things
- The frame-adoptions were not (really) helpful to solve the conflict

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Contributions of Responsible Research to find „good solutions“ for the conflict

- **More transparency** by looking at the involved actors, their views and interests
- **Show the difference** between participation as an intrinsic value and a strategy to improve acceptance
- organize a transparent **societal debate on grid extension**. Among the relevant topics:
- Should new power lines be constructed also for the energy-export of coal power stations (or not)?
- Alternative 1: Discuss if the adequate costs of grid extension are higher (more underground cable sections and HVDC underground cables)
- Alternative 2: Decentralize the Energy System (mainly) on the basis of renewable energies and natural gas (CHP) and different storage technologies.



Thank you!

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