Power, resistance and the Welsh sustainable development agenda: the case of the M4 'relief road'

Mirka Johanna Virtanen

Cardiff University

2023

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

This thesis examines the dynamics of stakeholder participation in infrastructure planning in the context of the discursive construction of the devolved Welsh sustainable development framework. It looks at how stakeholders from different governance scales and horizontal networks, such as business and community actors, mobilised along a proposed motorway extension in South Wales (the M4 'relief road'). In the context of scholarship on multilevel governance, the withdrawal of national government from the local planning context has been explored in planning research through a focus on the development of local planning discourses. How bottom-up stakeholder participation unfolds across governance scales specifically targeting devolution has thus far not been considered. Addressing this gap can improve our understanding of how participation influences planning outcomes in multilevel systems and the need to understand the social dynamics of sustainable planning transitions.

The research argues that planning participation can be explored as a process of continual discursive struggle that takes place both within and outside participatory events prescribed by a planning authority. Utilising Hajer's (1997) discourse coalition approach in the context of devolved planning, actors are found to actively participate in the planning struggle through constructing and co-opting into storylines that influence proposed development. Using a qualitative methodology combining analyses of planning policy, media coverage and participant interviews, the research provides a detailed picture of how the conflicting aims of different stakeholder groupings shape the sustainability discourse emerging in Welsh planning during the case study period. The research contributes to planning literature by conceptualising multiscalar participation as a contributor to planning discourses: in the case of the M4, discourse coalitions were found to shape not only the eventual rejection of the 'relief road' but also the wider sustainability discourse that continues to shape current Welsh transport planning.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother Kirsti, from whom I have inherited a love of reading and libraries, and who taught me that the world is not only beautiful, but also, always, interesting.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

List of abbreviations

AM	Assembly Member (later: MS, Member of the Senedd)
CALM	Campaign Against the Levels Motorway
CBI Wales	Confederation of British Industry
CPRW	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
DCF	Discourse Coalition Framework
DSF	Discourse Struggle Framework
EWA	Environment of Wales Act 2016
FGC	Future Generations Commissioner
FM	First Minister
FOE Cymru	Friends of the Earth Cymru
FSB	Wales The Federation of Small Businesses Wales
GWT	Gwent Wildlife Trusts
LDP	Local Development Plan
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SWA	South Wales Argus
WFGA	Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015
WM	Western Mail
WO	Wales Online
WSP	Wales Spatial Plan
WTS	Wales National Transport Strategy
WTW	Wildlife Trusts Wales

List of tables

List of figures

1. Introduction: power, resistance and the Welsh sustainable development agenda - the case of the M4 'relief road'

1.1.   Why this research?

In June 2019 the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, announced that no new motorway would be built to extend the M4 to the south of Newport across the Gwent Levels. A long campaign against this bypass, or a 'relief road' as it had come to be called in the Welsh press, had successfully come to an end. While I had not actively participated in the campaign myself, I had been aware of it for some years: from time to time, I had helped a local Green Party member to edit press releases about why they did not think the motorway should go ahead. At the time of the cancellation, I was operating as a media commentator and a spokesperson for the party in Wales, and so I was invited to attend the concluding meeting of the Campaign Against the Levels Motorway (CALM) group in Newport the week following the announcement of the cancellation. On 6th June 2019, I was also invited to discuss the road cancellation on the BBC, along with Jayne Bryant AM (now Member of the Senedd, MS) representing Welsh Labour and her Newport West constituency. During the programme, where I had emphasised the dedicated work of the activists involved, the presenters played the audience a clip of an earlier interview of Alun Cairns MP, the Conservative Welsh Secretary at the time, reinforcing his party's aim for a road to be realised in the future. In addition, it was apparent that as a representative of Newport, Jayne's wishes were different to those of Mr Drakeford, who had made the decision to cancel the road development.

To me, the comment from the Welsh Secretary that evening at the BBC raised questions about the strength of devolution in the face of Westminster's interests. Having been actively involved in campaigning with the Green Party for years, across a spectrum of roles, I had developed a good all-round understanding of the complexities of devolution and the sustainable development principle underpinning the Welsh devolution settlement, an exploration of which underpins this thesis. A new piece of legislation, the *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* (*WFGA*), had come in during the same time period as the debate around the M4

extension had been taking place. The purpose of the Act was to strengthen the existing sustainable development framework Wales already had in place (Davidson 2020).

The Act not only presented an exciting opportunity for Wales to provide stronger safeguards for sustainable use of resources that could better guarantee the wellbeing of both current and future generations, but it also prompted questions around the strength of devolution and Wales's ability to meaningfully follow its own path in the face of pressing economic concerns. These include persistent poverty and the legacies left by de-industrialisation, decline in heavy industry, and the end of coal mining in the 1980s (Bristow 2018). Bristow (2018, p. 15) notes that while the Welsh economy is "increasingly self-determined in terms of its governance and policymaking, it has limited self-reliance in economic development terms". It was precisely this juxtaposition of the reliance on external financing and investment and the Welsh aspiration for an effective sustainable development scheme conceptualised through ideas of personal and societal wellbeing (Wallace 2019) that, to me, seemed to be at the heart of the M4 debate. At that moment at the BBC, it did not yet look like Mr Drakeford's cancellation of the whole project would be the last we would hear of the case.

At the time, this made me question the effectiveness of the sustainable development framework in place as it, firstly, appeared in direct contrast with the road proposal (where was the funding for sustainable transport options that South Wales and the local authorities sorely needed?) and, secondly, in terms of whether it could make a difference on the ground in relation to attempts to protect the remaining environmentally sensitive habitats in Wales (the proposed motorway would potentially have decimated protected wetlands in the Gwent Levels in South Wales). These questions are no less relevant today and can be extended to explore the shift that planners and policymakers have been attempting (and failing) to move away from the centrality of the private car, particularly in relation to land use (Schiller and Kenworthy 2017).

1.2. Focus on stakeholder involvement and the social dynamics of sustainable development

At the CALM meeting that also took place in June 2019, the chair reflected on the organisation's campaign saying that it had utilised people's particular skillsets effectively. I thought about this in light of the many campaigns I had been part of, mostly through Wales Green Party, but occasionally connecting with environmental organisations that had barely got off the ground: it seemed that something about the CALM campaign against the motorway had been effective enough to push for the cancellation of the plans, and I wanted to know what exactly that was. Members of CALM who were present at the meeting concluded that they felt that the inquiry was given to the public as something they could contribute to, in a very open manner, as opposed to a planning notice on an obscure board at a local council office. They felt that this played a key part in the success of the campaign to stop the extension of the M4 across the Gwent Levels. Instead of focusing on the public inquiry per se, their emphasis seemed to be on the way the case played out in public, with the inquiry only being one (albeit significant) aspect of the whole process. I wondered whether the defining factor for a successful campaign was that opportunities for involvement had played out so visibly in the local media, potentially shaping local engagement and giving local actors the opportunity to engage with the discourse.

My motivations for this research are thus two-fold: first, understanding the factors contributing to the implementation of sustainable development in a devolved context, including the structural and cultural factors that may help or hinder the process; and second, understanding how participation in the planning process can push for better outcomes that are in line with the urgent need to address the climate and nature emergencies through destabilising approaches to infrastructure that can no longer be afforded should we wish to stay within a safe operating space for humanity (Rockström et al. 2009).

I am aware that my involvement in environmental and other campaigns as a campaigner has implications for the research topic I have selected, not only because the initial questions that led me to pursue PhD research arose from practical

3

experiences. This is partly why I have chosen to discuss my motivations for the research as part of the introduction. To be clear, however, the two roles of the activist and the researcher are both institutionally and temporally separate: I finished my work with the Wales Green Party in the late summer of 2019, before beginning my PhD in the autumn of 2019, and I never had any formal or substantial involvement with the CALM campaign, nor any other campaigning organisations apart from Wales Green Party, whose contribution to the M4 case was predominantly through press releases.

1.3. Project overview: constructing discourses of sustainable development in Welsh megaproject planning

The emergence of multilevel governance involves changes in how power and state authority are structured (Rhodes 1997; Pierre 2000; Piattoni 2009). The changes are three-fold: the last forty years has seen a trend towards devolution of power from central to local and regional governments; power is increasingly shared between the state, the civil society and private actors; and the emergence of international coordination on issues such as the environment potentially posing a challenge to the sovereignty of the state (Piattoni 2009; Di Gregorio et al. 2019). The implications of the shift from centralised state authority to a multilevel, networked governance landscape to planning processes have been explored with a focus on how local expertise might develop in, and how local planning agendas come together to fulfil the vacuum left by the state (Buhler and Stephenson 2021).

Theorising planning participation has largely been in the context of studies focused on top-down arrangements that prescribe little control or agency to localised participation. What has thus far not been considered in detail, is how stakeholder participation might come to exploit and challenge the shifting, fluid power flows that are contained within multilevel governance structures at moments of social change (Avelino 2021). This research argues that to develop a holistic theory of power at transitionary moments, attention should be paid to how stakeholder participation might unfold across governance scales to challenge processes of planning

implementation, influencing the ongoing and necessary policy shifts towards the utilisation of more sustainable infrastructures and technologies.

The thesis investigates the dynamics of stakeholder participation in infrastructure planning in the context of the discursive construction of the devolved Welsh sustainable development framework including the *WFGA* and related planning guidance. Exploring the social dynamics of planning transitions in multilevel systems, the research looks at how stakeholders located at different scales and within networks (e.g. business organisations, community groups, environmental organisations) mobilise planning discourses in relation to a proposed motorway extension in South Wales (the M4 'relief road'). The conceptual framework, the Discourse Struggle Framework, is operationalised around the argument that planning participation should be explored as a continual discursive struggle that takes place both within and outside the participatory events put on and framed by those in charge of the planning process. This is to understand how participation might influence planning outcomes within the institutional context of multilevel governance systems and devolved governance in particular.

The Discourse Struggle Framework relies on the work of Maarten Hajer (1997), who utilised a discursive, coalition focused lens in exploring how ecological modernisation came to dominate the environmental policy discourse in the 1990s. The framework uses the discourse coalition approach to map out actor involvement in the M4 planning discourse, with focus on the relationality of different inputs from all actors involved in the case. Consequently, actors are discovered to be actively participating in the planning struggle by constructing and co-opting into storylines that both support and resist the M4 'relief road', using varying narratives of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The thesis relies on a qualitative methodology combining analyses of devolved planning policy, media content and key participant interviews, to construct a comprehensive picture of how contestation and conflict productively shape the sustainability discourse emerging in Welsh planning, influencing how the motorway proposal is perceived during the case study period.

5

1.3.1. The research gap

The main areas of planning theory that consider participation are communicative, agonistic and insurgent planning. While participation and its effectiveness in relation to planning outcomes is a much-debated topic (Backlund and Mantysalo 2010; Innes and Booher 2010; Vigar et al. 2017), the common operationalisations of these theories do not always extend to consider how stakeholder participation might unfold across multilevel governance scales as the institutionalised backdrop to spatial planning. Addressing this gap can help to construct an improved picture of how participation as a bottom-up process influences planning outcomes, contributing to multilevel governance theory by providing a detailed account of a planning case study that takes place within institutionalised multilevel structures. There is a need for a development of a discussion on stakeholdership and agency within multilevel governance theory that instead is often focused on exploring the impact of different types of structures upon the operations of power and authority. To address this gap, the thesis argues that spatial planning, and in particular infrastructure planning (as it extends through different scales) can provide a useful example to flesh out what takes place within and in relation to the institutional structures, thus shifting the theoretical focus towards the interplay of agency and structure. This approach further brings together the two research areas of planning and multilevel governance scholarship.

Thirdly, by focusing on planning participation in the discursive context of sustainability transitions, the thesis addresses the need to understand the contested social dynamics of planning transitions aimed at achieving more sustainable futures. In relation to this, the thesis conceptualises power as fluid by utilising the Foucauldian idea of resistance as a relational, interior quality to power (Foucault 1990). This is in response to a call for non-static conceptualisations of power by Avelino (2021), who argues that new, more fluid conceptualisations of power are required to explore the mechanisms of social change that take place through sustainability transitions.

1.3.2. Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to understand the relationalities that take place between institutionalised multilevel governance structures and agency operationalised by different actors and actor groupings to influence planning outcomes.

   A. To define the parameters for the research by identifying the intersections of multilevel governance, sustainable development and planning participation to develop a framework for the inquiry.

   B. To test the framework by analysing the relational dynamics of actor constellations, coalition formation and interscalar contestation, to explain how stakeholder dynamics influence planning outcomes via discourse construction.

   C. To appraise identified elements of discursive participation, including both invited and uninvited forms, in the context of multilevel governance, to contribute to the reconceptualisation of participation within planning theory.

   D. To identify how discourse coalitions can influence the planning discourse to shape the delivery of sustainability transitions in multilevel governance systems.

1.3.3. Research questions

The following research question and specifying sub-questions address the research aim and objectives.

1.3.3.1. The overall research question

How do discourse coalitions construct and counter planning discourses in a multilevel (devolved) governance setting, in relation to large-scale infrastructure projects?

7

1) How is resistance constructed and applied to counter planning proposals put forward by the devolved Welsh government?
2) What tactics and strategies are used by discourse coalitions to co-opt power to influence planning discourse?
3) How do discourse coalitions mobilise alternative rationalities within the policy discourse on sustainable development?
4) What relationalities emerge between the discourse coalitions and the multilevel governance system in the case of devolved governance?

1.3.4. Research contributions

The research contributes to the scholarship on multilevel governance literature by "looking beyond 'the binary divide' [of Type I and Type II multilevel governance] and acknowledging the more complex and multi-faceted reality of contemporary public governance" (Bache et al. 2016, p. 493). It does this by utilising a fluid conceptualisation of power shaped by resistance that flows across governance scales influencing planning outcomes. Furthermore, by reconceptualising participation as a contributor to planning discourses, the thesis contributes to theorisations of agonistic participation in planning literature: participation in localised planning discourses is found to take place through relational construction of storylines. In the case of the M4 discourse, coalitions were found to shape not only the eventual rejection of the 'relief road' but also the wider sustainability discourse that has continued to shape Welsh transport planning beyond the case study period. Further contributions are outlined in the concluding chapter.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a review of literatures on multilevel governance, sustainable development and participation, identifying that the social process of participation is not always well understood beyond the local scale of decision-making in multilevel governance literature. It argues that the implications of participation, as it exerts its

influence, are especially relevant considering the focus on sustainability transitions taking place within multilevel governance systems, whereby moving towards new, more sustainable infrastructures is deemed of key importance in addressing the unfolding environmental crises. In considering the critiques of sustainable development as vague and too weak to address the ongoing socio-economic processes leading to environmental degradation (Baker 2016), the chapter lays the ground for the hypothesis that it is precisely the vagueness of sustainable development that enables stakeholders to operationalise the concept for their own aims and objectives in relation to planning outcomes, sometimes resulting in the sustainable development discourse being strengthened by alternative rationalities pushed by different stakeholders across different scales of governance.

Chapter 3 introduces the Discourse Struggle Framework, a conceptual framework that relies on Hajer's (1997) Discourse Coalition Framework, for the purposes of the research. The framework centres the notion of the agonistic discourse struggle to focus on exploring the relationalities of power and resistance, and the impact of these relationalities upon planning outcomes. It draws from previous approaches to policy analyses, focusing on discursive manifestations of participation, enabled by the utilisation of discourse coalitions and storylines (Hajer 1997) as tools to categorise actor contributions to discourse development. The chapter presents the argument that the impacts and influence of participation upon planning outcomes can better be quantified using a discourse-driven research toolkit, and that the focus on discourse can help to trace participation across the multilevel governance system. The chapter contributes to theorisations of participation within collaborative, agonistic and insurgent strands of planning literature, by proposing that extending analyses from singular participatory events to exploring the opportunities offered by the longer-term planning process can help to scope for a more holistic understanding on how participation takes place and influences planning discourses that shape the decisions taken by planners and policymakers.

Chapter 4 turns to the research design and methodology used for the purposes of the research. First, the chapter outlines the process of selecting the case study, and second, it introduces the three methods (document and media analyses, and semi-structured interviews) used to analyse the case study of the M4 'relief road'.

9

Additionally, the chapter includes considerations on research ethics and research limitations.

Chapter 5 investigates the devolved planning policy framework in place in Wales during the case study period from 2013 to 2019. It presents the argument that while sustainable development is conceptualised as a 'balance' of economic and social dimensions of development and environmental protections, it is very much left to the political process to deem what this balance might look like in the case of each planning proposal. It is then hypothesised that this lack of clear definition of the notion of balance leaves the political decision-making process open for stakeholder contestation over the meaning of sustainable development through the flows of power and resistance. The chapter contributes to an understanding of sustainable development in Welsh planning policy, an area that thus far has largely remained unexplored in the context of devolution.

Utilising local and national media coverage that occurred around the case study, chapter 6 unpicks the elements that constitute the agonistic discourse struggle. This includes identifying different discourse coalitions and storylines that emerge from the data sample. The analysis illustrates that involved stakeholders from different discourse coalitions (environmental, social and economic) engage in the planning struggle through the relational construction of storylines whereby cases for and against the road development are built drawing from existing discourses and based on other successful discourse interventions that occur. In addition, the chapter's contribution to planning theory is methodological: using media analysis to explore stakeholder contestation can help researchers to detect local flows of overt power/resistance when exploring the dynamics and constitution of planning struggles.

Chapter 7 analyses interview data that emerged from in-depth discussions with key case study participants. The interviews highlight the nature of the discursive landscape within which the different coalitions operate as messier than the previous chapters had revealed: stakeholders do not always share aims with the members of their own coalitions and the storyline development is found to be an organic and fragmented process as opposed to fully planned and intentional. Furthermore, the

analysis confirms the devolved scale as a site of targeted resistance, while the local scale is shown to be relatively powerless in the face of its perceived needs. This dynamic of uneven distribution and mobilisation of social capital between the local and devolved scales illustrates the importance of considering pluralism of aims and objectives not just across horizontal networks but different governance scales when constructing models of agonistic participation in planning.

Chapter 8 brings together the results yielded through the three different methods of analysis and considers them in relation to the framework, presented in a visual form as the Discourse Struggle Framework. It explores the case study as a moment of a Foucauldian discourse rupture (Foucault 2002a) whereby different relationalities between stakeholder groupings but also between the stakeholders and the planning policy, and policy and media statements, emerge as sites of power and resistance. Viewing the M4 'relief road' discourse as a contested site for discourse transformation, the chapter argues that stakeholder participation can influence the implementation of plans indirectly through discourse, in addition to the direct impact that might be trackable if focusing on participatory events such as a public inquiry. The chapter contributes to the theorisations of multilevel governance by considering the detailed picture of the social dynamics that were found to take place within the institutionalised devolved structure. This illustrates that any research into governance of sustainability transitions needs to address the social dynamics and their relationality to the governance structures to produce effective results.

As a researcher, my view of the world is underpinned by the Foucauldian notion of power as ever-present in social structures, intricately entwined with processes of knowledge production and meaning making (Foucault 2002b). In line with this, the thesis can be seen as my contribution to the discourse about what sustainable development is, and what it perhaps should or could be, while I simultaneously consider those questions from the perspective of Welsh devolution as a culturally specific layer inserted into the existing governance structure of the United Kingdom less than thirty years ago.

2. Literature review: locating the nexus of multilevel governance, sustainable development and participation

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I define the parameters for the research by exploring the current scholarship on multilevel governance, sustainable development and institutionalised participatory practices. The purpose of the exercise is to identify and define the research gap, formulate the questions that address the gap and prepare for the development of the appropriate theoretical framework in the following chapter. The sections that follow thus provide an overview of the up-to-date academic scholarship into the three topics identified as the starting point for the research.

2.2. Governance: institutional context for situating the research

This research situates the participatory process within the context of the institutionalised governance structures in place. Therefore, it is essential to begin with an assessment of literature concerning multilevel governance and its key institutional characteristics. Definitions of governance in academic literature vary depending on the focus of the research (Ansell and Torfing 2016). Jessop's (1998) notion of governance as non-hierarchical and reflexive self-organisation is inspired by the institutional processes of civil society, whereas Scharpf (1997) sees governance as embedded negotiation processes taking place in networks that exist alongside the more traditional hierarchical structures of state and market. The present research is interested in the discursive relations between different participants and participant groupings, governance actors and sustainable development policy. Therefore, it is more suitable to conceptualise governance as open to context-dependant interpretations shaped by beliefs, traditions and dilemmas (Bevir and Rhodes 2003; Ansell and Torfing 2016). In addition, the definition of governance from public policy, as "the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their

say" (Graham et al. 2003, p. ii), is useful in considering the participatory process as a sum of relationalities between the structures of governance and actors operating within.

In broad terms, the notion of governance addresses what Rhodes (1997) has defined as governing without government. This refers to the shift away from centralised government that scholars of social sciences have increasingly turned their attention to since the 1990s (Ansell and Torfing 2016). Research in political theory has regarded this shift both in terms of the diminishing power of the centralised nation state (Rhodes 1997) and, on the other hand, as strategic restructuring of the state in response to state failure (Jessop 2016) and a transformation of the state towards a role that exercises power through the coordination of public and private resources (Pierre 2000). At a local level the shift towards governance has often meant fragmentation and privatisation of traditionally local services (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998). Governance can therefore be understood as the wider inclusion of networked actors at all scales of decision-making. Conceptualising power flows related to the state as governance can thus enable investigations in the relations between the different actors, whether institutionally rooted in private, public or third sectors.

Governance can further be arranged through different types of institutional structures, such as network governance (Keast 2016), collaborative governance (Gash 2016) and multilevel governance (Hooghe and Marks 2003; Bache and Flinders 2004; Bache et al. 2016). Network governance theory emphasises the strength of horizontal networks over vertical structures, drawing from Castells' theory of the network society (Keast 2016). Castells (2000; 2009) highlights communication through networks as a central tenet in the processes of power formation. Networks are communicative structures that produce meaning and they come into being through the relationships between stakeholders and institutions (Castells 2009).

Conversely, the notion of collaborative governance is used to capture policy development and implementation practices that enable multiple stakeholders to build consensus through conversation and dialogue (Gash 2016). In addition, collaborative practices are often used to solve particular problems, for example those resulting in

collective action dilemmas such as to do with environmental management (Ostrom 2015). Collaborative practices are also part of planning processes (Healey 1998; 2006). Regarding multilevel governance, some scholars such as Bache et al. (2016), have focused on how different levels of governance operate in relation to the state, while others have directed their attention to task-specific governance networks that can cut across scales. It is evident that both networked and communicative governance practices exist within a multilevel structure of governance. Conceptualising governance using the multilevel lens is therefore selected for further focus.

2.2.1. Conceptualising multilevel governance systems

Governance can be classified as multilevel if its structure consists of overlapping centres of authority (Berkes 2010). Characteristic to multilevel governance systems are also horizontal and vertical decision-making and communication across both geographic space and different levels of organisations (ibid.). Initial descriptions of multilevel governance defined the concept particularly in relation to the European Union and as "a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers" (Marks 1993, p. 392). However, drawing from the policy networks approach, it has now become increasingly common for multilevel governance to refer to both vertical and horizontal interactions (Bache and Flinders 2004; Bache et al. 2016). Multilevel governance thus offers a lens through which it is possible to explore how governance is institutionalised across *both* scales and networks. Subsequently, participation can be investigated as taking place within both of horizontal and vertical structures, including their interaction.

Multilevel governance offers a framework for organising governance according to the principle of subsidiarity, which applies downward pressure for activities to be organised at a tier closest to local as possible. The proposition suggests that the scale of governance should vary according to the different scales of impact that particular policy problems have (Hooghe and Marks 2003). Marks and Hooghe (2004) argue that multilevel governance has eroded centralised state authority which over time has been dispersed both up to supranational institutions and down to

14

regional and local level. They further categorise multilevel governance into two types, to enable specific analyses of governance at different vertical and horizontal scales (table 1).

Table 1: Types of multilevel governance systems

Type I	Type II
Fixed, long-term, hierarchical, federal	Fluid, flexible, task-specific (e.g. policy)
Limited number of levels, membership geographically based	Intersecting membership, no limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
(Marks and Hooghe 2004, p. 17)	

Clear boundaries are characteristic to the structures that are identified by Marks and Hooghe (2004) as type I multilevel governance. Type I systems are also vertical and neater than those of type II. Type II category includes structures where the policy process is laid out more horizontally, involving stakeholders from both public and private sectors, as well as the third sector (Marks and Hooghe 2004). Type II governance systems can be task-specific, operate at multiple territorial levels and they can overlap, whereas type I jurisdictions are "general-purpose", defined by geographical location and where the remit of responsibility covers multiple functions (Marks and Hooghe 2004, p. 17). The membership of a type I governance system does not intersect. Type II multilevel governance describes more fluid and complex jurisdictions that are task-specific and not restricted by geography unlike with type I (Marks and Hooghe 2004). Interest in these different types of multilevel governance structures has come from different fields: the state-focused scholarship has traditionally been interested in type I relations, whereas scholars interested in network governance have demonstrated interest in type II governance processes. Bache et al. (2016, p. 489) note that regardless of the vast number of studies that have explored both of these types of multilevel governance, little attention has been paid on what happens at "the intersection or nexus between types of [multilevel governance]" such as how different geographically bound institutions are able to process and implement task-driven governance arrangements and approaches. Depending on how its institutionalised, task-specific governance of sustainable development within a layered multifunctional type I structure, such as for planning

15

implementation, could provide an example of an intersection of the two types for an exploration.

While multilevel governance was originally theorised in relation to European integration, it has relevance in relation regional engagement in the policy process: regional participation developed parallel to European integration (Stephenson 2013). This is an important, yet less discussed, aspect of multilevel governance: while the ascension of powers from states to supranational levels, such as the EU, has been especially important in shaping, for example, environmental governance (and relatedly, land use planning), the regional structures that have paralleled this development come with their own complex dynamics. The devolution of powers that has taken place in the United Kingdom since the late 1990s offers an opportunity to explore how both fixed and fluid governance types intersect to create a "fuzzy" contemporary landscape of institutional conditions (Bache et al. 2016, p. 486). In 1997, Wales voted to create a National Assembly for Wales, which has subsequently evolved and is now referred to as the Senedd Cymru (the Welsh Parliament in English). The Scottish Parliament was created at the same time as the National Assembly for Wales and in Northern Ireland, devolution acted a key role in the Good Friday agreement (Cullingworth et al. 2015). Power has further been devolved to English regions to support decentralisation (ibid.). Allmendinger and Haughton (2009) conceptualise the fuzziness of governance within the field of planning as the introduction of 'fuzzy boundaries' through the insertion of new governance scales such as devolved governance in the UK. They argue that the rescaling of governance to include new regional levels enables planning intervention and policy development at new scales, enabled by fuzzy boundaries that accompany the introduction of devolution (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009). Devolution itself is an evolving process and the landscape of interacting policy and governance arrangements in the UK continues to fluctuate since Brexit (Senedd Research 2020).

Devolution in the UK thus reflects what Allmendinger and Haughton (2009, p. 618) describe as a "reshaping" of governance on local, regional and international levels. Globalisation has produced new institutional conditions for local and regional governance, a process that has been termed "glocalization" (Swyngedouw 1992), resulting in regional networks becoming more dependent on global networks than

they are on the state. The context of neoliberalism further contributes to the governance arrangements through the creation of new forms of partnerships and networks, by subordinating social policy to economic policy through competition and the "filling-in" of the state with new scales of regional governance as the designated level of policy delivery (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009, p. 619). Therefore, changes that blur the power structure of the state can be seen as part of a strategic reorganisation of power as a response to globalisation (Salet and Thornley 2007; Allmendinger and Haughton 2009). Devolution, as a scale inserted into an existing structure, suspended in a culturally specific position between regional and national scales, is clearly part of this response. While the local scale has been explored, for example, in relation to the impacts ascending upwards when cities operationalise climate policy, devolution has not received similar attention (Bulkeley and Betsill 2003).

2.2.2. The extended stakeholdership of governance

New actors from private and third sectors have moved in to manage processes following the state's "loss of functions" upwards to supranational institutions, downwards to task-specific bodies and outwards to external providers (Rhodes 1997, p. 17; Evans et al. 2005). The institutional typology of European municipal governance by Salet and Thornley (2007, p. 191) illustrates not only the overlaps between the two governance types identified by Marks and Hooghe but also the connections between local and regional actors that reflect the "institutional fragmentation" of contemporary governance. They highlight that the devolved administrations in the UK have attempted to take responsibility for policy coordination in the context where fragmentation has made local government unable to coordinate multiscalar public and private action (Salet and Thornley 2007). Goodwin et al. (2005) argue that the establishment of new devolved scales of governance in the UK in the late 1990s has resulted in spatially uneven capacities to make and implement policy, simultaneously adding further complexity to the state's spatial division. To understand how devolved governance contributes to overall complexity of the multiscalar structure, it is important to consider both processes of 'filling in' and 'hollowing out' discussed by Goodwin et al. (2005): filling in refers to

17

the growing number of actors involved across all levels, while the traditional, centralised public structures have become less populated by government officials resulting in a changed power dynamic between the public and private sectors. By acknowledging that these two processes are fundamentally connected, further focus can be placed on exploring the intersections of the different governance types that co-exist within a multilevel structure, and how actors navigate these different but overlapping institutional conditions.

These processes of facilitating participation and collaborative involvement are enmeshed in power relations – something that will be analysed specifically in relation to the planning practice in chapter 3. The above review of multilevel governance literature indicates that discussions concerning power within the scholarship have mostly remained on an abstract level, concerned with structures, with less focus on agent-level interactions. This suggests that interactions that constitute power relations might be better analysed using a theoretical framework able to account for detailed power dynamics between different actors involved in a governance arrangement (Haugaard 2016). Yet, approaches exploring power flows between the governance structures and the agents who operate within them are found to be uncommon within the scholarship on multilevel governance. Chapter 3 discusses the benefits of using a discourse-driven framework to explore these power flows as taking place within institutionalised multilevel governance systems.

2.2.3. Multilevel governance and conflict

Salet and Thornley (2007) categorise the different types of European municipal governance into four separate groups to understand what institutional conditions may enable successful policy coordination between different groups of actors. The findings of their analysis are useful in understanding how different institutional conditions may mediate or exacerbate political conflict between different levels, however, no indication is given as to how these different categories may intersect or overlap in practice. To make sense of the fuzziness of devolved governance, simply understanding the typologies of governance is not adequate, rather, it is important to consider how interscalar political contestation may shape and be shaped by the

overlaps between institutional conditions such as categories three and four (see table 2). Political contestation between different governance scales may propose a challenge to the institutional conditions, resulting in a reconstruction of hierarchies in sync with the electoral cycle.

Table 2: Typology of institutional conditions of European municipal governance

1.	Unitary regional models: Madrid provides the closest example, although it cannot be said to be completely unitary as local government also exists. However, the local layer is found to be weak. Unitary regional models enable centralised processes that can effectively implement important planning agendas without facing competing aims between regions. Unitary structures are heavily bureaucratic and respond poorly to rapid change.
2.	Dual models of local and regional governance within a regional hierarchy, such as established in Catalonia, may create structural conditions for competition. For instance, bigger cities may not want to be coordinated by a regional government, which will result in a struggle for power. There can also be political differences between the local and regional powers. Regardless, nation states have used this model to establish devolved governance structures.
3.	Dual systems where regional government is set up to play a mediating role between the state and strong local government are less susceptible for conflict than those that follow a regional hierarchy. The mediating entity is not set up with fiscal responsibilities but instead focuses on strategic coordination of joint commitments between the different levels of governance. This is a common model across Europe, including some parts of Britain.
4.	Functional coordination and other ad hoc solutions provide the final model for institutional conditions in European municipalities. An ad hoc solution can be, for example, organising provisions for services. This type can be more task-focused than the others, consisting of functional organisations on different levels. The weakness of these arrangements can be that they can be heavily reliant on volunteer arrangements and can reinforce existing inequalities between groups and organisations.
(adapted from Salet & Thornley 2007, p. 197)	

Governance structures that are simultaneously networked, collaborative, hollowed out and filled in, are characterised by "intensive and ever-changing system

interactions" between the multitude of stakeholders taking part (Bovaird 2005, p. 221). In these fluid networked systems, both actor coalitions and contestation can occur at a dynamic pace (Salet and Thornley 2007). The different and ever-changing actor constellations make up the "fragmented landscape of governance", as termed by Allmendinger and Haughton (2009, p. 629) in their research on the role of planners in tackling complexity through coordinated interscalar networks in multilevel systems. Problems of accountability can arise when multiple actors are involved in governance: decision making becomes harder to follow by those not directly involved, shared responsibility between stakeholders can result in blame games and institutional conditions can be used to frame decisions as inevitable, thus limiting alternatives (Benz 2007).

Commonly discussed stakeholder groups in governance literature are shareholders, communities, special interest groups, the media and the civil society, planners, as well as the public, sometimes taking the role of consumers and sometimes that of citizens, depending on the context (Bovaird 2005; Reed and Curzon 2015). How these groups interact and lobby for their aims will influence how complex policy problems are defined and what solutions are favoured: policy literature suggests that solutions are shaped by institutional histories and the perspectives of stakeholders (Head and Alford 2015). While the typology of institutional conditions of European municipal governance by Salet and Thornley (2007) illustrates that institutional setting can influence how stakeholder groups might form coalitions or come to compete with each other, the scholarship on multilevel governance does not consider in detail how these processes contribute to the overall discourse on what constitutes a policy problem (and the subsequent solution). In a multilevel and devolved governance system, how problems are perceived might vary depending on both institutional and cultural contexts.

As is clear from the above review, the literature is focused on structural factors, but there is an evident lack of understanding how to investigate cultural factors influencing policy and its implementation within multilevel governance systems. The institutional context of multilevel governance does, however, comprise both structural and cultural factors; this is particularly evident in the case of devolved governance: for example, Jones and Scully (2006) note factors around a particular Welsh identity

as one of the causes of differing electoral behaviour when comparing how the Welsh electorate votes in devolved and parliamentary elections.

Complex problems, such as environmental-social dilemmas like climate change, are necessarily defined through governance processes which are geared towards certain solutions and not others (Duckett et al. 2016). This process of constructing, finding, agreeing and operationalising a definition of a problem to locate a solution is what continuously takes place within governance systems where different cultures and structures collide. Planning, for instance, can be seen as a specified process to try to solve these problems or exacerbate them, through the balancing of competing interests. The following section explores how complex policy problems are defined in multilevel governance systems geared towards sustainable policy outcomes. The section first investigates environmental governance as an example of a policy area where complex policy dilemmas that concern multiple stakeholders often appear. It then sets the scene for the discussion that follows on governance of infrastructure planning. Infrastructure is selected as area of planning for discussion because of its nature as a multiscalar process both in terms of impact (e.g. road can cross multiple governance authority areas, a waste facility can be strategically located to serve a larger area than those within its immediate vicinity) and the nature of the planning process itself (Romein et al. 2003). This thesis adopts the view that economic decisions on infrastructure provision are necessarily taken within conditions set by the environment and therefore infrastructure planning needs to be understood within the wider boundaries of environmental management (Folke et al. 2016).

2.3. Governance, sustainable development and planning for infrastructure

Environmental governance refers to the ways in which nature is managed through multiscalar social-economic processes, taking place in contemporary multilevel governance networks (Meadowcroft 2002; Newig and Fritsch 2009). It is defined as the "interventions aiming at changes in environment-related incentives, knowledge, institutions, decision making, and behaviours", consisting of "regulatory processes, mechanisms, and organisations through which political actors influence

21

environmental actions and outcomes" (Lemos and Agrawal 2006, p. 298). As well as thinking about it as the overarching contemporary paradigm of managing nature in the current era, environmental governance can be used specifically to explore specific resources, such as waste or water, to better understand the practices of "coordination and decision-making" between different actors operating at different scales (Davies 2008; Bakker 2010, p. 8).

Lemos and Agrawal (2006, p. 309) note that environmental governance has come to consist of "innovative hybrids", divided into three categories: public-private partnerships, which refer to collaborations between state and market actors; co-management, which involves community and state actors in joint projects; and private-social partnerships such as payments for ecosystem services or carbon sequestration that require transactions between markets and communities. Following in the footsteps of ecological modernisation both public-private partnership and other market-based mechanisms, such as subsidies, fines or trading schemes are seen as tools to achieve efficiency in resource use and thus are seen as good for business (Whitehead 2007; Himley 2008). Co-management involves state and community actors and can appeal both to supporters of less state control through privatisation and those who support a more centralised state. Bakker (2010) notes that in the case of water governance, involving a community can be seen as a means of resisting government interventions but also as a means of opposing privatisation and keeping water in public ownership. Reflecting these developments that have introduced new actors and processes into environmental governance, the capacity of the state to effectively solve complex environmental problems such as biodiversity loss or climate change is seen as uncertain (Backstrand and Kronsell 2017). Arguably, there is a need for normative scholarship on what the state's role should be in environmental governance as this might facilitate more progressive environmental outcomes (Barry and Eckersley 2005; Backstrand and Kronsell 2017). The debates concerning the role of the state ignore the opportunities presented by regional and devolved layers of governance which thus far appear little explored in relation to environmental outcomes.

By contrast, scholarship on infrastructure development has focused on the ability of governance structures to deliver economic, social and environmental outcomes (Kim

and Jurey 2013). Marshall (2013, p. 19) draws attention to the tensions inherent to the development of infrastructure in relation to the environment by calling for healthy "scepticism" in assessing what investment for infrastructure is necessary in moving towards low carbon societies, raising questions about the ways in which economic, social and environmental outcomes are planned and prioritised as part of the processes of decision-making. While seen as different policy areas in practice, it is clear from the above that environmental management and infrastructure planning are intricately intertwined. The example of water, mentioned above, illustrates this duality well: water is simultaneously an environmental quality and a resource that requires infrastructure to enable its management for societal purposes (Scott 2009). The following sections focus on defining the environment as a policy problem for planning, before moving on to discuss sustainable development and its conceptualisation in literature concerning infrastructure development.

2.3.1. Environment as a complex policy problem

Policy literature classifies environmental resources as public goods and common pool resources (Carter 2007; Ostrom 2015). A public good refers to a resource such as air that does not somehow diminish or become less by different actors consuming it (Carter 2007; Holahan and Lubell 2016). These resources are classified as 'non-rivalrous' or 'non-excludable' to illustrate scenarios such as where one person cannot exclude others from benefitting of their good actions, for example, refraining from polluting a resource (Weale 1992; Holahan and Lubell 2016). On the other hand, common pool resources are rivalrous: it is possible to exclude some actors depending on the size of the resource, for instance, when sustainably managing fishing fleets or forests to keep the stocks from depleting (Carter 2007). Political economists have highlighted collective action dilemmas arising from public goods provision and common pool resource management (Holahan and Lubell 2016). These take place when joint stakeholder actions result in undesirable outcomes such as continuing resource depletion (ibid.). Solving these dilemmas requires such governance arrangements that can shape individual decisions by for example altering conditions for individual payoffs, resulting in joint outcomes that leave at least one individual better off without harming others (ibid.). Dryzek's (1997, p. 8)

23

discussion on "doubly complex" environmental dilemmas reflects the conditions in which environmental problems come to exist at the intersections of ecosystems and human social systems.

Defining something as an environmental problem is a human-centred act: issues are often caused by the same social-economic and cultural systems that they threaten. Therefore, they require systematic interventions that are able to address their double complexity (Dryzek 1997). While the discourse of environmental politics began to emerge in the 1960s, the initial policy approaches were deemed piecemeal and lacking (Weale 1992; Dryzek 1997; Carter 2007). Policymakers came to treat the environment as a "discrete policy area", secondary to industrial policy (Hajer 1997, p. 25). This siloed approach of organising policy into different ministries such as transport, agriculture or finance, is a key characteristic of the traditional policy paradigm, which focused on solving environmental dilemmas through environmental regulation (Carter 2007). The approach failed to recognise the interdependency of ecosystems, as well as the fact that political, economic and social systems are inseparably entwined with environmental realities (Carter 2007). The traditional policy paradigm therefore illustrates how fixed institutional conditions (e.g. separate ministries, siloed policy processes) limit the ability of policymakers to address complex problems in a holistic way (Carter 2007).

Environmental damage is often a by-product of otherwise lawful or socially accepted activities, such as private-car use, energy consumption or diet, illustrating how environmental problems exist in a relationship with social-economic culture (Dryzek 1997; Carter 2007). Yet it is common that any regulatory intervention provokes negative reactions from stakeholders, such as private businesses, and this can prevent the adoption of solutions that are perceived as economically damaging (Carter 2007). Furthermore, the timespans of environmental issues differ from those of policymaking: the political process is tied to the election cycle and impacted by external events such as social, economic or cultural crises (ibid.). These qualities make environmental problems difficult to solve or deal with on a societal scale. Investment in infrastructure has been used to pursue public health goals; this approach has increasingly shifted towards solving complex environmental problems by proposing low carbon solutions (Marshall 2013).

24

2.3.2. Wicked problems and the planning discourse

Balint et al. (2011, p. X) define wicked problems as problems with "a high degree of scientific uncertainty and a profound lack of agreement on values, combined with the absence of a perfect solution", indicating their dual nature as social-environmental, rather than simply environmental. Uncertainty and irreversibility are central qualities to Rittel and Webber's (1973) definition of a wicked problem: both characterise many of the problems faced by the contemporary society. In the field of planning, solutions are sought from development, albeit done in a sustainable way (Carter 2007; Balint et al. 2011; Peters 2017). The concept of wicked problems was formulated in planning literature to describe emerging policy problems in the 1960s when conventional models of policy analysis used at the time could no longer provide answers for emerging problems (Peters 2017). These problems involved multiple actors and were complex both socially and politically (Rittel and Webber 1973; Peters 2017). Due to a lack of definitive formulations, wicked problems can be defined in different ways and how they are defined determines the solutions that will be used to tackle them (Rittel and Webber 1973). The process of defining a problem is always bound by the social and political contexts, which can change over the period of time it takes to define the solution, within which they occur (Kreuter et al. 2004). For example, conceptualising air pollution as a wicked problem can help to illustrate the shortcomings of the prescribed solutions: regulatory intervention in line with the traditional policy paradigm helped to reduce the problem because it encouraged more efficient technologies in the 1970s and 1980s, yet air pollution persists as a significant public health issue causing up to 40,000 deaths per year in the UK alone (Carter 2007; Holgate and Stokes-Lampard 2017). The biggest contributor to air pollution is deemed to be the internal combustion engine (Holgate and Stokes-Lampard 2017), however, causes of hypermobility such as the dispersion of society and resulting urban sprawl cannot be tackled by a regulatory approach aimed at car manufacturers alone (Schiller and Kenworthy 2017).

Further characteristics of wicked problems include their nature as a continuous problem, the uniqueness of the problem and the lack of opportunity to trial solutions (Rittel and Webber 1973). Each of these characteristics can be applied to the air pollution problem: the causal, intersecting pathways of infrastructure and society

resist a solution that can be applied once, and despite similarities between past and present cases of the problem arising, the conditions within which the problem (re-) emerges are always different from its precursors (Rittel and Webber 1973). For example, the source of the air pollution might vary, as do societal conditions, such as who lives in the areas it plagues, around it. Finally, each wicked problem is a symptom of another problem (ibid.): air pollution is heavily linked to car use, which is a producer of multiple problems from congested urban environments to emissions exacerbating climate change (Sloman 2006).

The notion of wicked problems is useful in illustrating the complexity of societal problems from the point of view of planning and policy formulation. It has relevance in terms of how solutions to perceived problems are defined (Rittel and Webber 1973). This can be seen, for example, in the case of hypermobility: addressing air pollution caused by motor traffic by adding roads and lanes to ensure faster traffic flow can produce negative externalities such as biodiversity loss, induced traffic and a reduction in quality of life for those living nearby (Schiller and Kenworthy 2017). Actors contribute to the construction of wicked problems by offering definitions, thus introducing discursive contestation to the arena of policymaking and implementation (Rittel and Webber 1973; Roberts 2000; Lockwood et al. 2010). Subsequently the solutions used to address problems are dictated by how the issue is defined by those involved (Rittel and Webber 1973), meaning that the processes of identifying solutions for complex policy problems are thoroughly enmeshed in power relations, something that is discussed further in chapter 3. In addition, the ways that institutional conditions define stakeholder engagement may have implications on how wicked problems are defined and addressed in multilevel governance systems.

The multilevel nature of governance adds to the wickedness of the problems: when solutions are required on national and local levels, conflicting interests of multiple stakeholders, such as planners, developers and third sector actors, placed at different scales are unavoidable (Balint et al. 2011). Resistance to plans prescribed from administratively higher scales has been found to coalesce locally, putting actors on different levels in conflict with each other (Rydin 2011). Stakeholder contestation has been shown to undermine attempts to reach definitive problem formulations, further exacerbated by the prolonged time horizons it takes to engineer

infrastructure-driven solutions or to achieve policy change (Duckett et al. 2016; Marshall and Cowell 2016). This gives a problem further wicked qualities, making it indefinable and non-generalisable (Duckett et al. 2016). The inability of the political process to find generalisable problem definitions makes attempted solutions ineffective and often incremental, such as in the case of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which has been criticised as unable to produce required changes quickly (Allan 2019). Therefore, the spatial and temporal imbalance prevalent in the societal process of defining wicked problems opens itself up to discursive contestation, both within stakeholder groups on a particular scale but also across the multiscalar system. The discursive aspects of the process discussed above are analysed in chapter 3.

The repercussive character of wicked problems further adds to stakeholder contestation: the problems are not only laden with value conflicts and ideological or cultural constraints which themselves can have problematic side effects but also exist in a continuous state of flux, meaning that they can be challenged by active subjects and new practices (Duckett et al. 2016). It can therefore be concluded that wickedness of a given problem can result from its existence in a fluid social system: as previously noted by Dryzek (1997), environmental problems are not only doubly complex but defined by the wider social discourses they exist in. Sustainability, the end goal of sustainable development, is seen as one such discourse, termed by Fairclough (2003) as a nodal discourse to which other discourses attach. The following section explores the paradigm of sustainability as an attempt to address wicked problems.

2.3.3. Addressing complex policy problems through sustainable development

Sustainable development has its origins in the shortcomings of the traditional policy paradigm and thus can be seen as an attempt to address the wickedness of the social-environmental issues that emerged from the 1960s onwards and remain unsolved (Carter 2007). While the concept of sustainable development has become popularised in polices ranging from land use planning to economic development, the paradigm has received continued criticism for being too weak to sufficiently address issues of environmental degeneration (Rydin 2010). UNESCO defines sustainability as a long-term goal for a planet fit for future generations and sustainable development refers to the processes and pathways via which sustainability is achieved (UNESCO [no date].). The paradigm of sustainable development has been operationalised as a vehicle for technological advancement and economic efficiency through ecological modernisation (Hajer 1997; Whitehead 2007) and as a vehicle for green growth (Jackson 2009). More than thirty years since the approach was introduced, no significant evidence of de-coupling of emissions and growth has been demonstrated (Jackson 2009) and the implementation gap between environmental policy and delivery persists (Karlsson and Gilek 2020). Owen and Cowell (2011, p. 21), using a very broad definition of the term, note that the concept of sustainable development has become widely accepted, while the *conception*, meaning "the principles required to apply a concept", remains in dispute.

The contestation around the conception of sustainable development can be pinned down to the trade-offs that take place between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the paradigm, thus allowing environmental degradation to continue (Baker 2016). When introduced, embedded in the notion of sustainable development was the hypothesis that economic development could be pursued in ways that would also protect the environment for future generations (Weale 1992; Whitehead 2007; Rydin 2010). The concept, defined as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", was first introduced in 1987 by Gro Harlem Brundtland in *Our Common Future*, which is more often referred to as the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, p. 8). This definition sought to address global poverty while simultaneously addressing the environmental agenda

through three overarching dimensions: economic viability, social equity and environmental protection (Rydin 2010). While the Brundtland Report saw sustainable development as economic development, it offered a reconfiguration that ensured that social and environmental goals could be met alongside economic growth to achieve a sustainable society: market-based dynamics could be readjusted to continue providing economic growth, while the social dimension of sustainability highlights the importance of community to local wellbeing and security (Rydin 2010). Furthermore, the environmental aspect of sustainable development was conceptualised through environmental goods and services on which humans depend to highlight their equal importance (ibid.).

While sustainable development has become a core element in the policy discourse since the initial publication of the Brundtland Report, its ambiguity has led to different definitions of the concept (Mebratu 1998; Rydin 2010; Baker 2016). Jones et al. (2005) specify that while by mid-2000s, most governments had incorporated an anthropocentric understanding of sustainable development into policymaking, this is a notably weak approach, holding economic growth as a prerequisite to protecting the environment. Weak or 'thin' approaches to sustainability see the environment as a measurable resource, while strong or 'thick' sustainable development places the environment at the centre, arguing that environmental protection is necessary to achieve healthy economies (Jones et al. 2005; Vos 2007). Ecological modernisation, which seeks to address environmental degeneration through market solutions, can thus be classed as a weak approach to sustainability (Hajer 1997; Rydin 2010).

2.3.4. *From ecological modernisation to sustainability transitions and megaproject development*

Ecological modernisation conceptualises sustainable development through the belief that economic growth can be decoupled from environmental destruction in advanced enough industrial economies (Baker 2016). Specifically, it refers to "the social scientific interpretation of environmental reform processes at multiple scales" (Mol et al. 2009, p. 4). Ecological modernisation discourse proposed to address ecological degradation through "ecologising the economy", by working the implications of the

sustainability approach into the logic and functions of the market (Mol et al. 2009, p. 7). Baker (2016) explains that as ecological modernisation was adopted as the overarching conceptualisation of sustainable development by states such as Germany and Japan, new relationships with industry were also built. These involved "invention, innovation and diffusion of new technologies and techniques" (Murphy 2000; Baker 2016, p. 55). Eco-socialist critique of ecological modernisation points out that as such, ecological modernisation does not address issues of social justice and much of the technology propelled as a solution, such as green energy, is still reliant on fossil fuels during its production and transportation (Baer and Singer 2022).

On the other hand, sustainability transitions literature conceptualises sustainability through "socio-technical systems" of infrastructure (e.g. water supply, energy or transport) that can over time intentionally be transitioned to a state that is more sustainable than the previous one (Markard et al. 2012, p. 956). Sustainability transitions involve a variety of actors, unfold over lengthy timespans and during the transitionary phase, new products, business models and organisations come into being (Markard et al. 2012). In analyses of sustainability transitions, the state has some level of ability to account for public pressure and/or activism advocating for the adoption of more sustainable technologies, however it is not always clear when governance structures support the aims of non-state actors in securing more sustainable outcomes (Haas 2021). Both ecological modernisation and sustainability transitions literature offer a technology-driven characterisation of both the problem and the solution of the wicked problem(s) presented by the declining environmental reality that first provoked the need for sustainable development.

Marshall (2013) highlights that conceptualising sustainable development as an infrastructure-led process where investment is sought for instance transport or energy transitions exposes the inherent tensions between environmentalism and development. Encouraging a level of scepticism against the environmental claims made by those promoting new infrastructure solutions, he refers to Swyngedouw's (2010) critical discussion on the de-politicisation of nature, in which the latter questions whether low carbon approaches potentially ignore the system-challenging qualities of the problems such as climate change that they are hoping to solve

(Marshall 2013). Marshall (2013) further refers to work done by Flyvbjerg and others (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003; Priemus and van Wee 2017) to raise that it is common for large infrastructure projects to cost more than initially projected. These projects, often termed as megaprojects, such as building a motorway, are consistently found to be "over budget, over time, under benefits, over and over again" (Flyvbjerg 2011, 2017). In addition, the political dynamics of megaproject construction can lead to the process being in some way corrupted (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003).

Megaprojects are "large-scale, complex ventures that typically cost $1 billion or more, take many years to develop and build, involve public and private stakeholders, are transformational, and impact millions of people" (Flyvbjerg 2017, p. 3). They are appealing to a wide variety of stakeholders due to their ability to possess what Flyvbjerg (2017) calls four qualities of the sublime. The notion of the sublime describes emotionally mixed experiences of awe and terror, which individuals may experience in the face of technological or architectural achievements, and more traditionally with sites of natural wonder (Sankaran et al. 2020). Flyvbjerg (2017, p. 7) categorises the types of sublime relevant to development of large scale industrial projects as follows: technological (the excitement that engineers, for example, get from pushing a project that is taller, faster or bigger than anything previously built), political (the "rapture" that politicians receive from building monuments to their causes, including media interest, helps with re-election), economic (financial benefits to shareholders such as trade unions able to promote jobs that will be involved) and the aesthetic sublime (the pleasure that those who love good design get from an iconic structure). The combined effect of the four sublimes is that the risks involved in megaproject planning, produced by long time horizons and their inherent complexity, are often overlooked (Flyvbjerg 2017). Megaproject management proposes challenges across the multilevel governance structure, but what has thus far not been explored in detail is how the regional or devolved scales react when the descension of powers enables them to take the lead on constructing large-scale infrastructure. Furthermore, megaprojects as such present not only a solution to what is perceived as a wicked problem, they also constitute a problem in themselves, with impacts ruminating across governance scales.

31

2.3.5. Scales and spaces of sustainability

Exploring sustainability through a geographical lens enables the understanding of its governance as multiscalar processes linking together societies, economies and environments. This geographical conceptualisation challenges the linear narrative of how sustainable development proceeds through global treaties and accords to achieve sustainable societies (Whitehead 2007). While conceptualisations of sustainability in policymaking have so far mostly contended with thin versions that place economic development above environmental protections, place-based analyses highlighting local and regional flows within global networks have illustrated varying degrees of sustainability in practice (Hajer 1997; Bulkeley and Betsill 2003; Whitehead 2007). While different discourses on the role of the state, private providers and the civil society are interlinked with those of sustainable development through for example the idea of ecological modernisation (Hajer 1997), discourses advocating for thicker forms of sustainability may be found in different levels of multilevel governance structures, where political contestation has been shown to take place in advancing solutions to environmental dilemmas (Jolivet and Heiskanen 2010; Zografos et al. 2020). Both weak and strong approaches to sustainability can clearly thrive within multilevel governance systems: sustainability discourses are constructed locally, albeit within the remits of the wider governance system (Barrett 1991; Whitehead 2007). Yet literature on sustainable development discussed above tends to focus on the local / global divide, leaving opportunities and challenges relevant to the other scales, such as regional or devolved, unexplored. For instance, transport is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases globally, has to an extent be planned regionally and there are multiple ways to gear planning towards sustainable transport options (Schiller and Kenworthy 2017). The intersections of multilevel governance, regional or devolved planning and sustainability approaches have thus far received little attention in sustainability literature.

The notion of balance is central to sustainable development: the concept contains the implicit assumption that economic, environmental and social concerns can be balanced in such a way that they do not conflict with each other in the process of development. Yet it is commonplace that in practice, this notion of balance is not grounded in adequate conceptualisations that would outline what is actually meant by it, leading to debates and arguments that materialise during planning processes (Owens and Cowell 2011). Owens and Cowell (2011, p. 3) present planning for sustainable development as the recurring "re-emergence of questions about the negotiability of environmental conditions in the face of pressures for growth". This dilemma, regarding the balancing of the environmental, social and environmental aspects is thus central to this thesis: infrastructure development is viewed critically as the process that requires a constant renegotiation of the meaning of nature and the environmental boundaries within which development takes place (Rockström et al. 2009).

Although specific areas of infrastructure, such as transport, are most often siloed into different sectors and policies, the function of spatial planning is to promote integration of various infrastructure needs and their application in society in ways that support economic, environmental and social objectives set out in policy (Morphet 2016). Sectoral governance, including both environmental and infrastructure development, is thus shaped by the structural changes that have led to decentralisation of power in multilevel systems. Globalisation, which refers to a world where societies, economies and environments are interconnected, applies economic pressures on the multilevel processes through which decisions are made and implemented, producing new *glocal* dependencies between regional and global networks (Lemos and Agrawal 2006). The process of global economic development has produced intense pressures on environmental outcomes on local, regional, national and global levels: as capital is able to flow freely to locations with less stringent environmental controls, environmental protections have not kept pace (ibid.). Furthermore, to provide for increased need for energy and water

consumption, waste treatment and transport, infrastructure continues to be built at an ever-increasing scale globally (Hall 1980; Truscello 2020).

While global governance has been seen as a necessary support mechanism for individual states experiencing capacity problems in responding to environmental problems effectively (Weiss and Wilkinson 2014), analyses of infrastructure governance have not always focused on the bigger picture, instead centring on problems in planning and delivery (Clements et al. 2023). Truscello (2020, pp. 4-5) highlights the discrepancy between environmental and infrastructure governance by bringing attention to the capitalist structures within which both operate: "instead of not building another oil pipeline, the emphasis of state capitalism is on building *better* pipelines; instead of expertly decommissioning all nuclear reactors, the emphasis of state capitalism is on maintaining an unsustainable level of energy consumption that makes nuclear reactors appear necessary (and their waste appear like a reasonable risk); instead of recognising that planetary ecological limits have been breached, state capitalism advocates more industrial infrastructure on an unprecedented scale." Clements et al. (2023) point to the development of "more-than-neoliberal" urban governance, conceptualised as "a hybrid configuration that prefigures urban infrastructure decisions without public oversight" as a perpetuating factor in the continuing decline in the capacity of built and planned infrastructure to address matters of environmental justice.

Not only does it then fall to environmental governance to address issues of environmental degradation, which may be perpetuated by the contemporary approaches to the development of infrastructure, justified under the ecological modernisation and sustainability transitions paradigms, but governance of infrastructure development may add to the negative social implications of the ongoing environmental crises in complex ways. Thus, understanding the processes whereby infrastructure is pitched as a solution to wicked problems arising from humanity's act of transgressing planetary boundaries requires an understanding of macro level stakeholder dynamics. Owens and Cowell (2011, p. 4) highlight that sustainable development and planning exist relationally, whereby the "idea of sustainable development had influenced the philosophy and practices of planning, but conceptions of sustainability were themselves being shaped and refined through

34

encounters with planning 'on the ground'." This relationship leads to conflicts of interest, values and beliefs being drawn to the surface in "discursive struggles over the meaning of sustainable development", when policies and economic pressures materialise in the form of specific proposals and plans (Owens and Cowell 2011, p. 4).

This section has discussed infrastructure planning as a contested solution to wicked problems caused by the ongoing transgression of planetary boundaries by humans. The above paragraphs have illustrated how the solutions to the problems arising from the breaching of the planet's limits are often conceptualised through sustainable development and specifically through the approaches of ecological modernisation and sustainability transitions. However, the literature on wicked problems concludes that a solution thus prescribed comes with its own problems.

In the beginning of the chapter, I outlined a focus on participation: this is now conceptualised as a 'problem' for further examination. To be clear, I do not wish to argue against participation, but instead, to conceptualise it as contested and conflictual in relation to infrastructure development. I will detail this conceptual approach in chapter 3, but first, the final section of the literature review explores participation as it emerges within institutionalised multilevel governance practices. This is to build an understanding of why participation is seen as an important aspect of the democratic policy practice, as well as how the scholarship on governance outlines it to take place. The section identifies that while participation as an integrated part of policymaking and planning implementation is an extensively researched field, analyses aiming to understand its role in shaping meaning across different scales of multilevel governance are lacking.

2.4.   Exploring participation through the lens of governance

As noted in the first section of the chapter, the shift to governance has meant the inclusion of more actors, through both horizontal and vertical networks, into decision-making processes. This section draws specifically from literatures on participation that are situated within environmental governance as this is a sectoral policy area

where formalised participatory practices commonly take place. The focus of is on exploring the existing understandings of the participatory practice as it relates to governance of sustainable development, while the following chapter focuses on how participation is discussed within planning literature.

Participation, as it relates to governance practices, is defined as "any type of inclusion of non-state actors, as members of the public or as organised stakeholders, in any stage of governmental policymaking including implementation" (Wesselink et al. 2011, p. 2688). Participatory practices can be both formal and informal, but analyses often focus on formalised practices such as exploring the efficiency of participation that takes place through information sharing and collaborative governance practices (Lane 2005; Benson et al. 2014). As such, public participation is a loose concept, and it is not always clear what exactly constitutes it, or "how it should be conducted for maximum effect" (Crompton 2015, p. 29). Rowe and Frewer (2005) highlight that terms such as public engagement, public participation and public involvement are used interchangeably, both by practitioners and in academic writing, thus leaving space for ambiguity. Crompton (2015, p. 29) points to an important theoretical alignment: when defined as "negotiated dialogue", public deliberation "aligns the act of participation with theories of deliberative democracy". As such public participation cannot by default be defined as collaborative or communicative: this depends on the wider conceptual and governance frameworks within which it is operationalised. Since participation by its nature is often place-based and local, participants may experience that they are only there to resist proposals subscribed from above scales: this has led to accusations of NIMBYism ('Not-In-My-Back-Yard') (Rydin 2011). Actors other than those rooted in local communities may also play a role in participatory practices, for example private consultants have been found to take part (Scott and Carter 2019).

2.4.1. The perceived value of participation

Moving from centralised government to a networked multilevel structure has enabled more flexible policy approaches that can be used to target the level and spatial scale where complex problems occur with distinct, localised solutions (Newig and Fritsch

2009). Solutions targeted at tackling environmental problems on the ground have increasingly involved stakeholders such as communities, the public and the civil society (Head 2007; Reed and Curzon 2015), although there is a mixed consensus on the effectiveness of stakeholder participation in areas of environmental governance and planning (Benson et al. 2014). The calls for increased participation to achieve sustainable policy outcomes resonate with normative liberal-democratic theory, which considers citizen involvement as an important theme (Head 2007). Wider participation in the policymaking process is seen by policy practitioners and some theorists as consent from the public to implement policies (Rydin and Pennington 2000; Adger et al. 2003; Wesselink et al. 2011). Subsequently, stakeholder involvement and community engagement have become integral, and in most cases legally required, element in environmental management and policymaking in most Western countries and the EU (Wesselink et al. 2011). The resulting links between community engagement, non-governmental stakeholders and institutions of the state have been explored in detail in academic literature considering multilevel governance and natural resource management (Head 2007; Gruber 2010).

Participatory practices have been part of the planning process since the 1960s (Rydin 2011). In the late 1980s, the Brundtland Report argued for participatory approaches engaging with communities impacted by economic development and its social and environmental consequences (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987; Rydin 2010). The importance of participatory practices to achieving sustainability was reinforced by the Local Agenda 21, which emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development taking place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and which advocated for subsidiarity in decision making (Berkes 2010). In 1998, the Aarhus Convention served as a reminder that decisions should be taken as closely as possible to citizens they concern by calling for early and effective involvement of the public (Hartley and Wood 2005). Furthermore, the convention continues to enable communities to challenge legality of plans impacting the environment through a judicial review by limiting costs somewhat (Fullbright [no date]).

Some scholars argue that there is an assumption in much of the policy literature that better results are produced when non-state actors are effectively integrated in environmental decision-making to solve collective action dilemmas (Rydin and Pennington 2000; Newig and Fritsch 2009). Rydin and Pennington (2000) note that more careful analysis is required to understand under what circumstances stakeholder involvement produces meaningful results. In theorising sustainability, the local scale has been explored as an avenue for place-based sustainable development where state-level solutions have failed to deliver the needed sustainability transitions (Bulkeley and Betsill 2003). However, Cowell (2015) challenges the perceived relationship between positive environmental outcomes and localised decision-making structures: while there are different means for local action to generate wider societal change, long term mobilisation is deemed lacking. Exploring how local action can generate wider change, Cowell (ibid.) lists three possible processes: replication, i.e., an increase in the number of localities making use of particular sustainability practice; up-scaling, i.e., an increase in size and impact of an initiative; and jumping scale, i.e., local ideas influence actors at more powerful scales or a practice becomes mainstream. However, it cannot be concluded that place-based action always leads into substantial wider action or change (ibid.)

While broader stakeholdership in governance can have positive results (e.g. increased accountability and efficiency), it can also result in negative effects for the environment (Scott and Carter 2019). Instead of challenging existing power disparities, it is possible that both collaborative and participatory processes reinforce them (Bidwell and Ryan 2006). A related problem is that public involvement in policy processes is often limited to special interest capture and bureaucratised forms of the participation process (Rydin and Pennington 2000; Innes and Booher 2004). While making information public and establishing public consultation procedures constitute an important – and common – policy approach, some policy processes offer opportunities for more active involvement. For example, the European Water Framework Directive incorporates the three types of public participation mostly utilised in policy approaches: access to information, public comments and active involvement on local level (Benson et al. 2014).

2.4.2. Institutional conditions of participatory practices

Governments can attempt to involve citizens in policy processes in various ways, such as by providing information, surveying public opinion, establishing forums for information exchanges, delegating powers and funds to community bodies and by outsourcing implementation of responsibilities (Head 2007). Citizens and community groups may also act outside the formal channels established by public institutions by, for example, lobbying, protesting, establishing new forums for dialogue or by forming coalitions of support or resistance (Head 2007). Whether inclusion of non-governmental actors is through top-down or bottom-up measures is relevant to the power relations that governance processes are enmeshed with (Hillier 2002).

Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation depicts participatory mechanisms as a power struggle between citizens and institutions (Collins and Ison 2009; Arnstein 2019). The ladder outlines different forms of participation, starting from non-participation, proceeding to tokenistic approaches and finally to citizen power, which exists in various degrees as illustrated by table 3. Collins and Ison (2009) critique the ladder for presenting citizen control as the goal of the participation process, on top of the participation hierarchy. The ladder also overlooks a complex set of relationships that play out in participatory processes by suggesting that the roles of participants only change in relation to formal power (ibid.). Using the ladder to conceptualise participation might thus lead to good policy implementation outcomes being ignored when these are not achieved by active forms of involvement from citizens (ibid.).

Table 3: The ladder of citizen participation

8 Citizen Control	Degrees of Citizen Power
7 Delegated Power	
6 Partnership	
5 Placation	Degrees of Tokenism
4 Consultation	
3 Informing	
2 Therapy	Non-Participation
1 Manipulation	
Source: Arnstein 2019, p. 26	

Instead of viewing power imbalances as hierarchical, both top-down and bottom-up approaches to citizen participation can be explored as "weak or strong, narrow or broad, episodic or continuing" (Head 2007, p. 444). Exploring stronger and weaker forms of participation within a multilevel structure produces further complexity not accounted for by Arnstein's ladder: for instance, what might work on a local scale may not work in the same way at higher levels or across scales (Head 2007). As planning dilemmas can be multiscalar, especially in the case of the nexus of infrastructure development and environmental conditions, they require effective collaboration across different scales. This may produce fluid and messy collaborative situations not accounted for by the linear hierarchy of the ladder. For example, Benson et al. (2014) found that interscalar participatory engagement patterns in water management and particularly in relation to the European Water Framework Directive are characterised by inconsistency when people in varying roles normally situated on different levels of the governance structure are required to work together on a joint level. Following the ladder, establishing shared forums where politicians, citizens and professionals engage might lead to citizen voices becoming more prominent and thus perhaps more powerful. However, Benson et al. (2014) found that working on interscalar shared forums led to disengagement when the issues covered were felt to be outside the remit of some participants' roles. The research thus concluded that a more hierarchical model of local stakeholders engaging with local water management and feeding into regional planning might lead to better results for both the participants and the resources in question (ibid.)

Wesselink et al. (2011) highlight that more important than seeking a blueprint for best practice, is examining the rationales that underpin participatory practices. They argue that the political and institutional context sets the remits for structuring participation. This view aligns with that of Fung (2015) who concludes that participation is always political. Relating back to the points made by Innes and Booher (2004) about bureaucratised practices that may only serve to disengage citizens, Fung (2015) argues that substantial citizen engagement is only sustained over time if citizens support participatory practices and the institutions implementing them. Therefore, all types of participatory practices – sharing information, consultation processes and different ways of active involvement – should be examined against the underpinning institutional conditions. It may be that public review and comment procedures create even more disengagement with the system in places where the backdrop is a continuing decline in civic engagement (Innes and Booher 2004) but it cannot be concluded that these types of participation processes never work. However, when the institutional, political and legal contexts consider participation a "disturbance" or a tick-box exercise that is an unavoidable part of the process, regardless of the type of participation, it is clear that any positive impact of participation will be limited (Wesselink et al. 2011, p. 2696). Therefore, simply inserting participatory arrangements into the policy-making processes is not enough to ensure the perceived goals of transparency, justice and increased democracy (Newig and Fritsch 2009; Paloniemi et al. 2015).

While Arnstein's ladder may represent the relationship between public participation and power in hierarchical and perhaps somewhat simplified terms, it does highlight a key tenet in institutional decision-making processes: power. This has implications for the earlier discussion on governance arrangements too: whether governance practices are conceptualised as collaborative or networked, they are always inserted into or emerge from situations that are already saturated with existing power relations. Simply aiming to extend any stakeholder group's power within an institutional setting does not guarantee effective outcomes, but this does not mean that social and political conflicts that may occur between institutions and the public or within institutions, cannot influence power flows (Paloniemi et al. 2015). Understanding power is key to comprehending the political process and how it shapes the society (Brisbois and de Loë 2016). Foucault argues that the social

structures through which the world is both comprehended and constructed are entwined with power (Van Assche et al. 2017). In this way, Bakker (2010) also sees governance as a social process where decision-making practices are infiltrated with power. Castells' (2009) characterisation of the present society is that of constructed by fluid networks: he argues that in a contemporary network society communication is power. If this holds true, then it follows that having voice is also power: who gets to be heard, under what terms and when (Couldry 2010).

2.4.3. Weighing up participation and power

In arrangements such as co-management or public-private partnerships, power-sharing takes place, influenced by the extent to which powerful actors are willing to cede their existing power (Lemos and Agrawal 2006; Brisbois and de Loë 2016). These type of active participation processes may involve stakeholders representing the state, community actors, private consultants or local government officials (Armitage 2007; Scott and Carter 2019). While collaborative practices do not equate the participatory practice which can be explored through different theoretical lenses, these offer a means to include broad stakeholder inclusion, face-to-face deliberation and consensus-focused decision making as part of the political process of participatory decision-making (Brisbois and de Loë 2016; Crompton 2015). For any collaboration to be effective, key experts and community members must be empowered to participate, however this does not always happen in practice (Gruber 2010; Reed and Bruyneel 2010). This can be for example because communities have not been granted the resources to make meaningful contributions (Reed and Bruyneel 2010). Marginalised groups often lack the resources to enable meaningful participation (ibid.). Therefore, pre-existing social inequalities must be acknowledged and the tools to facilitate conversations should be designed to ensure equal stakeholder participation (Sharma-Wallace et al. 2018).

On a more general level, inadequate communication with stakeholders can also be identified amongst a multitude of reasons for policy failure (Howes et al. 2017). Affording power to stakeholders can further mean providing means of resistance, rather than simply power to support policy implementation: policies that are not

sufficiently developed, fully implemented or politically popular are more likely to result in a lack of improvement to the conditions they were designed to improve (ibid.). This also applies in cases where the policies conflict with the prevailing political agenda (ibid.). These complexities that are part of the participatory process illustrate that solving policy problems through the process of stakeholder inclusion may produce further issues, underscoring the inherent difficulty of solving wicked problems.

Adger et al. (2003) note that benefits of participation include harnessing local knowledge to improve policy implementation and plans, and empowerment of marginalised groups who would otherwise not have been given the opportunity to use their voice. It is important to consider this in the context of power imbalances: for example, although collaborative public statements may manifest a political will to tackle environmental issues, concrete implementation solutions are more difficult to achieve (Sharma-Wallace et al. 2018). The multiscalar institutional conditions and the underpinning rationale for participation may limit the scope of participatory processes to take meaningful action (Wesselink et al. 2011). Couldry (2010, p. 1) writes that in the wider context of neoliberalism, "voice is persistently offered, but in important respects denied or rendered illusory". On a practical level, the experience of voice as an illusion may for example come through in practices of consensus-building in communities: in their analysis of participation in local transport planning, Bickerstaff and Walker (2005) found that in some cases consensus-building practices were felt to be an act of silencing rather than giving voice. For example, vocal representatives of minority views may be able to push the consensus their way giving it an oppressive quality; this can also work the other way round (ibid.).

It may be that the wider social context such as neoliberalism dictates whose voices travel across scales (Purcell 2009; Couldry 2010). Inch (2015, p. 412) argues that societal worldviews impact participatory practices on a micro level: in the case of planning, citizen participation happens within a growth-oriented culture that sees development as a public good and directs public participation towards "tokenistic" use of voice that can take place only when it "does not threaten the fundamental commitment to pro-growth planning". This has implications when pitching infrastructure development against environmental viewpoints: in her research into

43

the M4 corridor around Newport public local inquiry, Smyth (2021) found that in planning, decision-making processes considering the environmental impact of schemes fail to recognise the interrelatedness of multiscalar environmental impacts and consequently undermine those participants' viewpoints which give more weight to the environmental consequences of the proposals than the pursuing governance authority does in plans put forward.

2.4.4. Social capital as a means for effective participation

Rydin and Pennington (2000) suggest that gaining social capital by solving local collective action dilemmas can effectively influence local communities' abilities to successfully participate on longer-term basis. Social capital refers to a set of practices, norms and values in social networks such as communities (Bakker et al. 2019). Social capital can be, for example, the extent of networks between individuals and groups, the knowledge acquired by these networks, the weight put on promoting reciprocity among the networked participants, different forms of local knowledge, the level of trust between groups and individuals, and effective sanctions to punish free riding if it occurs (Rydin and Pennington 2000). Through collaboration and by using their networks strategically, resilient communities can gain access to resources otherwise beyond them (Bakker et al. 2019). Building social capital in communities has been seen as an important aspect of sustainable development (Roseland and Spiliotopoulou 2017). Bakker et al. (2019) found that while communities might possess social capital, challenges may be faced in mobilising it to gain power. Mobilising social capital might face specific challenges in multiscalar environmental governance systems, where problems of scale and fit linked to poor policy outcomes persist (Cheok et al. 2020).

Capital refers to the "flow of investment, yielding a flow of benefits over time" (Bottrill and Pressey 2012, p. 414). The resources that are used or generated during the processes of multiscale governance of social-ecological systems can be not only social but also natural, human, financial and institutional (Bottrill and Pressey 2012; Cheok et al. 2020). Although stakeholder relationships and interactions have been explored at length, research focused on how links are facilitated across jurisdictional

levels is only a recent development (Cheok et al. 2020). Exploring these links further can also contribute to a better understanding of how different types of multilevel governance systems interact in practice (Bache et al. 2016). Through assessing how different types of capital contribute to mobilisation of planning resources Cheok et al. (2020) identify new modes of scalar pathways that are not considered by the notion of social or other forms of capital. They therefore propose a new form of capital: scalar capital is defined as "the explicit consideration and application of understanding of the important dimensions of scale, as it pertains to the governance of complex systems" (Cheok et al. 2020, p. 6).

As opposed to seeing power as something that is held or controlled by stakeholders and institutions, viewing it in the Foucauldian tradition as relational enables explorations of how it operates between scales and levels in multiscalar systems (Griffin 2012). Linking back to participatory processes discussed above, the notion of scalar capital and how it may interconnect with building and perhaps mobilising social capital should be explored in relation to participatory practices beyond linear 'scaling up' or 'scaling down' approaches (e.g. Adger et al. 2003; Reed and Bruyneel 2010). Multilevel governance is admittedly fuzzy and fluid, therefore the trajectories stakeholders may embark upon to influence policy implementation processes cannot be expected to simply exist in linear, top-down or bottom-up arrangements. More research is required to trace how actors outside the government committed to certain planning proposals come to form coalitions across different levels and scales to influence planning processes. Exploring the participatory dynamics can also address the gap identified by Cowell (2015, p. 223) in understanding the "role of place" in sustainability transitions by focusing on the composition and role of social movements and resistance in destabilising unsustainable technologies through opposition to undesirable infrastructure such as new roads, sites of mining and waste facilities for example.

2.5. Participation as contestation: discourses for and against development

Different types of engagement, whether informal or formal, contested or collaborative, can exist simultaneously as part of the wider participatory process (Hillier 2002). Drawing attention to the inherent contestation in attempts to balance the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, Owens and Cowell (2011, p. 16) write that "answers can be shaped and refined through a process that has distinctively deliberative dimensions, but is always honed by the conflictual realities of policy formation." They see the contestation that is built into the process of policy formation as constructive, through its ability to connect "planning practices to wider policies" and thus act "as a forcing mechanism for environmentally sustainable development over time" (ibid.). Therefore, planning for sustainable development is infiltrated with both communicative and agonistic tendencies, and the broader participatory realities can thus include both qualities. Communicative and agonistic theorisations of participation are further explored in chapter 3; however, it is important to regard participation as able to influence outcomes through both resisting and collaborative practices when it comes to both planning and policymaking practices.

These different ways participation takes place exist firmly within the conflictual realities that have followed the inclusion of more actors following the shift to multilevel, networked governance. While the actors involved might engage with practices of lobbying and advocacy, both of which can be thought of in participatory terms (Hillier 2002), the tensions that arise can further be explored in terms of contestation between different discourses. For example, Murdoch and Abram (2017, p. 3) characterise the tensions that follow from the inclusion of different, multiple interests in the planning process as a "contest between discourses of 'development' and 'environment'". Focusing specifically on housing development rural areas, Murdoch and Abram (ibid.) conclude that this discursive contestation tends to result in resistance by the existing community against development proposals.

Owens and Cowell (2011) further draw attention to resistance emerging at the intersections of development and environmental protections such as to do with habitats and landscapes. Additional tensions emerge when considering the potential negative impacts of development on existing social and cultural environments (ibid.). The tensions that emerge across environmental and social dimensions, in relation to development, can be exemplified by discourses that have taken place around transport projects. Crompton (2015) has explored public participation as unfolding in relation to the development of high-speed rail in the UK. Exploring the case study of HS2 enabled her to conceptualise participation as an organic and multidimensional phenomenon, and thus examine public engagement as taking place through both formal and informal mechanisms, including resistance to the development (ibid.). She argues that instead of focusing on either top-down or bottom-up forms of participation, it is important to consider the interplay of both in order to make sense how these different ways of engagement interact and overlap influencing planning outcomes (ibid.). Based on the case study of HS2, she concluded that a model of multidimensional participation, within which both informal and formal engagement exist in relation to each other, can yield useful insights: in the case of HS2, both the national public challenge against HS2 and the local, more informal deliberations about how to resist and respond to the development were important contributors to the resistance that appeared against the rail project (ibid.).

Protest and resistance are equally prevalent in relation to the development of road infrastructure in the UK, leading to a need for frameworks such as Crompton's (ibid.) that enable explorations of participation as a multidimensional process. Melia (2021) has provided a comprehensive account of resistance that has taken place in Britain against road projects since the late 1980s, with a focus on direct action. While for example North (1998), explores the road protests of the 1990s focusing on the mobilising factors such as the ecology discourse, Melia (2021) focuses on impact. He contrasts the achievements of the various protest groups in slowing down road development with the longer-term policy success of the Big Ask campaign, which came together in 2005 to advocate for a climate change law in the UK (ibid.). He illustrates that many of the actors in the campaign for climate change legislation, which was achieved in 2008, were the same individuals as in campaigns against road projects such as the Newbury bypass which failed to stop the bypass from

being constructed (ibid.). For example, the Big Ask campaign was initiated by Friends of the Earth who had also been involved in multiple campaigns against road projects since the 1990s, although not in terms of direct action (ibid.). Thus, by applying a long-term lens to narrating the history of road protest in the UK, Melia's account underscores the interwovenness of not only different forms of participation, but also how actor-involvement may cross several campaigns and issues. Additionally, this highlights how accumulated learnings and knowledge might help produce more effective resistance later on.

The overlaps of different actions and actors, and their fluid engagement with various transport infrastructure developments including road development but also airport expansion and HS2, as narrated by Melia (ibid.), highlight the overlap of more formal opportunities for participation through advocacy and the informal, uninvited protest action. The overlaps that emerge not just within one campaign, but over multiple different campaigns, align with Crompton's (2015) proposal of seeing participatory engagement as organically unfolding and multidimensional: the individuals and groups who have participated in protest and advocacy against roads and other transport infrastructure have developed their skills, networks and repertoire of actions over years and decades, resulting in both campaign successes and losses (Melia 2021). While Melia's (ibid.) focus is on projects that have mostly taken place in England, Wales is briefly mentioned in relation to the development proposal of the M4 corridor around Newport. However, this is not explored further and the potential differences in multidimensional participation between English and Welsh transport planning are not investigated.

The literature on social movements has additionally explored the ability of local action to jump scale, referring to the ability of an actor to place their interventions at "an appropriate level", i.e., a relevant governance scale where desired changes can be enacted. Exploring conflicts over mining, Engels (2021) argues that scalar discourses that take place by scale jumping and re-scaling are integral to political conflict and protest. Hajer (2003) has noted that both local and global actors in the environmental governance space must be able to scale jump to be effective. Equally, the concept of scale jumping can be explored within the context of the nation state within which different administrative layers from local to devolved and regional occur.

While it is clear from Melia's (2021) investigation of road protests in the UK that the actors involved can scale jump as well as move across campaigns to realise some of their aims, the processes through which appropriate scales for intervention are identified by those protesting has scarcely been explored in the context devolution. Furthermore, local disputes can be viewed as part of wider social movements and their construction, highlighting that in complex multilevel systems, protests can be scaled up, but might also be scaled down from the global and national levels to refocus and target the local (Neville and Weinthal 2016). The ways in which multidimensional participation interacts with devolved governance scales has thus far not been explored in detail.

2.6.   Conclusion

While research has explored the intersections of multilevel governance and sustainable development (Smajgl 2020; Bauchinger et al. 2021; Marango et al. 2021), it is clear from the literature review that limited consideration has been given to how cultures of participation might influence planning outcomes within the intersections of both these contexts. Participation is regarded as taking place within a top-down system, even when it is collaborative: practices are prescribed from scales above the local or by those in charge of the planning. Questions of the impact of participation are commonplace within the scholarship on environmental and infrastructure governance, and they involve more focused explorations on the consequences of protests in relation to transport projects for example. Yet what is clear from studies such as Crompton's (2015) and Melia's (2021) is that participation develops organically across formal and informal spaces, and it can include protest as well as collaboration. Furthermore, stakeholder participation can play a role in, for instance, destabilising (or potentially, cementing) current technologies, helping to make way for more sustainable futures and vice versa. The thesis proposes that it is necessary to conceptualise participation as a multiscalar process, to better understand the dynamics of power in moving towards greater socio-environmental sustainability (Avelino and Wittmayer 2015). Chapter 3 unveils a discursive framework based on the discourse coalition approach by Marten Hajer (1997),

49

which, it is argued, can be used to capture the mobilisation of social capital through participatory strategies that flow across scales.

3. Analysing participation as multiscalar discourses: resistance and the discourse coalition approach

3.1.　　Introduction

This chapter begins with an assessment of how participation is conceptualised specifically within planning literature. Participation as part of planning literature is generally not discussed within the context of multilevel governance, unlike approaches within environmental and infrastructure governance explored in the previous chapter. The focus of the chapter is on exploring participation as a societal process that is enmeshed with multiscalar power relations that include an inherent capacity for resistance. The chapter suggests taking a discursive approach to participation to enable an analysis of it as something that stretches its impact across different governance scales, influencing planning outcomes through building relationalities between statements made in the public sphere, in policy and in interactions between stakeholders.

The second part of the chapter introduces the conceptual framework utilised by the thesis. It is based on the Discourse Coalition Framework, introduced by Maarten Hajer (1997) in the field of environmental policy studies. Based on the analyses of three main planning theories – agonistic, communicative and insurgent – the chapter identifies agonistic struggle as a central element in relational discourse construction in planning processes: this is evidenced using key literature covering planning and environmental policy development. The chapter proposes to use Hajer's (1997) Discourse Coalition Framework to focus on the dynamics of the agonistic discourse struggle. The agonistic discourse struggle is argued to act as a vehicle for mobilising social capital and insert meaning to the process of defining wicked problems to influence the perceived solutions to planning problems. The chapter further proposes to use the framework in a devolved planning context, testing it against a case study of Welsh transport project implementation, which is discussed in chapter 4. While the Discourse Coalition Framework is well-tested in the context of environmental governance and policymaking, the usage as proposed here is novel in relation to

transport planning that takes place within the devolved governance context. To apply the framework in this context, the chapter proposes a novel visualisation of Hajer's framework (figure 2). The diagram presents the framework focused on the argumentative discourse coalition process, arguing that policy implementation takes place through cyclical rather than linear time. No such visualisation is provided as part of the original framework. The framework as depicted in figure 2 is named the Discourse Struggle Framework for clarity, while, as per Hajer (1997), it focuses on exploring the interrelations of discourse making through coalition engagement.

3.2. Models for participation in planning and their limits: collaborative, agonistic and insurgent planning

Theories and analyses of participatory mechanisms form a key focus of planning literature. Recent debates have considered the role of participation in legitimating planning outcomes from the point of view of democratic theory (Zakhour 2020) and in challenging marginalisation through insurgent practices (Sandercock 1998; Huq 2020). There is also a notable, wide-ranging conversation on conceptualising participation through the binary forces of conflict and consensus (Inch 2015; Hillier 2016; Legacy et al. 2019; Bond 2011). While these debates on how to best conceptualise participatory practices within planning are important and provide a starting point for thinking through how participation may influence planning outcomes, they are often, though not always, limited to theory-testing against the more formal and invited forms of participation such as organised communicative events where, arguably, collaborative forms of engagement can take place and the extent of their emergence can in some way be quantified (see, for example, Innes and Booher 2010; Hartz-Karp 2005; Maginn 2007). The formal mechanisms that are part of planning processes can include collaborative management (for example in the field of environmental governance), public-private partnerships, information sharing through consultation and participatory events such as public hearings or inquiries where the extent of participation is at the discretion of the leading Planning Inspector (Smyth et al. 2023). Agonistic tendencies that emerge as part of the planning practice have been explored in the context of their institutional boundaries: for example, Pløger (2004) investigates agonistic conflict in relation to public-private

partnerships, a new form of citizen involvement in Denmark at the time, which can be considered invited due to the nature of the partnerships emerging top-down as a key element of the government's regeneration initiative. Both communicative engagement and agonistic tendencies can thus take place in various contexts and through different institutional set-ups. Different participatory tendencies can further emerge as part of planning processes at different times and for different purposes as illustrated by Crompton's (2015) conceptualisation of organic participation, and Hillier's (2002) discussion concerned with the overlaps of formal and informal participation during planning processes.

3.2.1. Participation in planning theory in the context of multilevel governance

The debates around participation in planning tend to involve questions about power, the nature of democracy and institutional structures that guide how participation happens. Policymakers tend to perceive public participation as able to give planning proposals legitimacy by rubber stamping plans with community approval (Zakhour 2020). This view presumes a unified, singular community, and a process whereby community backing is formally provided rather than the presumed backing being simply an absence of resistance. To counter the idea of participation as simply an enhancement to democracy, Purcell (2009), upon inspecting the participatory planning process within the structural conditions of neoliberalism, concludes that the scope for participation within existing governance systems remains tokenistic. Neoliberal planning is characterised as "restructuring of the relationship between private capital owners and the state, which rationalises and promotes a growth-first approach to urban development" (Sager 2011, p. 149). Both participation and multilevel governance can thus be said to exist in the context of neoliberalism (Brenner 1999; Jessop 2000; Harmes 2006). Existing within the same institutional conditions, unaccountability of decision-making that is a feature in multilevel governance (Benz 2007) can be argued to equally have become an institutional feature of contemporary planning. Local reactions to planning decisions are formed in relation to the regional and national scales of governance where higher-order decision-making, to an extent through processes obscured from public view, takes

place (Rydin 2011). Thus, local responses in multilevel systems are by default limited to opposing undesirable developments (ibid.).

Thus, exploring planning within its institutional context highlights the conflict producing qualities of the wider multilevel system with overlapping governance types, whereby contestation materialises when it comes to implementing plans and proposals on the local level. Healey (2003, p. 102) has written about her understanding of planning, which is rooted in the shift from centralised management of programmes such as the construction of the British New Town Programme in the 1950s to the "statements of policy principles and regulatory norms" that have guided land development processes from the 1960s onwards. Observing this shift, Healey (2003, p. 104) contextualises planning as "a governance activity occurring in complex and dynamic institutional environments, shaped by wider economic, social and environmental forces that structure, but do not determine, specific interactions". Planning is thus fundamentally an interactive process extending across multilevel governance scales that have emerged over the past half a century, necessarily involving both contestation and communicative practices that are needed since the expansion of involved horizontal and vertically networked actors.

Structures of multilevel governance can lead to scalar disconnections where those taking part in planning processes and those in charge of organising participatory opportunities or representing decision-makers may not have any real say or expertise in terms of taking forward ideas generated by participation (Benson et al. 2014). To bridge the gap in understanding how scalar disconnections influence planning outcomes, calls have been made for theories of planning participation to better account for the impact of local governance contexts and related power flows (Healey 1999; Hacking and Flynn 2017). This is because both the overlapping institutional conditions of multilevel governance and the spatially uneven capacities of regional and local governments to implement policy make the local level a fertile ground for assessing the micro aspects of discursive power dynamics (Goodwin et al. 2005; Rawluk and Curtis 2017).

3.2.2. How do different planning theories make sense of participation in multilevel systems?

It can be argued that stakeholder engagement in spatial planning is treated as an important legitimation device for decision-making in line with the Aarhus Convention for example (Schweitzer 2018; Hartley and Wood 2005). This theoretical approach conceptualises planning as a communicative practice, drawing heavily on the Habermasian ideal of deliberative debate and consensus formation as the backbone of democratic societies (Habermas 1987; Forester 1989; Healey 1998; Allmendinger 2001; Harris 2001; Healey 1997; Flynn 2016). The role of participation is thus to engage a wide variety of interests in society, ensuring that decisions taken are fair to a maximum number of stakeholders, preventing domination from one powerful group of stakeholders and increasing community buy-in into planning projects (Head 2007; Innes and Booher 2010; Sager 2018). Prominent analyses of communicative planning practices have often been focused on participatory mechanisms such as consultation, information sharing and collaborative situations where the conditions of collaborative rationality can be fulfilled (Innes and Booher 2004; Lane 2005; Healey 1997; Innes and Booher 2010; Allmendinger 2017; Legacy 2017). Innes and Booher (2010, p. 35) outline collaborative rationality as subject to three conditions: full diversity of interests amongst participating actors, interdependence of participants (i.e., they cannot get their interests met individually) and engagement of all participants in "a face-to-face authentic dialogue meeting Habermas' basic speech conditions". Figure 1 outlines what Innes and Booher (2010 p. 35) argue is the ideal collaborative process, against which success can be measured.

DIAD Network Dynamics

Characteristics of Participants

Diversity of Agents

Interdependence of Agents

AUTHENTIC DIALOGUE

Reciprocity
Relationships
Learning
Creativity

Results of Authentic Dialogue

Adaptations of the System

Shared Identities
Shared Meanings
New Heuristics
Innovation
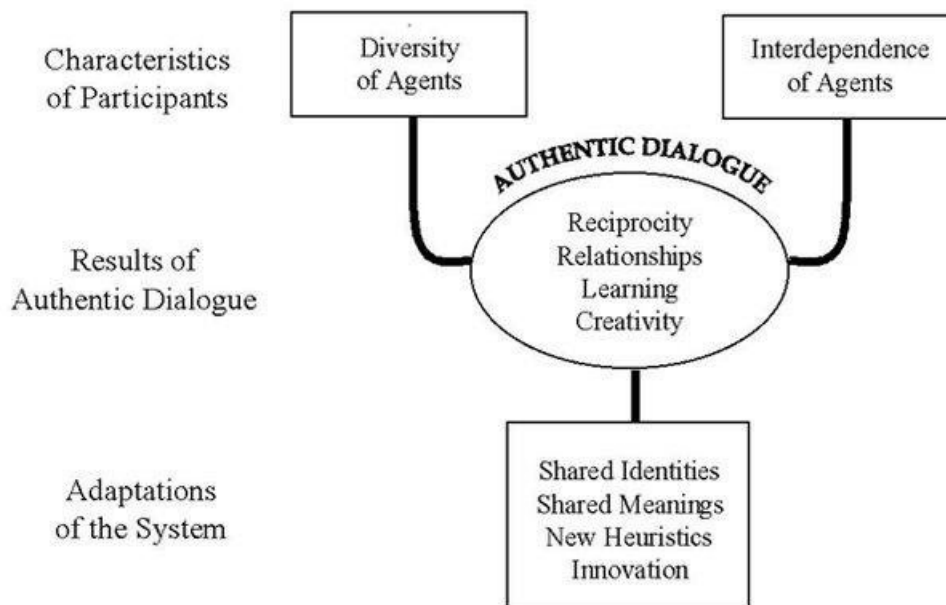
Figure 1: Diversity, interdependence, authentic dialogue (DIAD): theory of collaborative rationality

Critiques of collaborative planning theory tend to highlight the failure of communicative theorists to account for uneven power relations that influence real life outcomes (Richardson 1996; Flyvbjerg 1998; Healey 1999; Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2001; Bickerstaff and Walker 2005; Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 2016). Critics have further pointed out that in Western democracies, participation is conducted within the institutional setting of neoliberal, pro-growth planning, alluding to participation as mere tokenism in the face of already decided broader outcomes (Purcell 2009; Monno and Khakee 2012; Schweitzer 2018).

These criticisms highlight some potential shortcomings of Habermasian collaborative planning theory and illustrate the importance of placing the operations of power at the centre of any inquiry into how planning articulates the dominant rationality shaping planning outcomes (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 2016). Flyvbjerg (1998) conceptualises power as Foucauldian relational power that actively both constructs and deconstructs plans to suit a specific agenda, illustrating its workings through a detailed case study of city planning in Aalborg, Denmark. The Aalborg case study further highlights that planning actors would rarely share power equally

56

(ibid.). Achieving consensus through consensus-building practices as in the case of the DIAD (figure 1), may be at least theoretically possible during a single participatory event but not over time and space that a planning process for the implementation of a large-scale infrastructure project, for example, would need. Consensus can thus be seen to be a process of social construction (Hillier 2016) and as such it can be difficult to maintain over prolonged planning timescales (Marshall and Cowell 2016). While using the DIAD framework might be apt for certain situations, it cannot be used as a blanket solution for all planning dilemmas as they occur within multilevel governance systems.

Healey (2003) has worked to address the above criticisms of collaborative planning theory, and to bridge the gap between collaborative and agonistically-focused analyses which are discussed later in this chapter: she points to an earlier discussion by Hillier (2002) on the value of agonistic strategies of resistance when consensus-building processes might lead to "co-option" of discourses of those with more dominant power (Healey 2003, p. 113). The key is then to identify situations where collaborative rationality can be utilised, and situations that require more agonistic behaviours for whatever outcomes are desired. This is supported by Mattila (2020, p. 141), who suggests that rather than pitching Foucauldian and Habermasian approaches to power as mutually exclusive, a better approach would be to let them "complement each other". She highlights that Habermas' theory is a "theory of power in its own right" although the macro-scale perspective of Habermasian communicative rationality differs from the Foucauldian micro-analysis of power (ibid.).

3.2.3. *Understanding how power is conceptualised in planning theory: Foucauldian relational power vs Habermasian communicative power*

In History of Sexuality (vol. 1), Foucault (1990) discusses resistance as relational to power. He conceptualises this resistance not as a separable, measurable unit (e.g. an activist group) but instead as internal to power as one is always "inside power" (ibid., p. 95). The research applies the notion of resistance as an interior quality within power flows as part of the theoretical framework, discussed in the second

section of the chapter. To understand this lesser explored aspect of Foucault's work, it is important to first outline what is meant by power in Foucauldian terms.

Foucault conceptualises power as emerging through relational actions committed by social actors and institutions (Foucault 1990, 2002b,a; Rydin 2019). In his view, power cannot be separated from interaction or limited to a particular structure or institution such as the state (Foucault 2002b). Furthermore, the subject of power cannot be separated from it: actors do not act in a void but as part of a historical continuum that both constitutes and is constituted by them (ibid.). Through knowledge, power constitutes what is seen as valuable and meaningful in each society or context (ibid.). Knowledge produced by power is operationalised in society through various, both localised and hegemonic, discourses (Foucault 1990,2002b,a; Van Assche et al. 2017). Put simply, power enables the production of the type of rationality those in hegemonic positions need to shape the reality, which then infiltrates society through discourse (Flyvbjerg 1998; Torfing 2009; Rydin 2019). In planning, a dominant rationality might look like the hegemony of car-centric solutions to transport problems, and the dilution of plans to transition towards public transport and active travel solutions as seen in the Aalborg case (Flyvbjerg 1998). Social discourse is not only indicative of power relations in a society, but also provides a vehicle through which a researcher can explore the ways in which power flows and fluctuates to shape planning proposals and their implementation.

As opposed to Foucault, Habermas' model of societal interaction relied on by communicative theorists sees power as external to and separate from the communicative process (Wang 2014; Flynn 2016). It follows that mechanisms for citizen participation are by default defined as being separate from and not concerned with power. As illustrated by the DIAD proposed by Innes and Booher (2010), those participating in the planning process would ideally focus on their shared interests, as opposed to differences, and produce an authentic dialogue that would ensure the best-case scenario for most stakeholders. This approach potentially proposes a view of power where it can be excluded from processes of decision-making, something that advocates of Foucauldian planning do not agree is possible. Furthermore, the roles afforded to participants by normative Habermasian democratic theory are limited to fulfilling a civic duty while following both formal and informal rules set out

by the authorities in charge of providing the opportunity for participation (Inch 2015). Table 4 summarises the differences of Habermasian and Foucauldian perspectives on power.

The research applies a Foucauldian perspective that is concerned with relationality of power. This enables seeing participation as a struggle for power and resistance to gain dominance over the process of defining the dominant rationality. Hillier (2002) highlights that from an institutional perspective, power can be understood both as a simple causation (power over others) and as capacity (power to make something different). Viewing power as intrinsic and relational as opposed to external and separable from interactions between planning stakeholders opens the field to more pluralistic notions of how participation can happen and be accounted for in a fragmented, postmodern society. Shifting the focus to models of participation with inbuilt consideration for the plurality of participants must theoretically be grounded by a different conceptualisation of power than that of Habermas', to enable explorations of pluralistic power that can be co-opted into, grabbed and resisted by a variety of actors taking part in the planning process. Arguably, there are societal mechanisms through which stakeholders partake in conversations about planning, such as advocacy, activism, media work and coalition building, which influence societal discourse that in turn shapes how and to what extent policies are implemented (Hajer 1997). This research conceptualises these as something that can fall outside the more formal mechanisms for participation in planning but that also work jointly and in connection with the formalised participatory practice (such as collaborative events prescribed from higher levels of a multiscale institution, e.g. consultation, public hearings and inquiries). This research labels these practices, which include but are not limited to the ones mentioned above, with an umbrella term resistance, to be able to discuss them as part of the theoretical framework. Following the conceptualisation of resistance as a Foucauldian interior quality to power, resistance can equally be part of collaborative, agonistic and insurgent practices. Therefore resistance, for the purposes of the framework, offers a way to conceptualise participation as widely as needed to include *all* strategies of involvement relating to specific cases.

59

Table 4: Comparison of Foucauldian and Habermasian conceptualisations of power

Feature	Habermas	Foucault
Nature of power	- Power as mental or physical coercion - Power and money as influences exist separately from communicative rationality - Individuals can come together to deliberate outside power	- No single or external authority on power - Power is relational - Power is everywhere in society - Subjects cannot be separated from historical context of power relations
Discourse	- Power is separate from discourse - Power can become discourse through a process such as law-making - Discourse as language - Communicative rationality - Ideal Speech	- Power produces knowledge which is operationalised through discourse - Cyclical interaction of power and discourse: power comes into being through discourse - Discourse as method - Focus on discontinuities in understanding discourse transformation
Societal level	- Liberal-democratic - Modernist, homogenous - Marginalised communities organise through civil society to achieve voice - Social order is underpinned by consensus	- Power relations underpin social order - Historical perspective - Focus on societal transformation through discourse
Agent level	- Coordination happens through language - Rational communicative interaction is power-free - Consensus is achieved through reasonable argumentation - Resistance can only exist outside the consensual process - Focus on language enables intersubjective perspective	- All interaction emerges through power - Self-regulating subject - Institutional practices influence discourse - Resistance(s) is continually formed in relation to power(s) - Later thinking by others focuses on micropower & agent-level in discourses (Hajer 1997)
Sources: (Wang 2014; Flynn 2016; Allmendinger 2017)		

The use of resistance as a blanket term for participation is somewhat slippery: no clear distinction can be made between formal and informal, invited and uninvited

forms of participation, whereby some could be labelled as resisting practices and some collaborative. In addition, both collaborative and agonistic planning theories are relevant to considering power and resistance. Bond (2011) notes that while agonistic thinking can help to explore the potential transformations of social power relations that might take place during planning processes, it is equally important to acknowledge the role of reason in theorising planning practice: this can be done utilising a communicative lens. Therefore, instead of separately focusing on either collaborative, insurgent or agonistic practices, conceptualising participation as resistance is to enable an exploration of power from the perspective of stakeholder networks. This can shed light into how stakeholders react to flows of power, co-opt into and challenge the rationality put forward by governance actors' attempts to define how complex planning problems should be solved.

3.2.4. Agonistic planning

While there is a significant body of scholarship on social movements and environmental justice, for example, these have not always been integrated with planning literature concerned with participatory mechanisms (Gualini 2016). Gualini's (2016) work explores the urban character of conflicts over capitalist development, leaving the more regional aspects unexplored. Separate attempts have been made to consider more activist-leaning traditions within planning, through both agonistic and insurgent planning traditions (Sandercock 1998). The present section focuses on exploring agonistic planning theory, as a potential means for exploring more activist-leaning strategies and behaviours within the planning scholarship, after which attention is turned towards insurgent planning theory.

Responding to criticisms levelled at the collaborative planning paradigm and its ideal of consensus outlined above, some planning scholars have turned to agonism to theorise participation in terms of conflict and "conflictual consensus" (Hillier 2016; Pløger 2018, p. 264). Agonism argues that consensus is a social construction that can only be achieved by marginalisation of some social groups, which over time leads to openly antagonistic societal relations and polarisation (Mouffe 1993, 2005, 2013; Hillier 2016). In collaborative planning practice, the collapse of rationality into

antagonism can lead to resistance being labelled as NIMBYism (Burningham 2000; Rydin 2011). Inch (2012) points out that the pressure for development, originating from the growth-oriented economic culture and articulated by politicians at the national level, necessarily involves managing the levels of antagonism that take place on the local level by political strategies that attempt to manage conflict through labelling particular citizen behaviour and experiences as undesirable NIMBYism. On the other hand, the marginalisation and silencing that can take place as an inadvertent consequence of consensus-building practices, can lead into apathy (Innes and Booher 2004; Bickerstaff and Walker 2005), and types of citizenship that diverge from the liberal model of a rational deliberative citizen are disregarded as 'bad' participation (Inch 2015). Instead, agonistic applications of planning theory suggest that by acknowledging the existence of conflictual aims of different stakeholder groups, as well as the political nature of any consensus that can be achieved, participation can be explored more widely.

In practice, this has led to some exploration of behaviours that do not conform with the expectations set upon the deliberative planning citizen: table 5 refers to a list of behaviours, put forward by Inch (2015), that can be expected from participants in line with normative theory of deliberation and, in comparison, when applying an agonistic lens. Not accounting for the behaviours and traits of the agonistic planning citizen in situations of engagement limits the understanding of not only the participant experience but also the participants' abilities to influence outcomes. In addition, exploring spaces within which both agonistic and deliberative traits are exercised requires expanding from analyses of specific participatory events (e.g., a public hearing) to exploring campaigning around a planning process as something that takes place across multiple scales of governance as well as over time. For example, large scale projects that face significant local engagement (and opposition) take place over long timespans, subjecting the plans to changes in public discourse that can influence the financial and political feasibility of what is being proposed (Carse and Kneas 2019).

Critiques of agonism argue that the concept fails to sufficiently address the problem of marginalisation when the end goal is to achieve consensus (Jones 2014). Not dissimilarly to communicative rationality that underpins the collaborative planning

paradigm, agonism subscribes to a set of pre-determined rules about participation that those who wish to take part must adhere to, therefore meaning that those who act outside the rules some or all of the time will be discounted from consideration (ibid). Furthermore, Bond (2011, p. 163) notes that Mouffe's agonistic pluralism "can fall prey to the same challenges" as Habermasian-inspired communicative planning if the role of power and the political are sidestepped by those applying the theory in the planning context. This means that it is not necessarily possible to explore campaigning tactics that fall outside the participatory process using agonism on its own, as activist practices that may take place can also utilise adversarial and antagonistic, as well as consensus-driven and collaborative behaviours. Further, agonism does not outline what the dynamics of antagonistic practices are, and what their impact on outcomes in planning processes in multilevel systems might look like.

Table 5: Agonistic and deliberative planning citizen

Quality	Agonistic planning citizen	Deliberative planning citizen
Subject position	Activist for freedom/equality	Rational deliberator
Subject/identity formation	Through articulation of equivalences and differences. Shifting across space and time. No fixed, pre-existing set of interests.	Through inter-subjective dialogue that brings possibility of transforming pre-existing commitments
Modes of communication	Passionate range of political protest and argument	Rational argument
Goal of participation	Opening up lines of disagreement, linking of struggles for counter hegemonic change	Agreement/consensus on best course of action
Relationship to others	Respectful disagreement or struggle to create new identities through articulation of equivalences across difference	Willing to respectfully cede to the force of the better argument through deliberation
(Source: Inch 2015, p. 409)		

The inclusion of stakeholders across scales and networks in multilevel governance necessarily means the inclusion of diverse localised cultures whether to do with the scale stakeholders are located at, their institutional context or the place they root from. Drawing a line between agonism and antagonism, or deliberation and agonism, potentially suggest a singular experience whereby different people and groups experience certain behaviours the same: i.e., everyone involved knows which

behaviours are agonistic or even antagonistic, and which ones should be understood as deliberative. For instance, a planning inspector leading a public inquiry may find an opposing witness's behaviour irritating and thus adversarial and outside the remit of 'good' behaviour, whereas other witnesses present may support and recognise the same behaviour as respectful arguing from their own institutional context. Recognising plurality in social practices thus has implications to analyses of participation in planning, something I will return to in the second part of the chapter, which proposes that the discursive framework put forward can accommodate different discursive cultures within a planning process.

3.2.5. Agonism: a note on theoretical background

Mouffe (1993, 2005, 2013) challenges the post-political approach to reaching consensus through rationality: according to her all choices are political and all solutions require choice-making between contrasting options. Critiquing the post-political liberal consensus as a political construct, she places herself in opposition to the Habermasian ideal of deliberative democracy. The point about consensus-as-political is echoed by Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2016, p. 1978), who maintain that while communicative rationality claims to be about undistorted communication, open dialogue and a lack of oppression, conversely, the concept itself clearly contains "prejudices towards a certain view or set of values". Acknowledging the political, as opposed to objective, nature of any consensus, Mouffe (2005) sees recognising differences rather than brushing them away as an important part of relational inter-subject positioning and identity-building.

Both Healey (1997, 2003) and Hillier (2002) state that they adopt a relational perspective in their discussions of planning theory, however this is operationalised through different approaches. Hillier (2002, p. 9) refers to Pierre Bourdieu who writes about the nature of the real as relational: according to Hillier, social reality is an "ensemble of often invisible relations through which people's everyday lives are conducted". She highlights the importance of thinking relationally as this enables seeing the interplays between diverse networks of social, economic, cultural and political relations within which planning practice is contextualised (ibid.).

Mouffe (2005, p. 21) proposes viewing the democratic process as a relational "agonistic struggle" to avoid a collapse into antagonistic relations. She argues that political identities are formed in relation to each other as we/them relationships through this struggle. According to her, the political cannot be separated from the democratic tradition, as it is precisely through politicisation that mobilisation, participation and empowerment happen (ibid.). Seeking to establish a common rationality through deliberation works to suppress collective identities that are necessarily politicised to participate, potentially creating apathy and reducing political participation that happens through the institutionalised channels (ibid.). Furthermore, the focus on collaborative rationality ignores that political questions are not simply technical issues that can effectively be solved by experts (Mouffe 2013).

Forester (1999) argues that astute deliberative discussions are possible even in adversarial contexts, highlighting an understanding of the dual reality of the planning practice as a mix of agonistic and communicative tendencies. In addition, working to find ways to "evaluate the quality of the communicative and collaborative dynamics through which social relations are maintained and changed", Healey (2003, p. 112) argues for the need to "develop the analytical skills to reveal when communicative and collaborative processes are likely to encourage these qualities and improve life conditions for the diverse groups and communities of interest in cities and regions, and when they are likely to be merely mechanisms to sustain old and well-established power relations", Importantly, acknowledging agonism within the collaborative and in the interactions of both types of engagement calls for understanding how knowledge about planning matters is created and put forward. Kocsis (2023) reminds planning theorists that particular types of knowledge can be excluded from planning processes, this being a function of power. Hillier (2002, p. 8) argues that a Foucauldian view is particularly useful in understanding how planning can serve power interests: "planning does not simply distort communication: its discursive practices constitute the very objects of communication themselves". Therefore, much like collaborative planning, agonistic theorisations cannot alone provide adequate frameworks for theorising planning (ibid.).

3.2.6. Planning practice and hegemonic ideologies

The role of ideologies such as neoliberalism in constituting planning is a topic of recent debates (Inch and Shepherd 2020; Fougère and Bond 2016). Power can limit what the planning practice can achieve, as well as the ideas that can be put forward (Flyvbjerg 1998). However, focus on ideology can additionally expose "site[s] of struggle", where "ideology is deployed as part of ongoing efforts to secure, renew or challenge a broader (contingent) hegemonic settlement" (Inch and Shepherd 2020, p. 61). Laclau and Mouffe (2001) propose that 'chains of equivalence' can seek to transform existing power relations, through forming loose groupings within which each group themselves retain their own interest that is different to others while forming broader social movements through their ability to come together around an agenda of equivalence. Each of the groups act in relation to the existing ideological hegemony and are not disadvantaged in the same way (Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Purcell 2009). Chains of equivalence can thus help to explore how different social groupings with non-identical agendas for change can work together to shape and alter existing power relations which work to maintain and produce hegemonic ideologies (Purcell 2009). These find expression through discourse (Shepherd et al. 2020).

Fougère and Bond (2016, p. 146) explore the nature of politics in relation to environmental governance processes, arguing that spaces for agonism and antagonism are "squeezed by the sedimentation and hegemonic nature of particular sets of ideological, economic and political practices" which often lead to pro-environmental viewpoints more easily being regarded as biased. This is further illustrated by Smyth (2021) in her discussion on how the environment is compartmentalised in planning decision-making processes. Regarding the contestation of environmental aspects and development discussed in chapter 2, the processes through which the marginalisation of certain viewpoints under the hegemonic settlement take place warrant further consideration. Allmendinger notes that insurgent planning constitutes a counter-hegemonic planning practice as it appears as a direct consequence of processes that attempt to legitimise neoliberal growth (Allmendinger 2017). In addition, Miraftab (2009) notes that the ideology of neoliberalism relies on the perceptions of inclusion to gain hegemonic power.

3.2.7. Insurgent planning

This section investigates a third main model of participation found within the scholarship on planning theory. Insurgent planning recognises that participation draws from local struggles, building on earlier radical aspects of planning theory (Miraftab 2018). This line of theory positively recognises citizen and local community practices as forms of planning, while highlighting that these grassroots practices take place in the face of or in the "interstices of power" (Sandercock 1998; Miraftab 2018, p. 130). It emphasises bottom-up community organising, links opportunities to the rise of civil society and sets itself apart from collaborative planning through its requirement for situation-specific and historically informed recognition of societal complexities (Sandercock 1998). While multiple examples of insurgent planning practice can be recognised across the world (Sandercock 1998; Friedmann 2011), bottom-up organising is by no means a default planning strategy practiced or encouraged by those in power. Rather, as its name implies, it is an insurgent practice or a movement, born out of a need to resist the planning practices conducted by those in power (Sandercock 1998; Miraftab 2018). The notion of insurgent resistance is therefore framed as external to the mainstream planning practice and legislative frameworks, of which national and local governments, not citizens, are in charge. This is useful, and perhaps the most comprehensive way of looking at resistance in planning theory to date, as community-led practices and grassroots activism can be explored through the lens of insurgent planning.

Hillier (2002, p. 9) notes that Sandercock's theorising on insurgencies is influenced by Habermasian thinking. She highlights the difference between insurgent and collaborative planning pointing to Sandercock's criticism of Habermasian-inspired theory for "working through the state, rather than imagining alternatives", arguing that the ideas contained by insurgent planning for empowerment of marginalised communities are not very different from those offered by collaborative theorists. The key question thus concerns when it is good to engage with the more formal mechanisms of planning, and when should focus be on insurgent civil society action. Miraftab (2009) articulates a related key concern: drawing grassroots social movements into the space reserved for NGOs promotes the status quo as the

process of inclusion. This works to stabilise the relationship of the state and society. At the same time, although it should be noted that Miraftab (2009, p. 34) writes in relation to the global south, she argues that counter-hegemonic movements can use these "contradictory conditions" to destabilise the hegemonic order in place. The acknowledgement of the dualities of participation that are not dissimilar to Mouffe's theorisations of us/them relations and the political thus runs through the different strands of planning theory.

3.2.8. Refocusing on participation as a broader force in multilevel governance systems through discourse

The prevalence of conflict in multiscalar planning processes is well documented (Ruijter et al. 2021). This is linked to the emergence of governance in the sense that "the empowerment of resistance to unwanted development is one of the more predictable consequences of any move towards political decentralisation" (Cowell 2015, p. 223). Resistance can impact planning through the shaping of the rationalities that define what is thought possible by decision-makers or influence which plans become reality, and which do not (Pruijt 2004). The challenge is thus incorporating resistance tactics that reach across scales in a complex and potentially non-linear manner, such as the use of media strategies utilising local and national media for influence or the use of legal instruments such as a judicial review, into the lexicon of participation. As such the thesis situates the participatory practice within the more recent planning scholarship that conceptualises participation as an "inherently political act" (Legacy 2017, p. 427). The thesis relies mostly on agonistic thinking in defining this act as relational, but as is clear from the above discussion, there is scope within differently focused theorisations of planning to take into account the pluralism proposed by Legacy's definition.

Hillier (2002, p. 5) states a preference for discursive, as opposed to deliberative or communicative terminology. She writes: "discursive processes are social and intersubjective. They involve communication which may be rhetorical or irrational rather than necessarily being calm or reasoned." In addition, following Dryzek (2000), she argues that discourses leave space for unresolved contestation that may

take shape between and across discourses (ibid.). In line with Hillier, the thesis proposes a discourse approach to further explore how the agonistic, deliberative and insurgent practices may coalesce to achieve aims, using the broad conceptualisation of resistance. As such, the thesis is interested in processes of agenda creation, conflict mediation and consensus building that take place through discourse (Rydin 2003), albeit as expressions of power and hegemony, but also as articulations of relational resistance.

3.3. Planning and resistance: discourses as a tool to explore multiscalar planning

This section proposes to use a discourse analytical framework, following Hajer's (1997) coalition-focused framework to focus on interrelatedness of actors, coalitions and the institutional context of multilevel governance through the centring of the agonistic discourse struggle. The chapter provides a visual diagram (figure 2) based on Hajer's framework prepared for the purposes of the present study. The framework diagram details consideration for the impact of resistance in the policymaking and implementation process. The diagram is named Discourse Struggle Framework for clarity; however, its focus is on argumentative interrelations of actors (and thus, power/resistance flows) as per Hajer's (1997) original study into environmental policymaking. Here, the framework is used in a planning context. This enables an exploration of how planning stakeholders mobilise social capital to shape, disrupt and destabilise an institutionalised planning discourse during project implementation. In effect, these processes of mobilisation are argued to influence how planning problems are conceptualised and consequently solved, potentially directing decisionmakers towards new problem definitions.

In line with the liberal democratic tradition from which collaborative planning draws, the research takes as an ontological reality that communities hold a stake in planning processes, even during those occasions when the institutional conditions of neoliberal multilevel governance do not accommodate the public's views beyond tokenism. The processes of societal decision-making and policy implementation are also regarded as inherently conflictual in the agonistic tradition while it is

acknowledged that some communicative moments and processes may also take place. To analyse participation as something that takes place not just within the planning system, but also in wider society, where it attempts to influence, while simultaneously drawing from, multiscalar societal discourses around planning, participation is reconceptualised as resistance within the framework. The reasons for this are two-fold: firstly the use of resistance as an umbrella term is to ensure that no tactic that may be used by a participant to, in effect, participate, is left outside the scope of the analysis, and secondly, to examine the relationalities of power that take place within the planning process (between stakeholders, their groupings, decisionmakers, policy, influencing strategies, written statements etc.) in order to contribute to the theoretical understanding of conflict as a fundamental part of the planning process.

3.3.1. *The role of power and resistance in shaping planning transitions*

Avelino's (2021) research on power in sustainability transitions concludes that fluid conceptualisations of power are needed to understand the dynamics of societal change. Since the ongoing changes in the living conditions of the earth, and the need to adapt and mitigate, changes in how planning takes place and what is planned for are evidently already unfolding. Avelino (ibid.) argues that this has implications for the existing power dynamics: with environmental conditions in flux, creating an urgent need for new technologies and planning approaches, power may become available for stakeholders in ways in which it has not been in the more recent past. Alternatively, existing power flows may solidify their ability to produce knowledge at moments of transition. To contribute to the need to understand power as fluid and non-static at moments of societal transition, the theoretical framework highlights resistance as a shaper of power. This section centres participation as a driver of change in planning for further exploration by conceptualising it as part of the relational struggle. This is theoretically in line with the agonistic approach to planning theory. However, employing agonistic thinking to apply relationality does not mean that both communicative and insurgent events cannot take place during planning processes: as per the discussion above weighing up these different strands of planning theory, it is clear that collaborative, agonistic and insurgent tendencies exist

as part of planning processes. It is important to highlight that the relational struggle is used here as a conceptual means of exploring the interface of power and resistance as it emerges through planning, rather than as a particular behaviour or event.

Conceptualising participation as resistance for the purposes of the theoretical framework is based on the Foucauldian relational power dynamic. In Foucauldian thinking, resistance exists relationally with power, as an interior quality (Foucault 1990). Resistance is therefore not a separable, measurable unit (e.g. an activist group) but instead can be found entwined with operations of power (Foucault 1990). Following this definition, resistance in planning can be detected during uninvited or invited engagement, it can take place through formal (e.g. public inquiry, consultation responses, taking part in collaborative practices) or informal (e.g. protests, advocacy, lobbying media work etc.) exchange. In simple terms, invited engagement can be thought of as stakeholder events. Uninvited involvement, on the other hand, can be thought of as interventions by campaigners, in the form of a legal review for example. In challenging this straightforward split, Swyngedouw (2018) argues for resistance as an always invited quality: it is allowed as it functions to suture the agonistic struggle and avoid the societal collapse into radical antagonism. Inviting is thus always done by the authorities in charge of coming up with the planning proposal, whether the resulting participation appears invited or not. The following section outlines the tools used to analyse the impact of resistance on planning processes.

3.3.2. Discourses as a tool to explore participatory mechanisms

Communicative planning defines discourse as a grouping of statements that describe topics through particular kinds of knowledge (Allmendinger 2017). Habermas sees power as separate from language, and language can be used to expose power relations (Allmendinger 2017). On the other hand, Foucault sees discourse as the production of knowledge through language (Foucault 1991, 2002b, a). Discourse is produced by the discursive practice, which is defined as a practice of meaning-making and is intrinsically linked to the production of power (Allmendinger 2017). By unpicking and untangling particular social discourses it is possible to

understand what counts as knowledge and what does not, and how knowledge is formed through interaction, thus exposing inequalities or asymmetries in the process (Hajer 1997; Foucault 2002b, a). Furthermore, the identification of the discursive order underpinning aspects of society makes visible how discursive practices are regulated, the rules that hold them in place, how particular objects (for example, a wicked problem) are constituted as communicable entities and what is left invisible (Rittel and Webber 1973; Hajer 1997).

The production of meaning through discourse can be exposed by observing how knowledge is bound together in ways that highlight aspects of reality and disguise others (Van Assche et al. 2017). Further, discourses work to simplify and unify complex topics such as the environment (Dryzek 1997; Hajer 1997; Van Assche et al. 2017). For example, Van Assche et al. (2017) suggest that viewing natural resources as discourses can illuminate how they are constructed as valuable in different societal contexts. As discourse formation happens as a gradual transformation through discontinuities and re-articulations of meaning, discourses provide a vehicle through which societal changes can be observed (Foucault 2002a; Torfing 2009). The paradigm of sustainability has changed the ways in which both the built and natural environment are viewed (Rydin 2011). Through the notion of sustainability, a natural resource such as a forest can be viewed through varying combinations of economic, social and environmental discourses. The ambiguity of the term sustainable development illustrates how conceptualising complex problems characterised by a lack of single solution as discourses can help to unpack the realities that are produced by power through attempts to define what the problem is in the first place.

Public discourse works to address the social and scientific complexity of policy problems by simultaneously opening the conversation up for more stakeholders and directing the processes of finding policy solutions towards some paths and not others (Rittel and Webber 1973; Hajer 1997). Solving complex policy problems is therefore a process entwined with relational power flows that operate through discourse. The Foucauldian discourse perspective understands governance as the communicatively driven production of multiple rationalities, which directly influence material realities and action, for example through regulation and policy implementation processes

(Rydin 2019). The notion of sustainable development introduces pluralism into the debate as environmental issues are linked with social and economic issues, often requiring prioritisation of the different aspects that are covered by the concept. Exploring complex policy problems, such as balancing sustainable development in the realm of planning, as discourses, highlights the nature of available solutions (such as infrastructure-driven transitions towards net zero/sustainability) as innately political.

Discourses further enable tracking of micropower flows between agents and institutions (Brockhaus et al. 2014). This is useful as the way ideas are developed, disseminated or contextualised by actors in specific governance systems means that local forms of governance cannot neatly be separated from the wider structural context (Healey 1999). This aspect makes the discourse approach apt for research that considers the ways in which actors construct statements within the institutional context of multilevel governance. However, Dryzek (1997) criticises the Foucauldian approach to discourse that underpins the theoretical framework used for the purposes of this thesis as hegemonic and unable to consider societal change. He argues that postmodern environmentalism consists of a plurality of discourses underlining not only societal fragmentation but also that even powerful discourses can become modified and altered (Dryzek 1997). This criticism is somewhat ill-placed, however: Foucault sees discontinuities as key moments in the non-uniform processes of social change (Foucault 2002b,a). Discourses must be unpicked to identify moments of discontinuity, rupture and transformation (e.g. Foucault 2002a, b). It is then clear that discourses can and do change over time. Problematising the notion of continuity in the formation of historical discourses is key to understanding how rationalities are produced and what is defined as knowledge in a particular society or locality in a given time (Hajer 1997; Foucault 2002b, a). However, as the focus of Foucauldian discourse analysis is on historical discourses, the subject-level analysis of who, how and why is left lacking (Hajer 1997): something that Hajer's conceptualisation of discourse coalitions proposes to fix.

73

3.3.3. Discourse analytics and their suitability for assessing participation in planning

Utilising discourse analysis in the planning context, Rydin (2003) highlights its usefulness in building a picture of how different claims to rationality (i.e., what is seen as knowledge and truth in different societal contexts) are operationalised in planning to legitimate outcomes. This follows the Foucauldian notion of rationality as not necessarily what might be thought of as rational based on, for example, latest science. Instead, irrationalities can become rational through the process of social legitimation, making discourses key elements to unpick how knowledge in the realm of environmental planning is constructed (Richardson and Sharp 2001). Richardson and Sharp (2001, p. 199) note that discourse is "a complex entity which extends into the realms of ideology, strategy, language and practice, and is shaped by the relations between power and knowledge". They discuss discourses as competing through power struggles which create the social and physical world, as such making the case for discourse analytical approaches in planning scholarship specifically. Analysis of discourses using a Foucauldian lens, as shown by Hajer's approach, illustrates a focus not just on text and communication but also actions and practices (ibid.) Cultural context is important and, through a discourse analysis, can be connected to making sense of the actions taken and statements made (ibid.). This research thus proposes the discursive approach to be useful in relation to multilevel governance where localised cultures might exist not just across geographical space but also at different scales. For example, the devolved context of Wales is different to that of England both culturally as well as administratively – Foucauldian discourse approach can potentially take this into account.

3.3.4. The discursive framework

To explore planning participation as resistance, this section proposes to use Hajer's framework as depicted in figure 2. The framework uses discourse analytical tools to map out flows of power/resistance across the horizontal and vertical networks of multilevel systems. This will help to uncover the rationalities put forward that constitute the planning discourse in later chapters. Discourse analysis refers broadly

to a study of "language and its effects" in an everyday context and its use has covered various disciplines including media and policy studies for example (Johnstone 2008, p. 1).
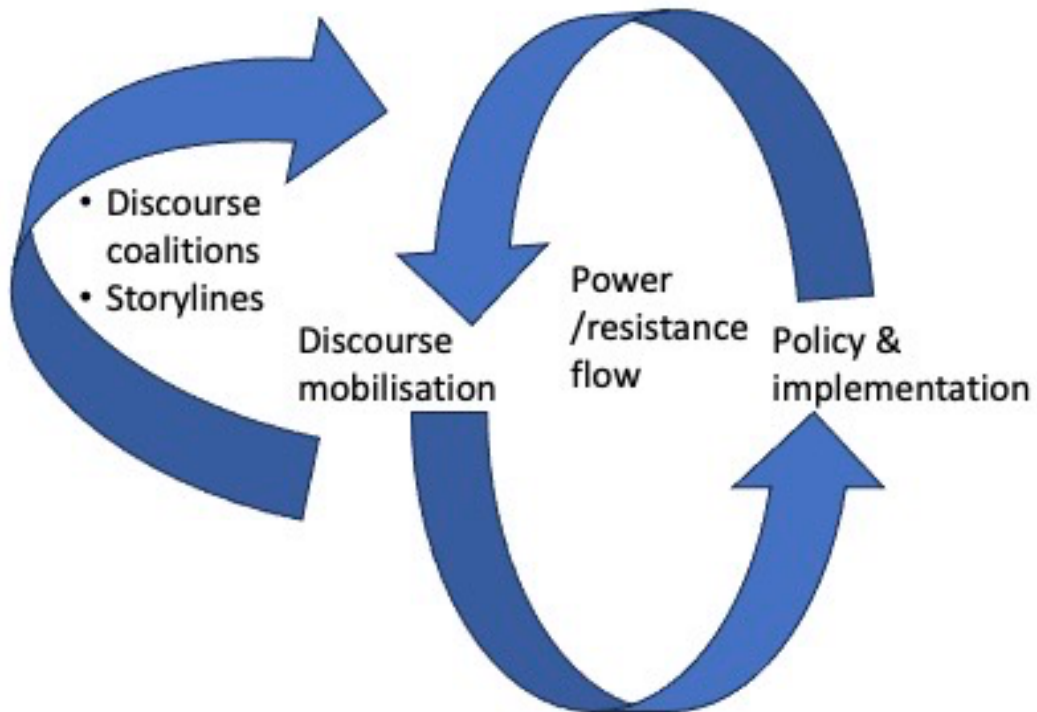
Figure 2: The Discourse Struggle Framework

This framework (figure 2), adopts the view that text and speech are tangible manifestations of abstract forms of societal knowledge, thus enabling explorations of how ideas, ideologies and particular policy solutions related to planning are formed and mobilised (Wodak and Meyer 2009). It is therefore also accepted that discourses and the spaces within which they emerge are shaped by societal flows of power and resistance (Foucault 1990; Flyvbjerg and Richardson 2001). Foucault describes the link of power and discourse as follows:

> *"If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it*

> *induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse"* (Foucault 2002b, p.
> 120).

Discourse formation is a process of gradual transformation of society, through a continuous number of displacements (Foucault 2002a), within which the struggle of power and resistance play a key part. As power, resistance can be seen as a positive force, it can, for example, influence a destabilisation of unsustainable technologies and practices in planning (Cowell 2015). This is the starting point for the Discourse Struggle Framework (figure 2), which has been adapted from Hajer's (1997) Discourse Coalition Framework for the purposes of the present research. The discourse approach argues specifically for the interrelatedness of power and resistance through argumentative action. It further highlights that this relationality is visible at moments of discourse struggles which constitute the process of discourse construction. The framework diagram attempts to depict how policy rationalities promoted by power are countered with the rationalities constructed relationally by resistance within Hajer's coalition approach. Both power and resistance are mobilised on and across different governance scales, ultimately contributing to transformed planning discourses influencing outcomes on the ground.

The diagram is based on Hajer's coalition-focused approach where the influence exercised by different discourse coalitions over the policy process plays a key part. To apply the framework in a localised planning context (as opposed to, for example, exploring a national or international policy process) where networked stakeholders work to influence what gets implemented and how, I have provided a cyclical depiction of the interrelatedness of the discourses and the policy/implementation process. I refer to the discourse struggle as agonistic, to specifically explore discursive conflict as relational and within the context of planning theory. It should be noted that Hajer's original framework is rooted in the argumentative approach that is not dissimilar, however, he does not discuss the coalition approach in local planning terms, his focus being environmental policy. The coalition framework is argued to accommodate for a plurality of localised cultures shaped by different beliefs, traditions and conceptualisations that exist within a given governance system, which also guide the perception of what has caused the planning dilemma (Bevir and

Rhodes 2003; Ansell and Torfing 2016). The following section explains the tools for analysis that are part of the framework.

3.3.4.1. Discourse Coalitions and storylines as mechanisms for discursive order

To trace such abstract conceptions as power, resistance and agonistic discourse struggle, the Discourse Struggle Framework, as visualised in figures 2-4, uses discourse coalitions and storylines as devices for collecting and categorising information about participation in line with the original framework (Hajer 1997). This is underpinned by Foucault's work on social discourse and the social-interactive perspective originating from social psychology and it recognises the "struggle for discursive hegemony" as a key building block of interaction (Foucault 1990,1995; Billig 1996; Hajer 1997, p. 59). The coalition-focused framework has subsequently been used by Stevenson (2009) to examine how different storyline coalitions position themselves in relation to renewable energy in Wales and by Brockhaus et al. (2014) to explore the implications of coalition building around specific interpretations of global forestry governance to localised policy implementation. Elgert (2012) has used the coalition approach to better understand the political struggles over meaning that have taken place in the processes of developing soy certification standards. The research utilising the coalition approach outlined above does not consider the relationality of resistance and power. It is thus hypothesised that focus on resistance could be usefully applied to a networked multilevel governance system where different discursive logics, brought by the various actors include a multitude of different negotiation and institutional positions, come together during planning processes.

Linking back to public participation in planning, understanding the formation of discourse coalitions can further provide insight into how social capital is mobilised across multilevel governance systems to influence implementation of planning frameworks across governance scales (Rydin and Pennington 2000). By focusing on discourse formation as a politicised struggle of power and resistance, a discursive framework enables the accommodation of multiple scales and viewpoints as the

basis for mobilisation. This is not dissimilar to Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) conceptualisation of chains of equivalence discussed earlier, however, the focus here is on the mobilisation of relations within and in relation to the prevailing hegemony and power through discourse, i.e., the medium through which the political struggle for ideological hegemony takes place.

3.3.4.2.   Power and resistance as the building blocks of planning discourses
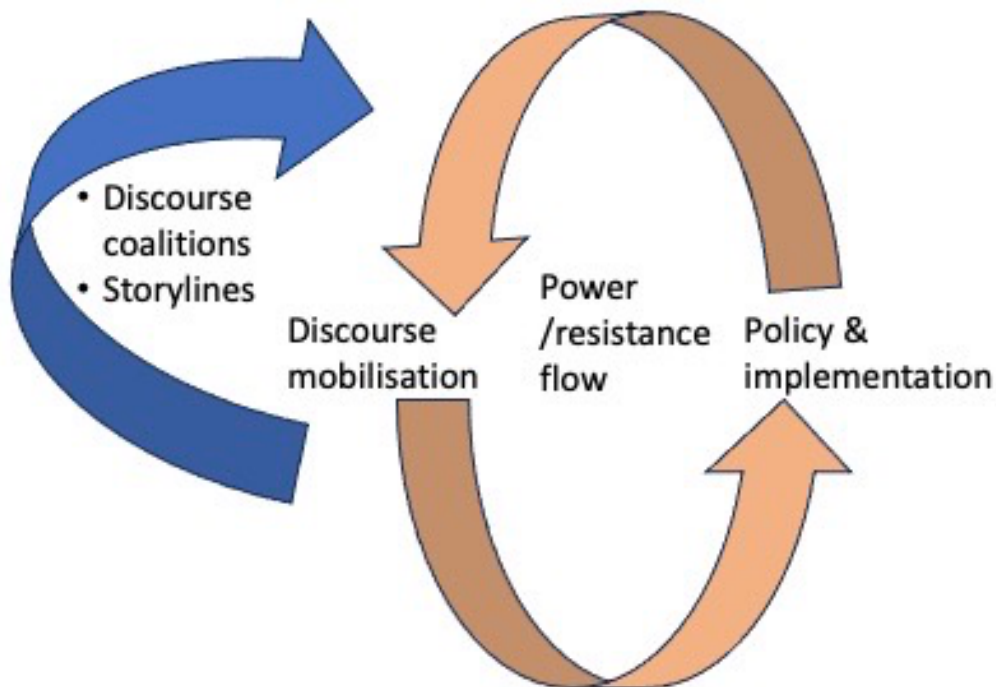
Figure 3: Flows of power and resistance constituting the agonistic discourse struggle

This section looks at the operationalisation of the power/resistance dichotomy as part of the framework put forward. The section of the framework under focus is highlighted in orange in figure 3. This conceptualisation is interested in teasing out specifically *how resistance is formed in relation to power and to what extent discourse coalitions and storylines are influenced by not just power but also resistance, forming an agonistic (relational) discourse struggle in the process.* The

proposal of a relational discourse struggle at the heart of the discursive process, has the capacity of challenging the suggestion built into the DIAD (figure 1) that from policy, through participation, follow outcomes (Innes and Booher 2010). Instead, the outcome of the power/resistance struggle may destabilise an implementation process or extensively alter what can be done. For example, the public unease towards fracking, framed as a transitional infrastructure towards net zero, has significantly contributed to the technology not taking off in the UK (Williams et al. 2017).

Adopting a discursive approach enables an examination of the power/resistance flow as depicted by the framework as both scalable and repeatable. The framework can be applied both within and across scales simultaneously: being loose categories of identified shared practices, discourse coalitions exist across scales and within scales, as do storylines which can be picked up by actors from different institutional contexts. Using an example can help illustrate this part of the framework: sustainable development can be seen as a nodal discourse, meaning that other discourses gather around it and attach themselves to it (Dryzek 1997). It therefore provides an opportunity to explore how the power/resistance struggle for dominant rationality can come into existence within social discourse.

Separate economic, social and environmental discourse coalitions can all be seen as attaching themselves to the sustainable development discourse, revealing the balance of the three pillars of sustainability promoted in policy approaches such as within planning, as a social construct. Sustainable development is thus an empty signifier for dominant rationality (Brown 2016), constructed through the relationalities between stakeholders and their capacity for having power or gaining power through resistance within social interaction. In practice, this means a clash of differently balanced notions of sustainable development that depend on both the institutional context and personal aims of each individual actor: for example, an actor placed on local level will conceive sustainable development in relation to their localised environment, a planning actor will understand the concept as contextualised in policies relevant to their professional remit and a politician will have a number of aims and priorities in relation to their personal objectives, the needs of their constituents and the scope of what they think they can achieve. Thus, the meaning

of sustainable development exists in a relationship with other aims, objectives and meanings. It is then these different streams of contextualised meaning that come to shape and are shaped by the agonistic discourse struggle. Put simply, this part of the diagram proposes a process of discourse transition, resulting in changes in implementation and, potentially longer term, in policy.

3.3.4.3. Discourse coalitions and storylines
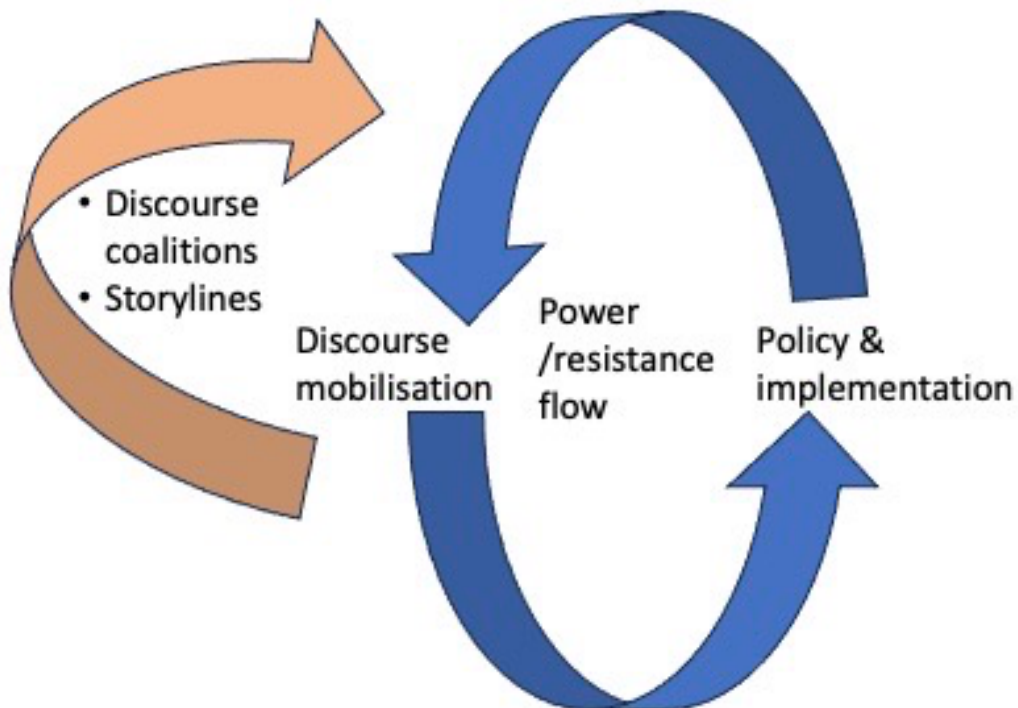
Figure 4: Discourses and storylines as part of the framework

A discourse coalition hosts a variety of actors from different fields and contexts, who connect to the discourse through storylines (Hajer 2003; Stevenson 2009; Elgert 2012) (figure 4). They are loose, discursive groupings of mobilised action and intent: actors can be categorised belonging to a certain discourse group based on their institutional context, personal aims or both. Storylines, on the other hand, are defined as "condensed statement[s] summarizing complex narratives", acting as mechanisms for creating and maintaining a discursive order (Hajer 1997; Hajer

2006, p. 69). Rhetoric and framing of the storylines play a key part in categorising and streamlining problems and attaching them to wider social discourses (Hajer 1997). Storylines further provide unity in fragmented discursive landscapes where expertise is drawn from multiple fields and institutions, such as the planning discipline, while also enabling different actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give specific phenomena coherent meaning (Hajer 1997). In practice, storylines have been used to map out stakeholder views into sustainability, for example: the identification of varying storylines has helped to contextualise stakeholder "worldviews, paradigms and assumptions" linked to sustainability practices by industry actors (Else et al. 2022, p. 861). While policy scholars are more experienced in using storylines to map out discursive actor involvement, scholars of sustainability transitions have recently begun using the discourse coalition approach to understand how different actors find common ground through storyline attachment (Markard et al. 2021). Links are yet to be made with planning theory, where the discourse coalition approach so far appears underutilised in terms of understanding the relationship between participation and resistance.

Finding the appropriate storyline enables actors to participate more effectively when they may not have specific expertise in each discursive field, such as in the case of sustainable development (Hajer 1997). Storylines can thus provide agency to participating actors: the greater the number of actors utilising a given storyline, the greater the degree of power it can wield, along with support for the discursive basis it is used to communicate (Shukla and Swarnakar 2022). While actors are clustered around specific discourse coalitions depending on their institutional background and personal aims, which can, for example, be predominantly driven by economic or environmental interest, storylines can extend across different fields of practice, connecting actors across their institutional or other divides (Hajer 2003; Elgert 2012). Storylines can be identified and analysed from media coverage, for instance (Mohus and Skorstad 2022). Extending analyses of storylines into textual forms of participation, such as inquiry submissions, press releases and media articles can further stretch the scope for analyses of participation in planning, as actors can use these to outline their arguments and strategies that shape outputs in situations of formal planning engagement.

The interconnectedness of discourses and storylines forms a key part of the framework. As highlighted by figure 4, this interplay is simultaneously fed by the power/resistance struggle and feeds it: in practice, the discourse coalitions are hypothesised to construct and co-opt into storylines within the context of the existing discourses (e.g. by first identifying an approach that can be expected to gain ground – this is based on conscious or unconscious analyses of the existing discourse by relevant stakeholders), further shaping the definition through successful mobilisation of the storyline and contributing to an incremental transformation of the existing discourse. Ecological modernisation, discussed in chapter 1, can be thought of as an illuminating example: subscribing to the idea of technological progress while simultaneously noting the reality of environmental decline, it drew from a regulatory discourse promoting better technologies to solve environmental problems, coming to shape the discourse on sustainable development by providing a specific, socially constructed balancing of economic, social and environmental sustainability (Murphy 2000). The framework thus contains the hypothesis that existing discourses shape storylines, which are then formed relationally through the power/resistance struggle, across the scales of multilevel governance. Notably, discourses are formed on and across global, national, regional and local levels (Dryzek 1997). The framework can therefore accommodate the multiscalar aspect of discourses taking place in contemporary multilevel governance systems including devolution.

3.4. Additional tools for assessing the role of power and resistance in knowledge production

Discourse structuration refers to the position of a given discourse as the basis of credibility and expertise of actors when operating within a certain domain (Hajer 1997): for example, the widely spread need to evoke the nodal discourse of sustainable development in policies and proposals regarding environmental policy and planning. Discourse institutionalisation, on the other hand, is used to express a situation where the discourse is articulated through institutional arrangements, such as policy and regulation (Hajer 1997). Both can be adapted for use to relationally define the extent of power/resistance within discourse coalitions and storylines within the framework discussed above. For example, if the sustainable development

discourse is already contextualised within planning policy, actors are thus co-opting into an institutionalised discourse when referring to it. This does not exclude different meanings given to sustainable development and therefore exploring the relationality of actors and institutionalised statements is important for understanding how policies are operationalised within a given discourse by different stakeholder coalitions.

Discourse structuration, on the other hand, presents a dilemma in terms of which aspects of the nodal discourse are needing to be emphasised: for example, in a multiscalar system, different levels or spatial locations may present varying interpretations of a discourse. For example, a grouping of national level decisionmakers may be concerned with *economic* sustainability, whereas a local politician may be required to demonstrate different discourse attachment in front of different groups. For instance, talking to a trade union who are demanding jobs in the locality (*social* sustainability) or an environmental group that is against an airport that would bring the said jobs on the grounds of *environmental* sustainability, presents the local politician with multiple contexts within which to appear credible and where different aspects of sustainability need to be emphasised. The research therefore uses both concepts, discourse institutionalisation and structuration, in a pluralistic sense, to identify the extent to which a discourse is localised within a scale or used across scales. This is an extension of the use of the terms and differs from previous research drawing from Hajer's initial conceptualisation of the discourse coalition framework.

3.5.   Note on limitations of the framework

Any theoretical framework has limitations that should be acknowledged. The discursive framework utilised for the purposes of the thesis leaves open some questions about participatory realities. Participation clearly does not only happen through discourse: it happens through material realities that influence how and to what extent participation happens over time (for example, volunteer workload, barriers for engagement such as lack of time, childcare costs, lack of transport, making it difficult to take part in campaigning events etc). Material factors can influence the asymmetrical flows of power and resistance. However, the framework

put forward in this chapter does not look at discourse struggles as they take place in real-time but instead, it traces how they happen through interactions that have taken place and produced discourse to explore the relationalities between statements that contribute to moments of discourse rupture. Therefore, while the material realities producing asymmetries in power/resistance flows might not always be exposed, the makeup of the agonistic struggle as documented by and through discourses can be uncovered and explored using the framework put forward, yielding a holistic understanding of the impact of discursive planning participation upon planning outcomes.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the framework that was used for the purposes of analysing the data collected during the field work phase. It has reviewed key planning theories that consider participation, namely communicative, agonistic and insurgent planning traditions. This review found that, within the literatures drawing from these three theories, participation is often discussed as separate from the institutional context within which it takes place, which at least in most contemporary Western systems is that of multilevel governance. The finding has implications for the type of framework that is needed to analyse participation as something that can take place across governance scales as well as within them. The chapter suggests the DSF as a framework that can draw from discourse theory to enable the tracing of the process of discourse construction by actors involved in the planning process, placed at different institutional scales and networks. The following chapter develops a methodology that is suitable for operationalising the discourse approach, to then proceed to the field work stage during which the theoretical framework is tested in practice.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, methodology and each of the methods used. The research uses a constructive ontological and epistemological approach, applied to case study analysis. Data was collected using sources of media coverage, policy papers, other secondary document sources and semi-structured interviews with key actors who had significant input in the case study. The analysis was conducted using the discourse struggle framework outlined in the previous chapter. Each of the methods was assessed against the research objectives to ensure relevance. The case study was identified as located in Wales, which offered a fuzzy and multi-layered devolved governance context for exploration. The case study approach was adopted to critically assess the theories and concepts laid out in the previous chapter (Flyvbjerg 2007).

This chapter is set out as follows: research questions and objectives are outlined first, before moving on to the discussion of the research design. The chapter then considers the selection of the case studies, before outlining the use of each method. The final section of the chapter concerns the analysis of the data.

4.2. Research questions and objectives

4.2.1. The research problem

The research questions were formulated based on the research gap identified by the literature review (chapter 2) which explored the nexus of multilevel governance, sustainable development and participatory approaches, and the more detailed review of how participation is discussed specifically within planning literature in chapter 3. The literature review concluded that while participation is an established area of governance literature, the conversation is focused on structures, ignoring the complex dynamics of localised cultures within multi-layered governance systems. This contributes to the lack of detailed understanding of how participation might

unfold across the scales of multilevel governance systems: a gap that this thesis proposes to address.

4.2.2. Research objectives

A. To define the parameters for the research by identifying the intersections of multilevel governance, sustainable development and planning participation to develop a framework for the inquiry.
B. To test the framework by analysing the relational dynamics of actor constellations, coalition formation and interscalar contestation, to explain how stakeholder dynamics influence planning outcomes via discourse construction.
C. To appraise identified elements of discursive participation, including both invited and uninvited forms, in the context of multilevel governance, to contribute to the reconceptualisation of participation within planning theory.
D. To identify how discourse coalitions can influence the planning discourse to shape the delivery of sustainability transitions in multilevel governance systems.

4.2.3. Research questions

How do discourse coalitions construct and counter planning discourses in a multilevel (devolved) governance setting, in relation to large-scale infrastructure projects?

A) How is resistance constructed and applied to counter planning proposals put forward by the devolved Welsh government?
B) What tactics and strategies are used by discourse coalitions to co-opt power to influence planning discourse?
C) How do discourse coalitions mobilise alternative rationalities within the policy discourse on sustainable development?
D) What relationalities emerge between the discourse coalitions and the multilevel governance system in the case of devolved governance?

4.3.   Research Design

This research is underpinned by the constructivist inquiry paradigm, which influenced the selection of a qualitative methodology and associated methods (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Goertz and Mahoney 2012). The constructivist paradigm treats reality as pluralistic, constructed by different actors through complex processes of localised meaning-making (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Schwandt 1998). In the previous chapters, I argued that stakeholder participation is driven by the varied contested and politicised realities that are shaped by relational power flows taking place across multilevel governance systems. This view contains the ontological assumption that there are multiple implementation approaches to complex problems. Using sustainable development as an example, it was demonstrated how a policy concept can take on a variety of context-dependant meanings.

The research questions reflect the constructivist ontology by acknowledging the pluralism of meanings embedded into the notions of sustainable development as applied to planning in the institutional context of multilevel governance. The methodology follows a qualitative approach and is built around a case study that takes place over the period of seven and a half years. Qualitative methodologies are considered better at investigating the research subject in detail and within its context than quantitative methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln 2013; Yin 2014,2018). For the inquiry to align with the objectives as outlined above, which emphasise participation firmly in the context of multilevel governance, a qualitative approach is thus deemed most suitable. The methodology combines three qualitative methods (Creswell and Creswell 2022): media and document analyses are combined with semi-structured interviews to generate a rich and detailed picture of the case study.

The following section outlines the process of case study selection, followed by a discussion regarding each of the utilised methods. The section on the different methods explains in more detail to which research questions each method is expected to provide answers and how.

4.3.1. Using a case study-led approach

A key objective of this research is to explore planning participation within the institutional context of multilevel governance. Because the empirical investigation of a case study is regarded as that of a "specified or *bounded* phenomenon", the case study approach is regarded as particularly suitable in this regard (Smith 1978; Mabry 2008, p. 214). The purpose of case study research is to achieve a deep understanding of an occurrence of the phenomenon that is the subject of the inquiry (Mabry 2008; Yin 2014). The research objectives state the aim of testing the framework, described in the previous chapter, against the relational and potentially overlapping power/resistance dynamic of stakeholder mobilisation. This requires an approach suitably able to scope for rich and detailed data regarding the strategies, placement of and interaction between actors. Therefore, with case study research commonly focusing on instances of complexity (such as impacts of a given policy or a community response to a prevalent social issue), it can be argued to offer a suitable methodological basis for the research (Chelimsky and Shadish 1997; Mabry 2008).

What constitutes a case is loosely defined: it can be focused on an individual, a group, an institution or an event, for instance (Gillham 2000; Yin 2018). The selection of a case might be directed by the researcher's interest in a specific site or event, or a case might be chosen for its capacity to inform theory or provide insights into a wider issue (Mabry 2008). Flyvbjerg (2007) emphasises an information-oriented selection strategy to maximise the ability to collect useful information from small samples and single cases. He argues that cases should be selected based on expectations about the level of information that the case can provide (Flyvbjerg 2007). The researcher should also consider their ability to negotiate access to the case study site (i.e., making contact with the right people, the extent and availability of secondary sources) and identifying a case informative enough within the researcher's field (Mabry 2008).

The benefits of extensive case study analysis include the ability to address gaps in knowledge using what Flyvbjerg (2007, p. 395) calls "force of an example". The selected case study, operationalised to test the conceptual framework, should

therefore be complex enough to yield interesting, detailed information that constitutes answers to the research questions, thus contributing to an understanding of the mobilisation of participation across multiple scales. Infrastructure planning was therefore selected as a type of planning where decision-making and implementation cover a variety of governance scales from national to local and is wrought with conflict and differing views between stakeholders (Pruijt 2004). With the emergence of regional and devolved authorities, varying levels of responsibility over infrastructure is also given to these scales: this is particularly the case with transport planning and development, as research into regional case studies has confirmed (Driscoll 2014). It was therefore important to select a case of infrastructure planning that involved stakeholders from various societal groupings such as local, regional and national decisionmakers, citizen groups, non-governmental organisations, business and other private actors. This way, the relational dynamic of power/resistance, argued to influence the mobilisation of social capital through discourse coalitions, could be explored in abundant detail (Yin 2018).

4.3.2. Selection of a case

The case study was identified with the researcher's existing knowledge within the field (Mabry 2008). The case study selection was limited to the UK, due to the researcher's familiarity with the planning frameworks and considerations around fieldwork during the Covid-19 pandemic. The UK has its own eclectic mix of multilevel governance, with devolved elected bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and an element of decentralisation of powers to regional decision-makers in England. As such, devolved governance is not regional governance, and brings with it its own context-dependant culture, including beliefs, traditions and problem definitions (Bevir and Rhodes 2003; Ansell and Torfing 2016). Analyses of devolved governance within the multilevel structure tend to focus on structural conditions (e.g. Birrell 2012) as opposed to cultural aspects that shape the devolved layer alongside the legislative context.

The literature review identified the mobilisation of social capital through participation, within the institutional context of multilevel governance, as a key research interest. In

addition, the selected case had to take place within a sustainable development framework (e.g. in planning) but also across different governance scales and entail an element of stakeholder participation. Devolved governance exists within pressures from the UK Government and Parliament who reserve the ultimate authority over the devolved governments in the UK (Birrell 2012): therefore a case focused on a devolved authority's remit would necessarily offer a complex legislative and cultural landscape for exploration. Focus on sustainable development further enabled the exploration of specific cultural aspects that were part of the devolved case: Wales was selected as the devolved authority with the strongest and most comprehensive commitment to sustainable development. To specify, the section 121 of the *Government of Wales Act 1998*, establishing the devolved legislature, outlines a duty for the National Assembly for Wales to promote sustainable development in everything it does. This is specific to Wales and different from the other UK devolution arrangements. This commitment to sustainable development in Wales further translates into planning through the spatial frameworks that fall under the remit of the Welsh legislature. Table 6 illustrates the evolution of the sustainable development framework in Wales. While devolved competencies include environment, agriculture and transport, for example, in practice the scalar boundaries are fuzzy and it is not always easy to establish the governance authority for a particular scheme or part of a scheme from the outset.

(source: adapted from McKinley et al. 2018)
Table 6: Timeline of sustainable development (SD) in Wales

1998	*Government of Wales Act 1998* creates a statutory duty on Welsh Government to promote SD
2000	First SD strategy published: 'Learning to Live Differently'
2002	Cynnal Cymru / Sustain Wales established
2004	Second SD strategy published: 'Learning to Work Differently'
2005	First SD indicators published
2006	*Government of Wales Act* introduces SD duty
2009	*One Wales, On Planet* policy introduced which identifies sustainable development as the central organising principle of the Welsh Government
2011	Commissioner for Sustainable Futures appointed
2013	*Active Travel (Wales) Act*
2014	Launch of the Wales We Want
2015	*The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015* passed; *Planning (Wales) Act*
2016	Commissioner for Future Generations Established; *Environment (Wales) Act*; *Historic Environment (Wales) Act*
2017	First deadline for wellbeing assessments from public bodies under the *WFGA*
2018	First annual wellbeing reports due from public bodies

I tested multiple infrastructure development cases in Wales against the specific criteria drawing from the research questions and objectives: table 7 provides a summary. I began the thesis in 2019, therefore the projects considered were those that had received significant attention at that time and are now, at the time of writing up, no longer such a significant part of the public discourse. It should be noted that some infrastructure proposals, such as the South Wales Metro project, had been discussed, but at the time of the selection of the case study, they were not seen to be advancing. The metro project has since resurfaced and would provide an interesting case study for an investigation of the realities of planning for public transport within a devolved governance structure (Transport for Wales 2023).

Four potential cases were identified within Wales: the proposal for a Tidal Lagoon in Swansea (Vaughan 2017), the proposed extension of the M4 corridor around Newport (Minnis 2021; Smyth 2021), the plan to extend Cardiff Airport (Deacon 2021) and the plan for a new nuclear plant at Wylfa Newydd, Anglesey, North Wales (Williams 2021). The selection criteria included considerations around the scales involved in the project, the number of both supporting and resisting stakeholders, the extent of networked actors involved and the extent of public discourse around the case, to ensure the alignment of the case with the research questions. It was deemed important for the selected case to have a significant public profile so that the elements of discourse construction around it could be explored using multiple data sources. This was further predicted to enable comparisons of storyline structuration, for example, across different scales and networks. I therefore used the Nexis UK newspaper database, which provides access to all articles published by newspapers in the UK, available at https://advance.lexis.com/, to initially scope for news around each of the cases, during a period of one year. Nexis UK provides access to most British and Welsh national, regional and local newspapers. Using this method of exploration, two cases, the Tidal Lagoon and the M4 motorway extension, yielded a good number of articles, whereas Wylfa B and Cardiff Airport had been reported on less.

Table 7: Case study selection: Identification of cases and their assessment against research objectives and questions

Case:	Tidal Lagoon proposal, Swansea	M4 extension around Newport ('relief road')	New nuclear plant at Wylfa Newydd, Anglesey	Cardiff Airport expansion proposal
Key characteristics	• Construction of a 9km sea wall and 16 turbines designed to harness renewable tidal energy at Swansea Bay • Project led by private enterprise, Tidal Lagoon Power, requiring financial backing from both Welsh and the UK governments	• Proposed fix for persistent congestion problems and to improve resilience of the road network, by extending the M4 around Newport, South Wales • New route was planned to bypass the city of Newport, replacing the old M4 skirting close to areas of the city, causing noise and air pollution to residents • New route was planned through the Gwent Levels, an area of multiple SSSIs.	• Planned new nuclear power plant to be built by Horizon Nuclear Power (Hitachi, Japanese conglomerate), seen as a reversal of UK policy ruling out direct investment in nuclear energy • Project involved the UK government as financial backer, along with Hitachi and Japanese government agencies	• The Welsh Government purchased the airport in 2013 for £52 million • National plans identify Cardiff airport as a strategic route in and out of the country, supporting growth in economic activity • Development masterplan, 'Our airport 2040' aimed for expansion to 3 million passengers per annum and improvement of the airport including a new terminal & better pedestrian, cycling and transport links to the airport
Scale of the project	• National: the UK government development consent given and later withdrawn • Devolved: approval granted after the UK government consent given, offer of investment into the project • Local: implications for local planning around the proposed tidal barrage, potential to link with regeneration projects	• Devolved: the UK government granted borrowing powers for the Welsh Government to realise the project • Regional: implications for South Wales, e.g. potential for new development along the proposed route, changes to landscape and environmental values • Local: implications for local councils along the route and for the Gwent Levels SSSIs	• National: the UK government oversees large-scale energy projects • Local: potential for jobs & plans put forward for new housing	• Devolved: brought to public ownership by the Welsh government, although operates as a limited company • Regional: the location of the airport in Rhoose, South Wales, requires development of the road network and opportunities for public transport should the expansion plans go ahead
Significant public attention (identifiable public discourse)*	• 25th June 2017-25th June 2018 (date of rejection by the UK government): 345 articles across all newspapers available	• 4th June 2018 – 4th June 2019 (date of cancellation by the Welsh First Minister): 317 articles across all newspapers available	• 15th September 2019 – 15th September 2020 (date of the news breaking that Hitachi withdrawal from Wylfa project): 26 across all newspapers available	• 1st January 2019 – 1st January 2020 (period selected randomly due to the project's continuous nature): 13 articles across all newspapers available
Conflicted or contested sustainability (stakeholders can mobilise alternative rationalities within the policy paradigm)	• Project widely seen as sustainable through the production of renewable tidal energy • In addition, seen as positive for the local economy by Swansea-based and regional decision-makers • Different prioritisation of sustainability by different stakeholders do not collide	• The proposed route run through a historically, culturally (leisure, outdoor activities) and environmentally (biodiversity) unique area, while also increasing Wales's emissions. • Economic advantage to South Wales seen as a justification for the project to go ahead	• Project in line with the UK's ambition for net zero carbon by 2050 • Links to energy transition and anti-nuclear discourses & economic value vs renewable energy but not on sustainable development per se	• Expanding Cardiff Airport would support economic development and growth • Yet increase in passenger numbers and traffic in an out of the airport would result in emissions not in line with Wales's environmental targets at the time
Several stakeholder groupings with differing aims and goals (Power/resistance struggle)	• Wales seen as losing out and the UK government is blamed, but no local, regional or devolved-level resistance to the plans detected (before the project was cancelled)	• Visible campaigns against the motorway, for example CALM, FOE Cymru & GWT • Active coalition of business actors involved in supporting the proposals • Local decisionmakers' comments identified in the media sample pilot	• Anti-Wylfa B campaign, comments from opponents such as Greenpeace in the local press (e.g. Chester chronicle)	• No campaigns for or against identified in the media sample piloted • Stakeholders include government and airport representatives
Sources	*(Vaughan 2017; Guardian 2018a; Williamson 2018)*	*(The Government of Wales Act 1998; Welsh Government 2013; Minnis 2021)*	*(Guardian 2018b; McCurry 2020; Williams 2021)*	*(BBC 2013; Future Wales 2021; Masterplan accessed 11/04/2021)*
*assessed using the Nexis Newspaper database – number of articles for a test period of one year during which the case was 'live', i.e., being considered by decisionmakers. Search backdated from the date of rejection / cancellation of the project apart from in the case of the Cardiff airport, since no obvious project cancellation date was available. The search does not exclude duplicates that are sometimes produced by the database.				

To explore the stakeholder dynamics through the conception of the power/resistance struggle, it was also important for the case to have a good number of actors, participating with different views and institutional backgrounds. Piloting the research questions by reading twenty articles produced by the database, during the test period in June 2021, it was possible to identify a number of differing views and actors around the M4 case, whereas the Swansea Bay project involved a smaller number of people speaking about the case. Furthermore, a tidal lagoon was seen as sustainable in a way that was not conflictual: it corresponded with perceptions of economic sustainability (inexpensive energy compared to nuclear), social sustainability (potential for regeneration of Swansea Bay) and environmental sustainability (renewable energy). On the other hand, the M4 extension provided a conflictual view of sustainability: in an economic sense, it was perceived to bring growth and reduce automobile congestion, yet environmental organisations condemned it as negative for the coastal wetlands in the region. Therefore, the case study selected, perceived to best provide detailed information about the relational dynamics of discourse coalitions and storyline construction, was the M4 motorway extension around Newport (figure 5. [Source: ARUP 2021]).

The following section provides brief context for the M4 development. The case focus is contextualised with the well-established fact that transport infrastructure – specifically the use of the private car – is an area with extensive implications to any sustainable development goals (Sloman 2006; Schiller and Kenworthy 2017; Wang et al. 2018).

4.3.3. The Case of the M4

This section provides a short summary of the selected case study. The following chapter provides an analysis of planning policy and other documents, thus laying out the institutional context for the road development which is not discussed here.

The M4 in South Wales is part of the Trans-European Transport Network, providing a strategic connection to Europe and links to Ireland through ports in Southwest Wales and England (Welsh Government 2013). It is the main gateway to South

Wales from England and one of the most used roads in Wales (ibid.). It regularly experiences heavy traffic, resulting in unreliable journey times. This has often been argued to be a hindrance to economic development in Wales (Welsh Government 2016), leading to proposals to solve the persistent congestion problems by extending the motorway. The plan for a new stretch of motorway initially surfaced in the 1990s, under the then-Welsh office of the UK government, thus predating the devolution settlement of 1998 (Mosalski 2019). Since 1998, several proposals have been presented, including a cancellation of the plans in 2009 on financial grounds (Shipton 2009). Upgrades to the existing system were proposed instead of building a new stretch of the motorway (ibid.). The extension plan resurfaced during the era of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in Westminster, which imposed significant cuts on infrastructure spending (Johnson and Chandler 2015). Politically convenient, Wales was granted borrowing powers through the *Wales Act 2014* to realise the long-awaited road building project without financial help of the UK government (Senedd Research 2020).

After a hiatus, the conversation around the new motorway had accelerated from 2011 onwards: the plan was brought into focus by the then-coalition government in Westminster, who proposed to work with the Welsh government to improve the conditions of the M4 corridor in South Wales (Mosalski 2019). This was then enabled by the granting of the borrowing powers by the same government later during their term in office. The Welsh government published a draft consultation document 'M4 Corridor around Newport' in 2013, which defined the 'black route' (figure 5) as the devolved government's preferred plan for development (Welsh Government 2013). By 2016, the road was seemingly ready to go ahead, with Welsh Labour's Assembly Election Manifesto promising to deliver an M4 'relief road' and key stages of the project being mapped out and planned for (BBC 2016; Welsh Labour 2016).
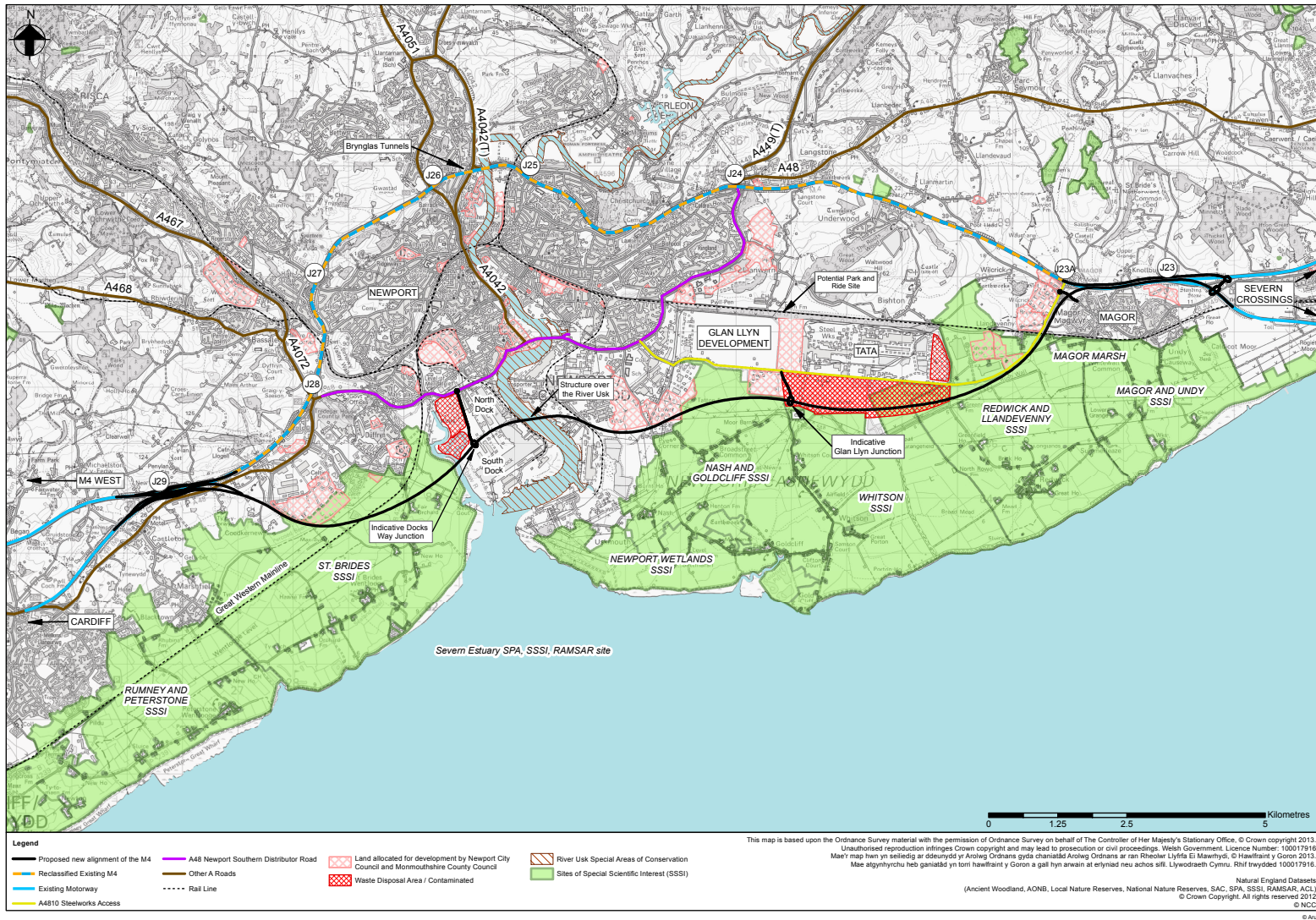
Figure 5: The proposed motorway extension and the current M4 route (ARUP 2021)

A public inquiry into the relief road was announced in the summer of 2016 and was held in Newport between February 2017 and March 2018 (Wadrup 2018). Smyth (2020, p. 219) has explored the inquiry that took place from the perspective of how environmental viewpoints are considered during this quasi-legal process, finding that it is "inherently difficult" for the inquiry process to reflect and act on the declining state of the environment as it is today. Although the participants of the public inquiry did not manage to convince the inspector of cancelling or adjusting the planning proposal on environmental grounds, by the mid-2010s project delays, political hesitation and continuously growing cost estimates were throwing the future of the project into question (Mosalski 2019). Furthermore, the Welsh First Minister who had driven the plan forward, Carwyn Jones, announced his departure from the role and was replaced by Mark Drakeford in early 2019. Eventually, it was Mark Drakeford who announced the cancellation of the extension project in June 2019. Following the decision, South East Wales Transport Commission was established to look into alternative options in order to improve the situation with traffic and air pollution in Newport (BBC 2019; SEWTC 2020).

While the conversation about the 'relief road' has continued and evolved over the years, there has also been a continuous discourse about sustainable development in Wales as illustrated by the set of policies and developments summarised by table 6. The first Future Generations Commissioner (FGC) appointed, Sophie Howe, took a prominent stance against the motorway extension, arguing that Wales needs to base its transport approach to future, not past, transport trends (Howe 2017). Both discourses, the M4, often linked to economic growth, and that of sustainable development, are both further entwined with a complex and multi-faceted conversation about what the nation's well-being should and can look like under the institutional conditions posed by the evolving devolution settlement.

4.4. Researching the case study using a three-part qualitative methodology

The research used a combination of three qualitative methods to achieve in-depth, contextually located answers to the research questions: media analysis, document analysis and semi-structured interviews (figure 6). This section discusses each method in the order that they were applied, starting with the document analysis. The document analysis was included to investigate the institutional context of the research and to set the scene for exploring how stakeholders may or may not use this context as part of their strategies of discursive participation. The media analysis was then employed to explore the public discourse and its construction by different stakeholder groupings via the use of storylines. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key participants to explore the relationship of the personal experience of participation versus discourses as they appeared in the public sphere, strategies of storyline construction and the mobilisation of discourse coalitions from the perspective of each stakeholder involved in the process on different sides of the discourse struggle. Table 9 illustrates which methods were hypothesised to provide answers to specific research questions outlined at the start of the chapter.
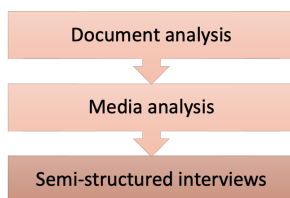
Figure 6: The three methods and their research order

Table 8: Methods and research questions

Overall research question	
How do discourse coalitions construct and counter planning discourses in a multilevel (devolved) governance setting, in relation to specific large-scale infrastructure projects?	
Document and media analyses, semi-structured interviews	
Specifying questions	
Question A	Media analysis, document analysis
Question B	Media analysis, semi-structured interviews
Question C	Media analysis, semi-structured interviews
Question D	Document analysis, semi-structured interviews

All data was collected between summer 2021 and autumn 2022. Data that had emerged between the beginning of January 2013 and end of June 2019 was included. Considering the nature of the case as a zombie project (Carse and Kneas 2019) that has continually resurfaced over the past thirty years, limiting the timespan within which the data would be collected was necessary for the scale and scope of the thesis. It was therefore decided that the focus of the research would be on the most recent reincarnation of the plans, with the draft consultation published in September 2013. Since large scale projects such as the M4 are often discussed in the press in advance of a consultation or other information being published, I defined the overall data collection period as the start of the year rather than the exact month of the consultation being published. This was most straightforwardly applied to the media analysis. Initially, I intended to include data from the aftermath of the cancellation decision in June 2019, but it appeared that after an initial furore in the news media, the coverage died down very soon. The point of saturation was reached at the end of June 2019 in the case of the media coverage at the time and the data collection was ended at that point.

Time appeared as a slippery construction with the interviewees, many of whom had been involved with the process during its previous iteration during the 2000s. At the start of each interview, I made sure to explain the limitation of the research being that it was focused on the most recent period of the 2010s. Several of them, however, felt that it was important to discuss the context pre-2013, before proceeding to talk about the more recent process. In more ways than one, time became an essential discussion point and element in the research that could perhaps have benefitted from further focus. This point is further contemplated in the final discussion chapter of the thesis.

Limiting the document analysis to the years from 2013 until 2019 was straightforward in the sense that a specific set of policies, spatial frameworks and planning guidance was in place during the case study period. Planning related guidance published by the Welsh Government, including spatial plans, editions of *Planning Policy Wales* and specific planning guidance related to transport, environment and economic

development, were included in the analysis to achieve a holistic picture of the objectives of the Welsh transport planning system during the case study period. However, as it appeared from the research, policy reflects the societal discourse – perhaps with an in-built delay. This is to do with the process of proposing, debating and agreeing what policies should look like, as well as identifying shortcomings, strengthening and updating present policy, regulation or guidance: policy, much like devolution, is a continuous process. Limiting the data collection to documents published before June 2019 was, to some extent, artificial for this reason. The Welsh planning framework continued to evolve during the case study period and immediately after. In a way, the decision by the Welsh FM to cancel the motorway extension in 2019 reflects the future of the Welsh planning policy at the time, rather than its past. The discourse struggle that took place around the case study can be argued to have influenced the novel balancing of the different policy aspects by Mark Drakeford, enabling the cancellation on environmental grounds.

4.4.2. Document analysis: policies and case study documents

Document analysis is usually divided into two categories: quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse approaches (Siegner et al. 2018). This research incorporates document analysis as a qualitative method to place the case study in its wider social and policy contexts, particularly in terms of the Welsh sustainable development framework (table 6) (Bowen 2009). Document analysis is applied to provide answers specifically to the research questions A and D and thus contribute to the overall research dilemma from the point of view of the institutional context that provides a relational nodal discourse for storylines to attach to. While many of the documents included in the data collection and subsequent analysis are policy frameworks and related guidance, documents operationalising the guidance set in policy such as the Planning Inspector's report on the M4CAN public inquiry are also included. In discursive terms, the policy process is seen as "mobilisation" of societal bias (Hajer 2002, p. 62). It follows that what is written down into policy frameworks, white papers and research reports are representative of those biases. Document analysis therefore offers a lens through which to assess how far particular discourses have reached a point of saturation around what is sustainable in Wales,

as well as the level of discourse institutionalisation at different scales of the governance system (Hajer 1997; Hajer 2002).

Table 9: List of analysed documents

Document Title	Objectives	Summary	Relevancy
People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update	Sets out a strategic framework for future development & policy interventions	Investigates the spatial interaction of policy & practice; Connects individual places with the wider Welsh economic context	Sets the Welsh discourse around planning matters; Focus on integrating sustainability and economic development
Wales Transport Strategy	Sets out the devolved vision for transport and sets the scene for how transport can balance the social, economic and environmental outcomes	Promotes the creation of sustainable transport networks; Sets indicators for measuring progress	Instead of offering an implementable spatial plan, the strategy sets the discourse on what transport planning should aspire to achieve
Planning Policy Wales editions 5-10	Sets out the Welsh Government's land use planning policies based on legislation Outlines the plan-led spatial approach in use	Provides guidance on development plans, planning decisions and sustainable development in Wales and how these should guide the land use for conservation, economic development, transport and other specific planning areas	Included to understand how the sustainable development discourse is framed in relation to specific land use policies on conservation, economic development and transport; and to explore how the discourse evolves over time
TANs: 5 (conservation), *18* (transport) & *23* (economic development)	Supplements *PPW* with specific topic-related guidance	Provides procedural advice on legislation and regulation relevant to planning authorities	Outlines the processes and weightings given to environmental protections, transport and economic development; Enables comparisons of processes of different aspects of sustainable development (i.e. environmental protections vs economic development)
Planning inspectorate's *public inquiry report* (M4CAN)	Report of the Planning Inquiry upon which the inspector's decision to recommend the Welsh Government to go ahead with the M4 black route scheme	Provides a detailed summary of the public inquiry from the perspective of the Planning Inspectorate	Key source reflecting on the planning inquiry that took place in relation to the M4; Demonstrates a practical application of planning policy and an institutionalised view as to how sustainable development should be implemented
Newport LDP 2011-2026	Fulfils the requirement set in the national spatial plan of plan-led local development	Sets the vision for Newport as the gateway city to Wales, emphasising regeneration and seeking economic growth	Newport as the biggest locality impacted by the M4 plans

Table 9 illustrates the process of identification and collection of textual materials for analysis. National, regional and local planning scales were covered where relevant. A preliminary list of documents was completed prior to the start of data collection. This was minimally altered during the research process to exclude some more technical documents, such as impact assessments, which were less useful viewed in relation to the process of storyline construction by different stakeholder groupings. The objective of compiling a list in advance was to ensure a systematic approach while leaving the data collection process open to discoveries (Love 2003; Yin 2014): this was helpful as it enabled a systematic process while leaving space for adjustment.

4.4.3. The scope of the analysis: included documents and sections of documents

Preceding the M4 black route consultation in 2013, there was a limited number of policies and guidance relating to spatial planning in Wales. Where documents (e.g. editions of *Planning Policy Wales*) included specified sections on non-transport related planning, such as housing, these were not included in the analysis. Only the relevant sections on planning procedures, transport infrastructure, conservation, environment and economic development were reviewed.

The Wales Spatial Plan was first published in 2004, followed by a significant update in 2008. This update was included in the policy sample as no further update on the overall spatial plan was published during the case study period. In addition, between 2013 and 2019, there were multiple editions of *Planning Policy Wales* (*PPW*), which continued to update planning policy as per the contemporary Welsh primary legislation in place. The editions are included in the analysis as summarised by Table 10, including edition no. 5 as the policy in place preceding the start of the case study period.

Table 10: List of editions of Planning Policy Wales included in the analysis

Planning Policy Wales	
PPW edition 5	2012
PPW edition 6	2014
PPW edition 7	2014
PPW edition 8	2016
PPW edition 9	2016 (precedes the public inquiry)
PPW edition 10	2018 (publication after the inquiry, before the First Minister's decision)

The *PPW*s included are supplemented by *Technical Advice Notes* (*TAN*s) published by the Welsh Government. These are subject specific with a varying level of technicality and for this reason only the three *TAN*s where their subject was seen as relevant to the research were included in the sample. The final and full list of documents identified for analysis is as outlined in Table 9.

4.4.4. Note on analysing the planning inspectorate's report

The inspector's report is considered as a written expression of discourse. Discourse not only happens at meetings and inquiries, as well as during consultation processes, but the concept also includes "*discourse as text*", i.e., conversations written down, speeches, articles, statements, which can be analysed using discourse analytics (Richardson and Sharp 2001, p. 98). On this occasion, the analysis is limited to a textual representation of the M4CAN inquiry that took place, as opposed to the inquiry itself. The report is written by the planning inspector in charge of the inquiry. The role of the planning inspector is discussed in section 5.3.1. The reasons for analysing the report, focusing on 'discourse as text' as opposed to directly witnessing the inquiry itself are mainly two-fold: the inquiry had finished well before the research for this thesis began, therefore the report being the main means through which sense of the inquiry's events could be made post-inquiry and in the future. As a publicly available source, the report is accessible for future researchers, citizens as well as journalists interested in the issue. Therefore, it is important to examine it critically, considering it as a textual statement that can tell us something about the relations of power and resistance through how the events are framed in the report. Secondly, Smyth's (2020) excellent thesis on marginalisation of

environmentally focused knowledge in quasi-legal processes has explored the public inquiry at length, based on observational data. This thesis thus builds on Smyth's insights of the inquiry process by exploring the report made available to ministers, but also the wider public post inquiry.

4.4.5. Media analysis

Media has a key agenda-setting function, often utilised by policy actors in pushing through views into the public discourse (McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs 2004; Kukkonen et al. 2021). The capacity these discourses have directing and defining public opinion is a key dimension of social power (O'Keeffe 2011; Altheide 2013). As discussed in chapter 2, the ability to define a complex problem through agenda-setting directs the selection of solutions (Rittel and Webber 1973; Caraher et al. 2014) and is thus a form of societal power. By including a media analysis, the thesis therefore contains the hypothesis that media discourses play a powerful part in shaping the approaches taken to solve complex policy problems through planning and development. This is suggested to justify the selection of the method as part of the overall qualitative methodology for the research.

In using media analysis as a method of research, it is important to acknowledge that media reports provide subjective representations of the issues they discuss, rather than fully objective accounts of the events that have taken place. The way the media represents issues is influenced by editorial practices and guidelines, which can differ across outlets. Wales Online states that their editors work according to The Editors Code of Practice, which is enforced by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) (Wales Online: About us [no date]). Wales Online are not affiliated with any political party in Wales or elsewhere, however, this does not mean that biases do not exist. South Wales Argus, also, declares to be politically neutral, while the newspaper was originally founded to support the local Liberal Party in the late 1800s (Ward 2012). Who influences who and how, and who has what power to put forward certain rationalities and leave out others, is not always straightforward: mediatization theory argues that governments are influenced by both direct and indirect interactions they have with the news media (Garland et al. 2018). The issue

of mediatized politics has been explored for example in England (ibid.), yet in Wales the picture might be more complex as those wanting to influence the Welsh Government need to acknowledge the potential avenues offered by both the UK and Welsh press.

The media analysis uses qualitative content analysis to systematically identify and describe the data (Schreier 2013). Qualitative content analysis is flexible, systematic and helps the researcher to reduce the vast amounts of data that often result from media analysis by using a qualitative coding frame (Schreier 2013). The coding frame will be used to identify storylines and actors within discourse coalitions (Hajer 1997; Mayerhöffer 2021). The qualitative element of the research requires a continuous adjustment of the coding frame (Schreier 2013). The categories were initially more concept- than data-driven but they were adjusted during the data analysis process to better reflect emerging detail (Schreier 2013).

The media analysis was utilised to identify discourse coalitions as loose groupings of stakeholders, as well as storylines that were proposed and shaped by members of discourse coalitions, around the case of the M4 (Hajer 2002; Hajer 2006). A timeframe covering seven and a half years was useful to trace storyline construction and shifts in the ways in which the case was discussed over time: it enabled the observation of which storylines became dominant over time and by whom they were propelled by. Furthermore, the lengthy timeframe was helpful in assessing the construction of balance of different aspects of sustainable development through storylines promoting a specific solution to the dilemma posed by the M4 development (i.e., whether the solution, such as investing in public transport instead, conceptualised sustainable development first and foremost through the notion of environmental, social or economic sustainability). Analysing media coverage across local and national papers, including some coverage from the UK broadsheets, was also useful in assessing the structuration and institutionalisation of storylines within the M4 discourse on different levels. In conclusion, media analysis helped to provide answers to the overall research question by contributing to the sub-questions B and C.

The data sample was collected using the Nexis UK database which provides access to most British and Welsh national, regional and local newspapers. It should be noted that not all news sources are included, for example BBC Wales online news platform or Nation.Cymru which is a small not-for-profit online service covering Wales. While this is a minor limitation of the database, the lack of these sources had no major impact on the sample, which consisted of articles on local, devolved (Wales) and national (the UK) scales. Table 11 illustrates the news sources and numbers of articles that could be found on Nexis UK in relation the case study. The sampling technique took into account the fluidity of discourse coalitions by utilising a time period covering multiple years (Metze and Dodge 2016). Only English language media were included.

Table 11: Welsh news titles including Wales-wide and South Wales based titles available on Nexis UK

Title	Scale	No of articles: "M4" & "Relief Road"
Wales Online	Wales (online)	719
The Western Mail	Wales, mostly South Wales (print)	719
South Wales Argus	Newport and surrounding areas (print, online)	866
South Wales Echo	Cardiff and surrounding area (print)	247
South Wales Evening post	South West (print)	45
Wales on Sunday	Sunday title of Western Mail	13
Penarth Times	Penarth (print, online)	3
Barry and District times	Barry and surrounding areas (print, online)	3
Carmarthen Journal (part of Wales Online)	Carmarthen (print)	6
Llanelli Star Series (part of Wales Online)	Llanelli and Carmarthen (print)	5
Western Telegraph	Pembrokeshire (online, print)	1
South Wales Guardian	Carmarthenshire (print, online)	4
County Times	Powys (print, online)	4

Most coverage of the M4 extension was provided by Wales Online (WO), Western Mail (WM) and South Wales Argus (SWA). WO and WM are published by Trinity Mirror North West and North Wales under the title of Media Wales. As these media platforms are part of the same company, some overlap in coverage was predicted.

Therefore, WO was chosen as the most comprehensive source for the data sample to explore the devolved discourse, as opposed to including both WO and WM in the sample. SWA is the most local newspaper to the planned M4 'relief road'. It produced a significant number of articles on this topic during the case study period, indicating a strong local interest. SWA was thus selected for the local sample.

Regarding UK-level national news sources, the sample was significantly smaller and therefore gathered across the newspapers for which coverage on the subject appeared. Only titles with national circulation were included to achieve a sample that represented the UK national scale. The included newspapers were: The Guardian, The Times, The Independent, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph, totalling only 11 articles. Other newspapers in the national circulation did not discuss the topic.

As discussed, it was important to extend the sample to cover several years to identify narrative shifts resulting from discourse struggles that take over longer time frames and contribute to a discourse transition. This presented some challenges in terms of the overall sample size and ensuring its feasibility as part of a multi-method approach. The overall number of articles was thus limited to maximum of 250 from the outset, with the caveat that if a point of saturation was reached earlier in any given year included in the analysis, the number of articles included would be less. There were three separate samples (local, Wales-wide and the UK-wide). The predicted numbers of articles that would be analysed versus what was available for analysis after excluding repeat and non-related articles from the sample are summarised in table 12.

Table 12: Numbers of articles in the sample predicted vs materialised

Timeline	Number of articles predicted	Number of articles located	News source
01/01/2013 - 30/06/2019	78, adjusted to the coding scheme	52	Wales Online
	156, adjusted to the coding scheme	114	South Wales Argus
	16, adjusted to ensure that maximum of 250 articles would be analysed	11	The Guardian, The Times, The Independent, The Daily Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph
Total number of articles	**250**	**Total number of articles analysed**	**177**

Table 12 further reflects the need to keep the sample a manageable size for the purposes of the method and the overall inquiry including two additional methods. The coding scheme was thus built on analysing three articles per each month included in the case study timeframe. This approach presumed that a point of saturation would be achieved after reading three articles per month: this hypothesis was mostly correct, confirmed by scanning the article titles for the rest of the month. After piloting the scheme by analysing twenty-five articles from both SWA and WO, it was clear that there was a larger variety of actors interviewed and, thus, viewpoints introduced in SWA than in WO. The decision was then taken to include two articles per month from SWA, one from WO and the rest (maximum of sixteen) from national titles.

4.4.7. Semi-structured interviews with key participants

The final method was hypothesised to provide answers to sub-questions B, C and D, thus contributing significantly to the overall research question. While the methods of media and document analyses explored the research questions through written down, public and formalised data produced by discourse coalitions and governance actors, interviews were included to highlight the less visible flows of relational power/resistance and the role of their struggle in discourse formation. This is in line with the literature on research methods discussing interviews: they are commonly used to uncover how specific and contradictory truths are produced and what tactics

are used to promote these contested rationalities in complex policy contexts (Leech 2002; Ripley 2007; Clifford et al. 2016). The objective for selecting interviewing as a method was to provide nuanced information on the internal workings of the discourse coalitions, how discursive participation might be operationalised across multilevel scales and how discourse struggles play out in the agonistic, relational sense. The preceding media and document analyses were used in preparation for selecting interview participants and writing up interview questions.

There are multiple different ways of conducting qualitative interviews. The research utilised semi-structured interviews (Mills et al. 2009). Interviews that do not use fully structured questions tend to invite open responses given in each participant's own words (Leech 2002). Open questions and prompts can help to gain more detailed, contextual answers that describe lived experience of the topic (Leech 2002; Clifford et al. 2016). Used in this way, the interview method can further the understanding of both formal and informal organisational relationships and campaign tactics which are part of the relational power play of the discourse coalitions. The qualities of the semi-structured method were considered apt for purposes of the study which relied on developing an intricate and detailed understanding of a complex case study. While covering the same broad themes through semi-structured questioning with different interviewees helps the researcher gather contrasting and complementary talk on the cases, it is advised that the interview questions and prompts should evolve throughout the project (Ripley 2007). The questions were defined at the start of the interview process. They drew from the background information collected and additionally from the results of the document and media analyses. However, they were adapted to suit the context of each discourse coalition in advance and during the interviews themselves, I often changed the order and the focus in response to information provided by each participant.

4.4.8. Sample: process and challenges

Table 13 illustrates the coalitions that emerged from the media analysis and the subsequent categorisation of the interviewees. During the media analysis, three discourse coalitions emerged from the sample. The way of categorising actors is

critically assessed in the final chapter of the thesis, however, for the purposes of the analysis, separating stakeholders into loose, discursive groupings based on their institutional context mapped against the three pillars of the sustainable development paradigm (Baker 2016) was useful. The discourse coalitions identified from the media analysis were: the economic coalition of business actors, such as the Federation of Small Businesses Wales (FSB) and the Confederation of British Industry Wales (CBI), the environmental coalition of non-governmental stakeholders focused on protecting the Gwent Levels (for instance, Wildlife Trusts Wales) and social coalition of stakeholders, such as local politicians who prioritised issues such as jobs or clean air for their localities. When it came to arranging interviews, I had identified forty-one stakeholders outside the Welsh Government, willing and able to comment the case on the media. I contacted nineteen actors identified as key spokespeople from their input in the news articles. In cases of organisational overlap, I first contacted the person who had made the greatest number of media appearances: significantly, where I did secure an interview, it was with the person whom I had initially singled out as a key commentator from the particular organisation. I also used a technique of snowball sampling where existing research subjects identify further participants and utilised my own contacts in the field (Browne 2005). Using these tactics, I identified a further five potential interviewees. The data resulting from the interviews was transcribed and minimally edited for readability: for example, repeat words were removed and in some cases the structure of the sentence was tidied but no other editing took place.

Table 13: Discourse coalitions and interviewees

Media analysis ->	Environmental coalition	Interviews ->	4 interviewees: 3 NGO actors, 1 community activist (environmental viewpoint predominant)
	Social coalition		4 interviewees: 3 politicians, 1 community activist (social viewpoint predominant)
	Economic coalition		4 interviewees: 3 representatives of business coalitions, 1 planner (emphasis on local economic development)

The conversion from an invite to an actual interview proved challenging. In the end, twelve people accepted the interview invitation and were subsequently interviewed. The number of respondents included spokespeople from environmental organisations, local campaigns and business coalitions, a planner, and politicians from the Senedd and one local council impacted by the plans (table 13). Although, due to the difficulties in recruiting key participants, the number of interviews was relatively small, each provided a unique organisational context, a thoughtful point of view and had been significantly involved in the case over several years. Furthermore, discussing the experience of participating to shape a planning proposal over a prolonged timespan with those who were willing to be interviewed helped me to understand why some key stakeholders responded saying no to the interview request: time spent participating had very likely taken significant amounts of personal resource and emotion and revisiting the experience may not have been a desirable thought.

I categorised the participants using the same categorisation tool, sustainable development, as for the media analysis. This was straightforward, as many had already been identified and categorised from the media analysis. I interviewed four individuals whom I contextualised within the environmental discourse coalition, four within the economic development coalition and four whom I categorised as belonging to the social coalition. The social coalition was the loosest and least unified coalition as it included politicians with different aims and objectives depending on their scale and location. Surprisingly, while the case was financially and geographically within the definition of a megaproject (Priemus and van Wee 2017), the interview process illustrated that the pool of participating actors outside government officials and appointees was quite small and each had a different scalar location, institutional context and/or set of expertise. Interviews were conducted remotely using Zoom or Teams depending on what the interviewee preferred. Finally, it should be noted that some interviewees reported that Covid-19 had made the case feel in such a distant past that they could no longer remember all the details.

4.5.   Overall research process: analysing discourse coalitions

The data gathered through both interviews and the two text-based data collection methods was analysed using the discourse-based tools referenced extensively in the previous chapter, namely, discourse coalitions, storylines, institutionalisation and structuration (Hajer 1997; Hajer 2002; Hajer 2003). In the discourse analytical tradition, the analysis was not limited to what was said or written but instead, the combination of the three methods was designed to capture both what is said (language) and done (practice) as the building blocks of discourses (Gill 2000; Hall 2001; Yates et al. 2001). From a practical perspective, the data analysis combined elements from content and thematic analyses, involving skimming, reading and interpretation of the collected documents and media articles (Bowen 2009).

Data collected in relation to each method was analysed separately using the discourse analytical framework presented in chapter 3 and is discussed in detail in the following chapters. The analyses are presented in the same order as the methods have appeared in the current chapter, starting with document analysis

before moving on to the next method. The analysis looked for patterns in coalition formation. The initial questions that guided the field work were:

1. What are the storylines that emerge about each case?
2. What are the goals of these storylines in relation to sustainable development (e.g. economic, social, environmental or a mix)?
3. Which actors evoke which storylines?
4. Which coalitions emerge?
5. Are there issues that become emblematic?
6. What narrative shifts can be identified over time?

The questions helped to identify the main discourse coalitions and the construction, adaptation and interaction of key storylines. These will be discussed in the following chapters. Some of the coalitions managed to build a storyline around an emblem, a discursive device that came to symbolise the case (Hajer 2006). Storylines were identified as more specific and isolatable than discourses and were thus found to be useful units of analysis.

4.5.1. Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of a mixture of different methodologies or methods helping the researcher to view the case studies from several angles and strengthen findings through corroboration across different data sets (Olsen 2004; Bowen 2009). These strategies help to reduce potential biases and increase the resiliency of the research findings (Bowen 2009).

The three methods discussed previously were used together to ensure that the case studies are explored in rich, contextual detail that enforce the power of an example (Flyvbjerg 2007; Bowen 2009; Denzin and Lincoln 2013). In addition, triangulation of methods ensured that the data gathered via each research method was checked against the results produced by the two other methods.

4.6. Research ethics

Ethics approval was obtained from the Cardiff University School of Geography and Planning Ethics Committee before proceeding to interviews. The approval is dated 26th January 2022. As such, media and document analyses rely on secondary data and did not require approval. Throughout the project, I have been conscious of the need to reflexively consider my own positionality, particularly because of my background as a campaigner. I have kept an irregular research diary and ensured transparency by reflecting on my positionality from the start of the thesis by discussing my motivations for the research in the introduction to the thesis. The constructivist paradigm upholds that no research can be value-free. In my case, the informal conversations I had with multiple contacts working in the fields of politics and environment prior to embarking upon writing a thesis, led me to ask questions about what sustainable development in Wales meant in reality and what was hindering its progress. Before beginning my PhD research, while working with the Green Party in Wales, I helped to edit press releases that others had written that questioned the need for an M4 extension, and I spoke against the M4 as the party's representative on a few occasions. My work involved the other potential case studies too: for example, I attended a promotional visit to Swansea by Tidal Lagoon Power and helped with press releases on topics ranging from challenging nuclear power development to pushing for better public transport in Wales.

5. Contextualising sustainable planning and governance in Wales through document analysis: devolved power and policy agenda in transition

This chapter provides context to the case study of the M4 black route development by exploring the Welsh policy discourse on sustainable planning in relation to transport development. It looks to the formal policy environment within which development decisions take place, arguing that the shape of interactions between policy and implementation provide impetus and space for resisting discourses. By offering a detailed analysis of the policies in place during the case study period, the chapter provides contextual detail on the specifics of the case, enabling understandings of not only the Welsh planning policy landscape itself but also how it is shaped by the complex politics of devolution that act to both "fill in" and "hollow out" governance (Goodwin et al. 2005). This chapter addresses the research question, 'How do discourse coalitions work to construct and counter planning discourses in multilevel governance setting, in relation to specific large-scale infrastructure projects?', by focusing on sub-question A, 'How is resistance constructed and applied to counter planning proposals put forward by the devolved Welsh Government?'

The M4 case study focuses on a period of change, during which foundations are laid for a novel direction in transport planning and development in Wales. It is thus important to acknowledge that during such transitionary periods power dynamics warrant extensive exploration (Avelino 2021). This chapter looks at the policy frameworks in place as "product[s] of discursive struggles" (Backstrand and Lövbrand 2006, p. 3) that are constantly changing as "object[s] of political contestation" (Hajer and Versteeg 2005, p. 177). There is a particular focus on how the three strands of sustainable development (social, economic, environmental) discussed in the literature review are balanced against each other in policy during the case study period. This is to understand not only how those with formal power (e.g. politicians) may wish to understand the concept of sustainable development as aligned with the discourse of 'green growth' but also how resistance (explored in

later chapters) works to unsettle the existing definitions pushing for a differently adjusted planning balance that would give more weight to environmental issues.

5.1. Devolution and implications to the evolution of planning policy

In Wales, power relationships have undergone a series of evolutions following the devolution settlement in 1999, with implications to the planning system that are discussed below. Key legislation that defines the current Welsh administration's competencies has been reviewed several times over the past two decades. Figure 7 provides a brief outline of the underpinning legal framework of Welsh devolution. The secretary of state for Wales in 1998, Ron Davies, fittingly described devolution as "a process, not an event" (Senedd Research 2020). Through its construction over time, and the impact of the evolving policy framework aimed at strengthening Wales's statutory duty to promote sustainable development (see chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion), the Welsh planning policy reflects this notion of devolution as a process of changing power flows rather than a singular power-sharing event. The competencies of the current Senedd Cymru (previously the National Assembly for Wales), include those for housing, highways and transport, local government, town and country planning, environment and economic development (Cullingworth et al. 2015). In practice, there have been, and continue to be, overlaps and restrictions as to what Wales can do with its devolved powers such as holding adequate borrowing powers in the case of the M4 black route. The need for these was highlighted by the Silk Commission and enacted through the subsequent *Wales Act 2014*. It is then that the Welsh discourse on economic, social and sustainable development takes place within the institutional conditions prescribed by the wider governance system of the UK. However, understanding the dynamics of how the Welsh planning policy has evolved towards its own direction under the devolution settlement can provide important detail to theorising how planning operates within multilevel governance systems.

The legislative landmarks of Welsh devolution

The Government of Wales Act 1998
- Based on the referendum result of 1997 to establish a National Assembly for Wales
- Creates a legal basis for the National Assembly for Wales
- Powers to make secondary legislation in specified areas (agriculture, fisheries, education, housing, highways)

The Government of Wales Act 2006
- Accepts recommendations made by the Richard Commission
- Grants Wales with powers to make primary legislation

Wales Act 2014
- Enacts recommendations made by Silk Commission on taxation and borrowing powers

Wales Act 2017
- Makes the National Assembly a permanent part of the UK constitution
- Moves from the conferred powers model to the reserved powers model
- Grants powers for Wales to decide upon the voting system and the name of its representative body

Richard Commission 2002-2004
- Recommends the legal separation of the executive and legislature, the devolution of primary law-making powers to Wales & an increase in the number of Assembly Members (AMs)

Silk Commission 2012-2014
- Considers the future of devolution in Wales
- Part I report recommends bestowing new financial powers on Wales, including borrowing and taxation
- Part II report makes recommendations on future legislative powers and arrangements

Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020
- From the National Assembly for Wales to Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament)
- Extends the right of vote in the Senedd elections to 16 and 17 year olds and qualified foreign nationals

Figure 7: The legislative landmarks of Welsh devolution

(source: adapted by author from Senedd blog, published 07/12/2020)

Devolution has shaped the Welsh planning policy particularly through the sustainable development principle. "*One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government*" (Welsh Government 2009) provides the framework in place during the case study period, until the *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFGA)* articulated the processes and principles from *One Wales* into law in Wales (Davidson 2020). *One Wales: One Planet* was built upon consultation, following on from participation being seen as a key principle in governance for sustainable development (Bell et al. 2012). The document introduces a vision for a sustainable Wales, which relies on using only a "fair share of the earth's resources and becoming a fairer and more just nation", confirms sustainable development as the central organising principle of the Welsh Government and as the overarching strategic aim all policies and programmes should follow (*One Wales* 2009, p. 4). It provides an integrated, or 'joint-up', approach to sustainable resource use, enhanced wellbeing, sustainable economy, society and environment (figure 8). In relation to transport development, relevant to the case study of this thesis, the document states that as a key objective, Wales must "organise the way we live and work so we can travel less by car wherever possible and can live and work in ways which have a much stronger connection with our local economies and communities" (*One Wales* 2009, p. 18). The broad objective of reducing car use as well as distances travelled appears in a direct contrast with the aim of building a motorway extension around Newport during the case study period. The following sections explore this contrast through an examination of planning policy and other formal planning related documents that link to the case study of the M4 black route.
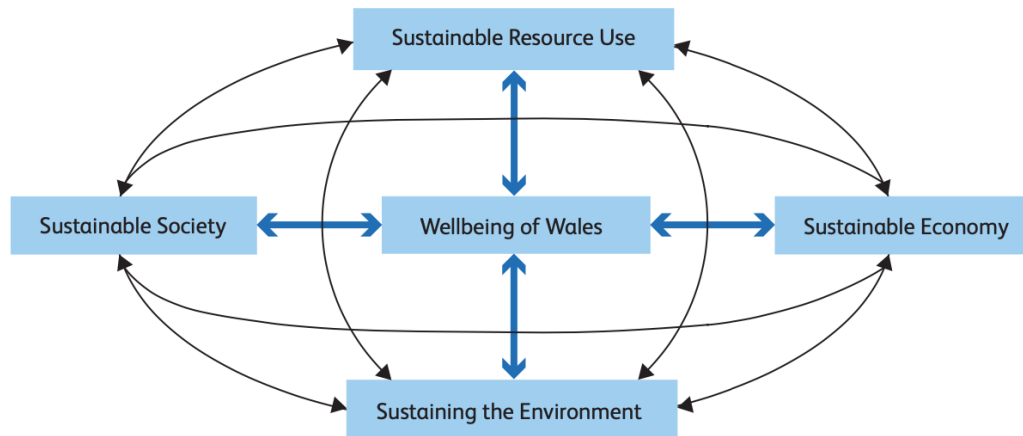
Figure 8: Integrated sustainable development

(from *One Wales: One Planet*, 2009, p. 12)

5.2. Development of *Wales Spatial Plan* and *Planning Policy Wales*

From a planning policy perspective, the M4 case acted as a watershed moment for Welsh devolution by providing a test case for devolved planning policy that advocates for sustainable development as its central principle. Yet the plan for the road development was rooted in an institutional framework that failed to separate the objectives of transport planning from advancing economic growth above all, illustrating that even in specific policies, objectives can be contradictory and thus leave space for contestation as to how their implementation should be practically realised. Hajer (2003, p. 88) views public policy as something that "creates a public domain", in other words, a "space in which people of various origins deliberate on their future as well as on their mutual interrelationships and their relationship to government". It is therefore that policy discourses contribute to the construction of political identities, reversing what is conventionally thought as the relationship of politics and policy (Hajer 2003). The spatial policies upon which the chapter now turns are viewed in this manner as providing a point of ignition for those who in later chapters come forward to argue over the meaning of sustainable development in Wales in relation to the plan to build a 'relief road' for the M4 around Newport.

Wales's plan-led policy is underpinned by the *Wales Spatial Plan.* The spatial plan's objective is to help to deliver the priorities of the Welsh Government that were at the time set out in the *One Wales: One Planet* document. For the case study period studied in this research, the relevant document is the 2008 update on the then-current spatial plan. The document is important in relation to the case study, because "it provides a canvas against which Welsh Assembly Government investment, both capital and revenue, can be considered and agreed." (*WSP* p. 7). On a national level the spatial plan also directly influences the Wales transport strategy, *One Wales: Connecting the nation*. The transport strategy is a complimentary document that sets out the needs and vision for transport in Wales, highlighting the objective of "efficient, reliable and sustainable links between the north, south, east and west" (*Wales Transport Strategy*, p. 5). Whereas the spatial plan provides a bird's eye view into Wales and its regions, emphasising coherence and joint working across "fuzzy" regional boundaries (*WSP*, p. 20), the transport strategy zooms in, providing a researched outlay of the problems of the transport network to provide solutions that align with the objectives of *WSP* and *One Wales*.

In discursive terms, *WSP* lays out a narrative of Wales faced with the challenges of regionally uneven prosperity, economic change and population dynamics. It proposes spatially better aligned investment and cross-region collaborative approaches as solutions. The spatial plan thus acts as a road map as to how to achieve these outcomes, with the objective of guiding the work of local authorities in setting their own local development plans. Sustainable development as per *One Wales* is a key concept upon which the plan relies. Outlining its vision for achieving prosperity across Wales, *SPW* sets the tone for more specific planning policy. It is noteworthy that the Welsh discourse on sustainable planning and development is underpinned by the notion of growth to "increase Wales's competitiveness" on balance with "reducing negative environmental impacts" (*WSP*, p. 20). The transport strategy puts this balance in more practical terms: "We must protect our environment in a way which minimises any detrimental impact on our economy." (*Wales Transport Strategy*, p. 43). Therefore, while the sustainable development discourse is the

prevailing discourse through providing the overall frame for both documents, these statements illustrate that there is a significant discrepancy between the desired policy discourse and the reality within which transport decisions take place in relation to the environment. Unpicking the discourse involving these different elements highlights that the notion of balance, and taking a 'balanced' approach, in fact disguises that the economic aspect of sustainable development is given more weight than the other two pillars of environmental and social wellbeing in Welsh spatial planning.

Further discursive elements support the construction of sustainable development as a 'balance' of the three separate aspects of the concept. *WSP* uses verbs such as "sustain", "reduce", "enhance" and "grow" (p. 20) in connection to the important key concepts relating to sustainability: communities, economic development and environmental protections. The national spatial policy in place during the case study period is thus based on creating incremental changes ("reduce", "enhance") where necessary for environmental protections, working to minimise change in communities ("sustain"), but, importantly, placing economic growth as the enabler of both. In line with what has been characterised as a weak approach to sustainability (Vos 2007; Baker 2016), during this time the devolved Welsh administration based spatial planning on the challenge of "achiev[ing] sustainable economic growth and social justice whilst protecting and enhancing the environment" (*WSP*, p. 7), but does not provide security for protections for nature from economic development per se. Furthermore, it does not provide guidance as to how nature and the environment could be treated as the fundamental basis within which economies are nested (Folke et al. 2016). This would enable a sustainable development policy that is in line with 'ideal' or 'strong' approaches to sustainability that outline the need to treat nature as with having "intrinsic value", helped by "strict limits on resource use" (Baker 2016, p. 38).

While proposing a discourse of sustainable development in spatial planning in Wales, *WSP* 2008 update provides little guidance as to what sustainable approaches might look like on the ground in the face of competing local needs. It does, however, emphasise cross-region collaboration as a key tenet of a sustainable planning system, as well as the importance of seeking stakeholder engagement from the

public, private and third sectors as an important procedural element to achieving sustainable development.

In the foreword to the national transport strategy, then-deputy first minister Ieuan Wyn Jones AM states: "We face similar problems to many other countries – how to ensure a proper balance between protecting our environment and improving our economic performance. We can introduce innovative solutions to ensure that there should be no conflict between the two" (*WTS*, p. 5). The strategy is thus firmly embedded in the discourse of ecological modernisation emphasising technological advancement as a route to achieving sustainability. It further echoes the 'balanced' approach promoted by *WSP*. The foreword along with the rest of the strategy points to public transport improvements as the favoured technological fix while also highlighting the new devolved powers giving Wales the capability to achieve the solutions it needs for becoming an efficiently connected nation: "we will use our new powers to develop Welsh solutions" (*WTS*, p. 5). The geography of Wales along with underinvestment in public transport and focus on private car use have traditionally proposed challenges to the public transport network, therefore the appeal for Wales-specific solutions is easy to comprehend. Yet the strategy falls short on providing scalable solutions moving away from car-dependency, highlighting the sustainable development discourse as a discourse of aims and objectives only, without a realistic ability to enable the more specific transport plans (e.g. regional plans, the national transport plan) to change things on the ground.

5.2.2. Reasonable sustainable development: the evolution of Welsh spatial planning

From its inception, *Planning Policy Wales* (*PPW*) has been framed as of essential importance in achieving the devolved administration's statutory duty of promoting sustainable development (edition 1, foreword). It provides the key document that communicates how spatial policy should be understood and implemented in Wales, with regular updates since 2002. Furthermore, it outlines, in planning terms, the frame within which sustainable development should be understood and acted upon by those involved in the planning process. Each edition included in the analysis

outlines the requirement for sustainable development in Wales, framing the concept as a balance of economic development, social needs and environmental protections. For example, it is stated that: "the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It should reconcile the needs of development and conservation, securing economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land, and protecting natural resources and the historic environment" (edition 5, p. 10; repeated in editions 5-8). How the balance of these different elements is discursively framed evolves over time. This section now reviews the main narratives and practical approaches to sustainable development as framed by the *PPW* editions 5-8, before moving onto a comparative discussion focused on the changing policy discourse in *PPW* 9 and 10.

As per the national spatial policy, *PPW* sets the remit and process for a plan-led approach in Wales, whereby local authorities are in charge of preparing their own local plans. The policy sees local plans as "fundamental" to planning for sustainable development (edition 6, p. 18). Sustainable development underpins further sections on economic development, nature conservation, historic environment, housing, transport, retail and infrastructure development for which spatial policies are outlined in *PPW*. *PPW* editions 5-8 are broadly similar in wording and structure. Edition 9 was published before the M4CAN planning inquiry and thus is the one applicable to the inspector's report which will be discussed later in this chapter. Edition 10 was published after the planning inquiry ended but before the final decision on the development took place. While the policy remained by and large the same from edition 5 to edition 7, there was a need for an overhaul following the passing of the *WFGA* in 2015. Therefore editions 8 and 9 include some changes, but the updated approach is only fully reflected in *PPW* edition 10. The tenth edition presents a significant procedural shift in the policy guidance reflecting the revised governance structure for public bodies in the wake of the *WFGA* (Netherwood and Flynn 2020). The update further introduces new terminology and a clearer, perhaps stronger, rhetoric of conservation and environmental protections. In the light of the M4 case study, its cancellation after the publication of the tenth edition of *PPW* therefore indirectly (if not directly) signifies the changing objectives of devolved planning policy and implementation practice. The M4 can thus be seen as a point of rupture in the policy discourse wrought with conflict over changing ambitions, inviting an analysis of

relationalities between policy statements and those put forward by different stakeholders (Foucault 1991).

In their introductions, editions 5-9 state: "A well functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development" (edition 5, p. 10, repeated in later editions). The policy thus works to lay out the Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development for the planning system to maximise its role in achieving sustainability. While the goal of sustainable development in Wales is defined and emphasised throughout different editions of *PPW*, it is not an absolute one: "The planning system is intended to help protect the amenity and environment of towns, cities and the countryside in the public interest while encouraging and promoting high quality, sustainable development" (e.g. edition 7, p. 29). Sustainable development should be *encouraged* and *promoted* but overall, *PPW* also emphasises the need for economic development as an overarching theme. There are multiple occasions where it is stated that economic development must be prioritised, articulated using a language of what is *necessary*, or *unnecessary*: "A key role of the planning system is to ensure that society's land requirements are met in ways which do not impose unnecessary constraints on development whilst ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard or enhance the environment" (edition 8, p. 81). Additionally, the notion of planning balance is used to emphasise that "in the interests of achieving sustainable development it is important to balance conservation objectives with the wider economic needs of local businesses and communities" (edition 7, p. 76). A close exploration of language used thus illustrates the idea of balance as subtly leaning on the primacy of economic development over environmental protections where the two are in conflict.

In *PPW* editions 5-9, chapter 4 is dedicated to "Planning for Sustainability", which then frames the subsequent chapters on specific planning areas. While chapter 4 outlines the objectives for the planning policy emphasis on sustainable resource use, the promotion of low carbon economy and creating "safe, sustainable, attractive communities" (edition 5, p. 44), the following sections on transport and biodiversity conservation outline their applications of the sustainability approach using a language of economic development and compensation. For example, "The planning system has an important part to play in meeting biodiversity objectives by promoting

approaches to development which create new opportunities to enhance biodiversity, prevent biodiversity losses, or compensate for losses where damage is unavoidable" (edition 6, p. 72). The notion of unavoidable damage renders any protections placed on landscapes and habitats fragile: as will be discussed later in this chapter regarding the M4CAN inquiry, it is possible to make a case for development to be more necessary than conserving fragile environments, even when the environment is granted with statutory protections such as SSSIs. Instead, these statutory protections protect the environment only as far as is practically reasonable: "With regard to SSSIs, which are of national importance, the *Wildlife and Countryside Act*, as amended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, places a duty on all public bodies (including local planning authorities) to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the features by reason of which a SSSI is of special interest" (edition 5, p.77). *Relative significance*, *necessity* and *reason* therefore help to construct a discourse of sustainable development that prioritises development over environmental aspects of achieving sustainability in the Welsh planning policy.

The policy further states that "While the value of landscapes is recognised, local planning authorities should have regard to the relative significance of international, national and local designations in considering the weight to be attached to nature conservation interests and should take care to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on development" (edition 6, p. 72). It is not always specified whether development refers to, for example, development of housing, or development of transport: instead, the need for any development can be perceived as relational to the *recognised* value of environmental protections, which can, if *necessary*, be overridden. This opens the door for the practical prioritisation of development for economic and social aspects over, rather than in line with, conservation interests. Social is a fuzzier, less specified and regulated category than the environment, and it often not easy to distinguish between economic and social development in policy wordings. However, for instance road development can be in conflict with the maintaining of cohesive communities: literature on car use highlights that the increasing use of cars can contribute to the "loss of social glue" in localities (Sloman 2006, p. 24). The impacts of undefined development on economies and communities can thus be contradictory: this is hardly addressed as part of the sustainable development approach in *PPW*.

In the specific guidance about transport planning, *PPW* states that mitigation should be used as a last resort: "Where no other alternative routes or options are practicable, transport infrastructure schemes should provide mitigation measures to minimise the impacts caused by their construction and operation" (edition 7, p. 116). The language of mitigation and compromise overall contribute to the fact that the Welsh planning policy discourse takes place within the tradition of ecological modernism, which rejects the idea of radical restructuring of the state and the market as a reaction to the environmental crisis and instead favours gradual transformation drawing from negotiation and compromise (Backstrand and Lövbrand 2006). While in edition 10 the language of nature protection becomes stronger, it also introduces new discursive elements of nature financialization such as nature as "future proof economic assets" (edition 10, p. 3). These come embedded in the newly structured narratives about "a more prosperous Wales", "a resilient Wales", "a healthier", "more equal" and "a globally responsible Wales" (edition 10, p. 2). These planning policy sub-narratives were already present in edition 8, composed after the passing of the *WFGA* in 2015 to align with the legislation, but in edition 10 they are for the first time used to frame and structure the policy document from start to finish. It is then reasonable to expect a shift in content that would strengthen the possibilities for implementing a 'thicker' version of sustainable development than offered by the discourse of ecological modernisation (Vos 2007).

Up till edition 10 *PPW* does not include a ministerial foreword which is common practice on strategy documents, plans and policies. Edition 10 includes a foreword by the cabinet secretary for energy, planning and rural affairs, turning *PPW* from a largely procedural document into a more directly political one from the outset. The foreword introduces placemaking as the new "key element to deliver on the aspirations of the [*WFGA*] and drive plan making and development management decisions" (edition 10, p. 2). The policy that follows is structured around core themes: "Productive and Enterprising places" (promoting economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being by focusing on employment and economic development); "Active and Social places" (focus on economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being through well-connected communities) and "Distinctive and Natural places" (emphasises the value of landscapes and historic environment) (edition 10, p. 3).

Overall, in *PPW* 10, there is a continued emphasis on economic development, including a redressing of the discourse around achieving environmental sustainability as that of financialization.

Terms used to describe nature as "ecological assets" (edition 10, p. 131) and referring to nature as infrastructure using the popular term of "green infrastructure" (referring to networks of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, waterways etc.) highlight that the newly structured discourse put forward by *PPW* 10 remains in the previous policy tradition of weak sustainability (Helne and Hirvilammi 2015; Baker 2016). The review of *PPW* editions 5-10 thus confirms that while sustainable development has been an important policy discourse in Welsh planning policy since 2002, at least during the case study period it does not yet evolve towards a meaningful definition of sustainability that would realistically be able to secure environmental protections needed for landscapes and biodiversity to ensure Wales can continue to support healthy communities of human and non-human actors in the era of the Anthropocene (Jon 2021). However, while the overall discourse constructs economic development as the priority over environmental and social sustainability, the statutory protections built in for nature conservation leave a certain openness that enables resistance over attempts to disregard them. The planning inspector's report on the M4CAN offers an opportunity to trace how this might happen, but first, the three *TAN*s relevant to the case study are briefly reviewed.

5.2.3. Note on TANs and WelTAG

The three technical advice notes (*TAN*s) are, as their name suggests, the most technical documents reviewed for the purposes of the present analysis. Nevertheless, these are political documents that illustrate the process of translating planning policy into practice in Wales. While the *TAN*s analysed offer specific guidance on implementation of both development and preservation, they further legitimise the policy discourse on sustainable development as a process where certain boxes can be ticked, while also excluding other possible ways of implementing relevant planning regulation. Rydin (2019) has noted that the framing of impacts of development in planning regulation tends to give more space for

consideration to ecological impacts than socio-economic impacts. Measured by the length of guidance and processes in place as laid out in *TAN5* compared to the less specific, shorter and the more overall guidance present in *TAN23*, this is certainly correct (table 14). However, reflecting on the wider policy landscape and the case study public inquiry report, it becomes clear that while time is spent ensuring that environmental regulation is followed, there are notable gaps that potentially enable development where protections should be expected to apply, such as upon designated SSSIs.

Table 14: TANs analysed

TAN (*Technical Advice Note*)	Length
5: Nature Conservation and Planning	126 pages
23: Economic Development	16 pages
18: Transport	58 pages

It appears that there is a clear process that helps to secure environmental outcomes, which is mapped out using multiple flow charts in *TAN5* (exemplified by figure 9). This might contribute to an overall sense that the environment is well protected. This, however, is false in the light of the above analysis of *PPW*: examining the policy language in detail, it is possible to ascertain that environmental regulation can be sidestepped if the need for development is deemed essential enough. The chart depicted by figure 9 is titled "Consideration of Development Proposals Affecting Internationally Designated Nature Conservation Sites", illustrating a process of assessing the need for development on an existing conservation site. It lays out a process whereby it can be decided if a development proposal relating to a site under consideration can be allowed.

1. Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to site management for nature conservation? — Yes

No

2. Is the proposal likely to have a significant effect on the internationally important interest features of the site, alone or in combination with other plans and projects? — No

Yes

3. Assess the implications of the effects of the proposal for the site's conservation objectives, consult CCW and, if appropriate, the public.

4. Can it be ascertained that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site? — Yes → 5. Permission may be granted.

No, because there would be an adverse effect or it is uncertain

6. Would compliance with conditions or other restrictions, such as a planning obligation, enable it to be ascertained that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site? — Yes → 7. Permission may be granted subject to the conditions or obligation.

No, because there would be an adverse effect or it is uncertain

8. Are there alternative solutions that would have a lesser effect, or avoid an adverse effect, on the integrity of the site? — No

Yes

9. Might a priority habitat or species on the site be adversely affected by the proposal?

No / Yes

10. Are there imperative reasons of overriding public interest, which could be of a social or economic nature, sufficient to override the harm to the site? — No / Yes

11. Are there imperative reasons of overriding public interest relating to human health, public safety or benefits of primary importance to the environment? (Also see Note above) — Yes / No

12. If minded to grant permission, planning authority must notify the Assembly Government and must wait 21 days.

13. Permission must not be granted.

14. Permission may be granted subject to the Assembly Government securing that any necessary compensatory measures are taken to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

15. Permission may only be granted for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, following consultation between the Government and the European Commission and subject to the Assembly Government securing that any necessary compensatory measures are taken to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

Note on Stage 11

Where cSACs and pSPAs are concerned, the plan cannot be adopted under any circumstances unless it is ascertained that:-
• In relation to cSACs, it will not seriously compromise the ecological characteristics of the cSAC;
• In relation to pSPAs, it will not cause significant pollution or deterioration of the pSPA, or significant disturbance of the bird species for which the pSPA has been proposed.

Unless this can be ascertained, permission cannot be granted.

54   55

Figure 9: Flow chart example

from TAN5, pp. 54-55

The chart makes it clear that there are criteria to be followed when deciding whether permission of applied development can be granted, illustrating the environmental protections in place. However, for instance, point number four highlights the process as an ongoing negotiation: "4. Can it be ascertained that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site?" If the answer arrived at, through a social process of institutionally contextualised decision-making, is a yes, then permission for development on an internationally designated conservation site can be granted. There are further three scenarios where permission can be granted, as depicted by the flow chart: if "compliance with conditions or other restrictions" that would ensure that the proposal does not adversely impact the site can be put in place then permission may be granted, "subject to the conditions" (point 6). If there are no alternative solutions or sites for the development, then a check on whether there is a priority habitat or species located on the site must take place. In either case, whether such a habitat or species is identified on site, development can take place under certain conditions and for the reason of "imperative reasons of overriding public

interest" (points 10 and 15). *Imperative reasons of overriding public interest* are elsewhere in the document advised to be at the discretion of the decision-taker depending on the case characteristics. These imperative reasons are outlined by table 15 as per *TAN5*.

Table 15: TAN5, p. 62

Conditions for a proposed development to go ahead on a protected site	
Where a priority habitat or species is affected:	- A need to address a serious risk to human health or public safety; - The provision of a clear and demonstratable direct environmental benefit on a national or international scale;
Where no priority habitat or species is not affected:	- The interests of national security and defence; - A vital contribution to strategic economic development or regeneration; - Where failure to proceed would have unacceptable social and / or economic consequences

No process for assessing potential economic or social impacts of unrealised development is outlined to support decision-making in *TAN5*. Neither does the document offer guidance on what kind of strategic development is vital enough: necessarily, space is left for socially constructed processes of decision-making. Following on, it can be argued that the general nature of the *TAN23* on economic development is only possible because of the dominant position of economic development on overarching planning policy: less boxes need to be ticked to justify the status quo of growth-driven planning proposals than when trying to protect the remaining natural spaces.

TAN18 on transport falls in between *TAN5* and *TAN23* both in terms of length and the level of guidance. It should be read alongside the *Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance* (*WelTAG*), revised in 2017. The process of planning for transport is focused on integrated land use and has the stated aim to drive development into places where it makes most sense, for example places with existing public transport links. During the case study period, however, there is a lack of integration of environmental protections, social goals and transport planning: for example, the

*TAN*s remain separate documents tackling separate topics. Furthermore, transport planning and conservation are tackled in separate sections of *PPW* and there is no process whereby planners can assess impacts of transport development on an existing community other than assessing the levels of further travel need generated by housing development for example. Furthermore, major travel generating uses, such as housing, form part of both *PPW* and technical guidance, yet induced demand when building or adding new facilities for motorised transport (Sloman 2006) is not mentioned as a potential generator of further traffic. This contributes to a lack of nuanced consideration of the impacts of road building in the Welsh policy guidance during the case study period.

5.3.   Policy vs. implementation: M4CAN Planning Inquiry report

The Public Inquiry on the M4 Corridor Around Newport (M4CAN) took place from 28th February 2017 till 28th March 2018. This was the largest public inquiry thus far taken place in Wales and is discussed in detail in a thesis by Smyth (2020) which focuses on the legal process of environmental decision making as reflected by the inquiry. As the public inquiry itself has extensively been covered elsewhere, this section focuses on the discourses put forward in the final report only and considers how they interact and feed into and from the wider planning policy framework. The focus is thus on a textual form of discourse and how it is constructed to reflect the events, instead of the real-life actions of the actors the text depicts. The purpose of including the inquiry report in the analysis is to establish the extent to which the nodal discourse on sustainable development is institutionalised in relation to the case of the M4 and how the different aspects of sustainable development discussed above are balanced in practice.

The report of the inquiry was drafted by the appointed planning inspector Mr Wadrup and published in September 2018. In the case of the M4CAN inquiry, the appointment of the planning inspector was made by the Ministers of the Welsh Government and the position therefore represented an extension of formal power held by the devolved administration. As is customary, the final report was authored by the planning inspector, with noted assistance from Mr McCooey who also

represented the Planning Inspectorate. The language and format of the report are analysed in the following paragraphs as a representation of the inquiry's events by the inspector, rather than as an objective reading into what took place. This is in line with the Foucauldian underpinnings of the research, which highlight the societal production of knowledge as a process infiltrated with power flows (Foucault 2002b). It should be noted that in conducting the inquiry and in compiling the report, the inspector acted fully within the remit of his role. The following paragraphs investigate the discourses contained in the report in detail, including the way in which they are constructed by the inspector working within his institutional context.

5.3.1. A note on the inspector's institutional remit

While there has been relatively little research into the role and influence of the Planning Inspectorate (Boddy and Hickman 2018), Cullingworth and Nadin (2015) identify the body as a site where contestation of different value systems is most easily seen within the planning system. The role of a public inquiry into a planning proposal is clearly defined to address the overall soundness of the plan put forward, as well as the objections that arise. However, this role is largely administrative in the sense that the recommendations of the planning inspector, resulting from the inquiry, act as guidance only to the governance authority in charge of making a final decision, whether on central or local level, and in the case of Wales, on devolved level (Cullingworth et al. 2015). Discussing the English context, Bobby and Hickman (2018, p. 202) note that the Planning Inspectorate is "an 'Executive Agency' of government, separate in managerial terms but accountable to the Minister and ultimately subject to their control." The inspector is seen as a quasi-judicial and semi-independent body, charged with making recommendations to its government, something that equally applies in the devolved context (ibid.). The report on the M4CAN inquiry is therefore investigated as taking place within these institutional parameters. For clarity, it should be noted that due to the lack of citation marks in the report, it was not always possible to identify whether a participant's words are cited as originally written or spoken or whether a summary is provided in the inspector's own words when conducting the analysis.

The main body of the report begins with an introduction to the case as that of the Welsh Government, after which it moves on to the scheme's identified supporters' statements. These are followed by statements of the statutory and non-statutory objectors of the M4 scheme, which go on to constitute over 200 pages of the report that overall comes to 559 pages (including Annexes). Unlike with the supporting statements, each objection is immediately followed up by a response from the Welsh Government. Some objections further include a note from the Inspector, where he points out various things such as if the objection had in the end been withdrawn or altered as a result of cross-examination, or if he felt that the objection required more context. Typically, the note from the Inspector outlines additional details that were revealed by a cross-examination of the participating objector. The power dynamics of the public inquiry cross-examination process and the inequality of arms spoken about by the inquiry participants are well covered by Smyth (2020) and are also discussed in relation to the dynamics of discourse construction in later chapters of this thesis as brought up by research participants. It therefore suffices to say here that cross-examination of objectors in a public inquiry is a process enmeshed with its own politics of power. Therefore, the Inspector's documenting of evidence in the form of inspector's notes cannot be understood as objective recollections of the inquiry's events, unlike the report's status as a formal recommendation to decisionmakers would suggest. Insights from Lee (2017, p. 23) help to ascertain the significance of the aspiration to objectivity (even if objectivity is something that can, in reality, rarely be achieved): "the reason giving process does not seek 'truth pure and simple' but 'serviceable truth'". The inspector's report can thus be seen as a claim to knowledge within the planning process whereby lay knowledge is marginalised in relation to the environment, and technical and expert knowledge dominates (Lee 2017; Smyth 2020).

A typical Inspector's note following an objector's statement reads as follows:

> *"Inspector's note*
> **In answer to a question from me, Professor Whitmarsh clarified her position as one*
> *where she was opposed to the proposed M4 (and other road building) and wanted*

> *restraint on the existing motorway in the form of tolls, junction closures, speed control and lane removal to limit capacity, all in an effort to force drivers off the road and onto buses or trains."* (Public Inquiry Report, p. 160)

The above note presents Professor Whitmarsh as someone motivated by her desire to "force drivers off the road and onto buses or trains" and as someone who is not only opposed to the M4 but seemingly all road building. Being against roadbuilding per se evokes a certain kind of inability to compromise that is not an invited or desired behaviour in a participatory context. The use of the phrase "forcing drivers of the road" is not only emotive, as illustrated by ongoing, long-standing public debates on limiting driving in cities (Walks 2015; Jacobs 2016; Kuss and Nicholas 2022), but it is also not possible to know whether these were the words used by Professor Whitmarsh herself, or whether they are used to make a certain point by the Inspector in the report. The additional comment thus exposes a power dynamic: the objector does not have the power to choose how her comments are framed by the author in the report of the inquiry.

5.3.2.1. Language

To assess the evidence given at the inquiry, the report is structured to give space to the scheme's supporters, objectors and the Welsh Government's defence. It thus conforms to the norm of impartiality in its presentation of the arguments from all sides in its format. Like with policy documents, which are constructed to present knowledge using objective language (e.g. use of passive voice), any notion of the report as objectively laying out information to make a case for the M4 black route should be questioned in the discourse analytical tradition. Unlike with formal policy documents, the language used by the Planning Inspector is less formal. It is authored from the perspective of the Inspector, demonstrated by the use of first person and phrases such as "I am satisfied with the proposed changes…" (p. 482) and "in my view" (p. 481) throughout. While it is the customary format used by the Planning Inspectorate in reporting from public inquiries, the use of first person as opposed to more passive language illustrates the explicit power of the inspector as the representative of the governing authority. This is not only apparent in terms of

the Inspector's ability to frame the inquiry's events from his own perspective, but also that no attempt to disguise the power relations present is institutionally perceived as necessary at this relatively late stage of the planning process. It also highlights the position of the author, as opposed to the participants of the public inquiry, as the maker of the recommendation, which in this case was to proceed with the road as planned. The report is not unusually written but instead, follows the tradition of reports summarising the planning inquiry process. The analysis here is focused on the report, not the Inspector, to uncover relationalities that take place between different stakeholders, through an analysis of wordings, framings and statements put forward, in the discourse analytical tradition (Paltridge and Hyland 2012).

By concluding with a recommendation to proceed with the black route scheme, the report presents a narrative where one by one the evidence put forward by each of the objectors is refuted, bringing to mind the notion of more tokenistic participation used for box ticking (Arnstein 2019). Statements indicating that an objector is simply wrong are commonplace throughout the report. For instance: "The RSPB/GWT case maintains that the only notion of balancing in the [*WFGA*] relates to short and long-term needs. This is wrong and an over simplification" (p. 177). It is important to note that the objectors from RSPB and GWT are experts in their respective fields and while there may be disagreements over what an ambiguous, newly legislated sustainable development policy might look like in practice, stating that an objector's reading of it is wrong is an oversimplification in itself. There are further instances where either the inspector or the Welsh Government's rebuttal of an objector's comments states they are "wrong" (e.g. p. 35, p. 129, p. 154, p. 163), or their comments are based on evidence which has been "rebutted" (p. 185), or their comments are described as "opinions" (e.g. p. 34, p. 159, p. 163, p. 164), directly challenging the validity of the objectors' discourse from a position of power. The objectors do not get a chance in the report to challenge the rebuttal, as this is not within the remit of the report or the overall planning process. Considering the nature of power as a shaper of knowledge that is produced by the public inquiry, the planning inquiry report gives the impression of extended state power influencing the interpretation of evidence as 'right' or 'wrong'.

Certain words are used repeatedly, thus forming the core of the discourse put forward by the Inspector in the report. The word 'balance' is mentioned on 66 pages, often multiple times per page, referring to things such as taking balanced judgements in relation to development, the balance of the wellbeing goals as per the *WFGA* and the balance of ecology on the development site. While balance is a word used both in policy and by the Planning Inspector in relation to different things (the balance of aspects of sustainable development, the planning balance) and the use of the word by a Planning Inspector is not limited to the instance of the M4 (see, for example, 'planning balance' in reference to the planning inspectorate's decision on Bristol Airport: Moore 2022), the use of the word implies a particular balancing of different elements that could equally be balanced in different proportions leading to a different recommendation. Viewed through a lens of discourse analysis, balance is thus revealed as not a neutral word: it is constructed both socially and within the institutionalised policy discourse in place.

Discourse analysis emphasises the detection of not only what information is presented, but also what is excluded (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2016). This is entirely relevant to the discussion on balance: for example, the Welsh Government's statement responding to objecting comments from FGC Sophie Howe, emphasises a particular balancing of different wellbeing aspects: "The Commissioner is again wrong to suggest that the *WFGA 2015* requires public bodies to cease taking actions that would harm elements of well-being. It would be impractical to rule out any development if it were to cause harm to one aspect of well-being, without assessing that harm against the improvements to other aspects of well-being which it could bring. Balanced decisions must always be made that weigh the likely impact against the benefits of well-being" (p. 308). This example indicates the idea of balance as one that not only includes positives, but also negatives. Yet the report does not specify on how both the positives and negatives and their joint impact, have been measured as part of the road planning process. It is also apparent, that in opposing the scheme, the Commissioner has a different idea of what balancing different aspects of well-being should look like in terms of sustainable development to that of the Welsh Government. This contested dynamic aptly illustrates the notion of balance as something that meaning is inserted into, depending on the values and the institutional context of those able to engage in the struggle over meaning.

Carbon neutrality, traffic reduction, sustainable development, sustainability, mitigation measures and economic resilience (in relation to Wales) are phrases that are also used several times by the author, the Welsh Government's defence and the objectors, illustrating that these terms with specific meanings are interpreted differently in discourses put forward by the two sides. The report refers to a claim that the black route threatens only 2% of the present landmass of the Gwent Levels, something that was repeated in the press around the M4 coverage to justify the breaking up of the Levels ecosystem. For instance, by way of justification to go ahead with the scheme, the Inspector notes that "the inescapable reality is that only about 2% of the Levels by area would be affected and approximately 2% of the reen network by length." (p. 480). Linking back to the flow chart from *TAN5* (figure 9), this illustrates how the determining of the impacts of development is not necessarily a process solely based on specific scientific expertise on, for example, biodiversity: in the case of the M4, the Inspector maintained that the integrity of the site was not challenged by the development, while some of the opponents, with a potentially more informed understanding of the area's biodiversity, ascertained that the integrity of the site was in fact threatened. The reens are an interconnected web of ancient waterways, meaning that the implications of land allocation to a new motorway to the whole area's biodiversity would be more complex than citing the 2% figure would lead to presume. The 2% figure thus acts as another building block of the discourse focused on economic development which presents nature as reduced, simplified and something that can easily be mitigated for.

Overall, the use of language that appears to tick all the right boxes in enabling development that is sustainable, serves to construct a discourse around the black route where the case for sustainable development as per the policies in place can be said to take place. In reality, not all stakeholders perceive sustainability in the same way. Furthermore, based on the above discussion, it is clear that the notion of planning balance, much like the balance of sustainable development, is a concept that means different things to different people, therefore making it a tricky concept to consider from the point of view of collaborative, consensus-driven processes, instead lending itself well to the notion of agonistic struggle over dominant rationality.

The Welsh sustainable development discourse, as operationalised in the report and illustrated above through unpicking elements of the language used in *PPW*, highlights the importance of a balanced approach to development and environmental protections. Yet there is no evidence this balance has or can be achieved on the ground in Wales, or elsewhere, in a way that addresses environmental degradation. The ongoing breach of planetary limits, specifically in the category of land use, underscores that what might appear as balanced development on one scale may not be so when examining the bigger picture (Richardson et al. 2023). The Planning Inspector provides a reading of the *WFGA* and Wales's statutory commitment to sustainable development that relies on "weighing and balancing different considerations" (p. 35). The report can thus be seen as an effort to operationalise the sustainability discourse with a fixed meaning of sustainability as balance, with the aim of connecting the then-Welsh Government's ambitions to build the black route with its own sustainable development policy. The Inspector finds support from planning policy, making use of the *PPW's* relational approach to environmental protections reviewed earlier: providing it is 'reasonable' to build on designated SSSIs, it is sustainable for the road plan to go ahead. For example, in referring to Section 6 of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* (*EWA*), which *PPW* relies on in its wording of environmental protections, the Inspector states "The duty under section 6(1) is not an absolute one" (p. 176). This is, however, countered by a different discourse of sustainable development put forward by the objectors. For example, the Inspector's and the Welsh Government's reading of *EWA* Section 6 duty is challenged by RSPB, who as objectors to the scheme "dispute that the words: 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity'" weaken the duty as set in *EWA* (p. 31). These points of 'flex' in law then become points of contention where different sustainability discourses collide.

While framed by the Inspector and the Welsh Government's case for the road, the objectors' (resistant) discourse on sustainability is nevertheless persistent across the report. Firstly, through the volume of objections that cover almost half of the report's

length and secondly, in the arguments put forward by the objecting individuals and organisations. The report therefore puts forward two different discourses on how sustainable development, as per the *WFGA*, should be operationalised. Throughout the report, the Welsh Government's position is that going ahead with the road extension ensures long term economic sustainability for Wales. This is countered by the objectors' discourse that highlights the necessity of continued environmental and wildlife protections in the Gwent Levels SSSIs, the inclusion of public transport alternatives and a nuanced view that prioritising economic development does not enable balanced long-term sustainability. It is thus evident that the report pitches these two discourses against each other, repeating a pattern also followed by some of the participants. For example, the late Newport West MP, Paul Flynn's supporting testimony for the black route is summarised by the inspector as follows: "Whilst the philosophy of removing people from cars and onto trains is a worthy one, imposing misery on the people of Newport by denying the city a new motorway would be wrong, as the scheme would be immaterial in solving problems that affect the Planet" (p. 113). In attempting to provide justification for the road, this supporter testimony not only attempts to reduce the discourse on sustainable development put forward by the objectors into a "philosophy", but also, by claiming the scheme's 'immateriality' in relation to "solving problems that affect the Planet", links to a wider 'discourse of delay' around the futility of individual attempts to control or reduce emissions (Lamb et al. 2020).

5.4.   Newport *LDP*

Newport's *Local Development Plan 2011-2026* (*LDP*) was included in the analysis due to much of the proposed M4 development falling within the unitary authority's boundaries. The Welsh plan-led system dictates that local development plans must follow the direction set in the national spatial plan and planning policies. Newport's *LDP* thus simultaneously repeats and contributes to the prevalent policy discourses on sustainable development as "green growth" (e.g. *LDP*, Foreword) while working to translate the national policy approach into a specific local plan tailored for the city. The motorway development is not within the jurisdiction of the local authority but instead falls under the Welsh Government's remit. However, as LDPs are political documents, they contribute to the discourses around development and can therefore

be seen as actively participating in discourse struggles over development including major roads.

This non-neutral position is illustrated by the way in which Newport, as a local authority, participated in the public inquiry process and contrasting this with the priorities as set in the local plan. According to the M4CAN Public Inquiry report, Newport City Council provided written support in favour of the M4 development. The report further highlighted that the motorway scheme would be compatible with local planning policies and that it is seen in the Newport's *LDP* as "a key element for Newport" (Public Inquiry report, p. 56). At the time, Newport was seen as a would-be beneficiary of the black route in the public realm, based on the expectation (questioned by objectors at the inquiry) that the new route would reduce traffic on the old route that skirts Newport and causes air quality issues with significant negative impact to residents. This presented a dilemma in terms of balancing development and environmental protection needs on the local level. For instance, Newport's *LDP* makes frequent reference to the "rich and diverse landscape" (p. 47) and "rich and unique natural environment" (p. 58) that Newport continues to benefit from, including a large part of the Gwent Levels. Overall, the plan hails the city's natural environment in terms that evoke certain pride in the city's surroundings: "Newport has a rich and unique natural environment which this Plan seeks to protect and enhance. Areas such as the Gwent Levels, have been specifically recognised by the *Wales Spatial Plan*. Proposed developments will be required to avoid the loss of such a finite source" (p. 58).

Table 16: Gwent Levels designated protections from Newport LDP 2011-2026

Designated protections that apply	Designation applies
Multiple Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Gwent Levels, Severn Estuary
Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest	Gwent Levels
Archeologically Sensitive Area	Gwent Levels
Special Landscape Area	Gwent Levels
Partly included within the Green Belt	Newport
Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site)	Severn Estuary
Special Protection Area of birds	Severn Estuary
Special Area of Conservation	Severn Estuary

It is clear from the above that the road plan and the statutory protections that the local authority, along with the Welsh Government, are expected to follow were in direct conflict, yet what is interesting is that the *LDP* does not address this conflict in any way. Table 16 outlines these protections as per the *LDP*.

Newport LDP thus constructs two separate discourses, one on protecting its natural surroundings and one on economic development of which the road plan is part of. As the expression of support submitted to the public inquiry illustrated a practical commitment for economic development over environmental protections, it is also true that the black route was seen as an opportunity to improve air quality in the city. Yet this is not something that becomes salient as its own discourse. The above analysis of the *LDP* illustrates the difficulty of combining the different discursive strands within the sustainable development paradigm, which in this case are the ones on economic development and environmental protections while the social aspect is mainly covered in relation to housing need and community facilities.

5.5.   Conclusion: how does planning policy relate to resistance?

This chapter has developed an understanding of how discursive concepts such as nature, the environment and economic development are "continuously 'produced' through environmental policy making [and] planning", thus creating spaces for the discursive struggle (Feindt and Oels 2005, p. 163). As this chapter illustrates, discourses set in policy are operationalised during the implementation stage through contestation and conflict, but with power having the defining influence in the participatory scenario of the public inquiry. Certain flexibility is built into planning policy based on the legislative framework consisting of planning, conservation, sustainable development and environmental legislation. In relation to environmental sustainability, the relevant policies present this with room for interpretation through the use of phrasing such as 'relative steps'. In practice, this can result in interpreting policy in a way that will result in weakened protections, such as was argued by the Planning Inspector in his report on the M4CAN inquiry. Economic development is understood much more broadly than environmental protections which are specified

in numerous laws, policies and technical advice notes. As opposed to the wealth of environmental regulation that needs to be followed, providing a somewhat false impression regarding the strength of protections in place, policies concerning economic development present an overall priority narrative that is perhaps difficult to counter through the existing regulatory frameworks for environmental protections based on procedural box ticking.

Yet while the flexibility of environmental protections in policy is what enables the prioritisation of economic development over other aspects of sustainable development, it is precisely the same ambiguity written into policy that leads into discourse struggles over meaning during the development and implementation phase. Such imprecision in policy does not only necessitate resistance but further makes it possible both within and outside the formal conditions of the deliberative planning process. Where the notion of 'relative' steps and protections fails to stop development proposals on land that is statutorily protected as in the case of the Gwent Levels, it also creates space for resistance against how the policies can be interpreted and what implications these different interpretations have on development. The following chapters thus go on to discuss the details of the resistance per se, as relational to the policy landscape discussed above. First, public means of discourse construction by discourse participants will be analysed based on media coverage of the M4 extension, after which the findings from interviews with key stakeholders, tracing discourses from the public realm to the less easily visible, will be discussed.

6. Media analysis: defining discourse coalitions and identifying storylines

6.1. Introduction

Having explored the institutionalisation of the nodal discourse of sustainable development within Welsh planning policy and its operationalisation in practice within the M4CAN inquiry in the previous chapter, this part of the analysis turns to the elements that constitute the discursive struggle around the case study. The discursive struggle is investigated as it appears in newspapers at the time. The chapter subsequently presents the results of a qualitative content analysis of media articles, investigating discourse coalitions and storylines. These emerged between 2013 and 2019 in the local, Welsh and UK news media, during which the case of M4 'relief road' was salient in the public sphere, receiving significant attention. The analysis was conducted during summer and autumn 2021, two years after the cancellation of the road scheme took place. Data was collected using the Nexis UK database, which enabled a systemic exploration of media content from newspapers. The purpose of including the media analysis was to identify discourse coalitions and storylines which were hypothesised to emerge from the sample. These were then further examined to assess how actors placed at different sides of the discourse struggle around the M4 development worked to construct and operationalise certain narratives while attempting to override others. This chapter addresses the research question, 'How do discourse coalitions work to construct and counter planning discourses in multilevel governance setting, in relation to specific large-scale infrastructure projects?', by focusing on sub-questions A ('How is resistance constructed and applied to counter planning proposals put forward by the Welsh Government?'), B ('What tactics and strategies are used by discourse coalitions to co-opt to power to influence the planning discourse?') and C ('How do discourse coalitions mobilise alternative rationalities within the policy discourse on sustainable development?').

The chapter first outlines the context for the M4 case as it appears in the public sphere during the case study period, from both local and national (both Wales and

UK) news, including how discourse coalitions are formed around key actors. The first part of the chapter is structured around the categorisation of actors into three discourse coalitions, found to be environmental, economic and social, and the storyline attachment of each coalition. The discussion then draws on the data to map out power/resistance relationships between and within each of the identified discourse coalitions. The coverage analysed has also been used to define interview questions for further data collection and analysis. It should be emphasised that findings depict the case as it was represented by the newspapers included, which followed their own editorial priorities and selection processes, filtering sources and storylines accordingly.

6.2. Overview of the case as it appears through the lens of traditional media and the categorisation of actor groupings

The media should be understood as having its own agenda setting ability that directs how newsworthy issues are selected and framed (McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs 2004). Yet, particularly in the case of local news media, community structure theory insists the ability of local communities to express themselves through local news sources (Funk and McCombs 2017). The case investigated illustrated both qualities: local actors' voices came through in diverse detail in the local newspaper, South Wales Argus, while the data collected across the different sources highlighted differences in editorial choices in presenting the case. For instance, Wales Online exhibited a strong prioritisation of the economic case of building the motorway, detectable based on use of sources whose institutional context was national and related to economic development, as well as the unfiltered adoption of the Welsh Government's initial argument that the road extension would facilitate economic growth in the region. Meanwhile, some of the newspapers based on the national scale of the UK, rather than Wales, exhibited varying framings of the case depending on their own editorial and selection processes: the Guardian brought up the case from the perspective of the Gwent Levels wetlands that would be lost, while the Times and the Telegraph discussed the economic case for the road from the perspective of the whole of the UK's economic development.

The analysis further focused on gathering information on the discourse coalitions and storylines to categorise actor involvement and to unpick the construction of different discourses on the topic. The categorisation of discourse coalitions was hypothesised to follow the categorisation of the pillars of sustainable development into economic, social and environmental groupings (Baker 2016; Folke et al. 2016). This turned out to be an effective method of organising the actor related data, as most participants, as it appeared from the media coverage, were institutionally aligned with either economic or environmental organisations, or they were politicians or local campaigners with social objectives such as to do with health impacts of localised air pollution. The discussion chapter will further reflect on the complexities of selecting this method of categorisation to separate the discourse coalitions to explore their relationalities. In addition to considering each actor's institutional context, the content of their interventions as appearing in the news articles further influenced their categorisation into a given discourse coalition.

The three loose discourse coalition groups that resulted from this process were then mapped against storyline attachment based on whether the coalition supported the relief road proposal, or it was supported by some within the coalition but resisted by others, or it was not supported at all. Consistent with previous research into discourse coalitions (Hajer 1997; Stevenson 2009; Elgert 2012; Metze and Dodge 2016; Else et al. 2022), the M4 discourse coalitions were found to attach themselves to storylines in different ways and common ground between discourse coalitions could be found in storylines that were formed and developed relationally within the overall M4 'relief road' discourse. The most prominent three storylines were found to be:

> 1) the black route (in support of the 'relief road' proposal by the Welsh Government),
> 2) the alternative blue route (put forward by an independent transport expert and supported by actors from environmental and economic coalitions), which included two connected sub-storylines:
>> a) a sub-storyline around costings that saw the black route as 'increasingly too expensive'

b) a sub-storyline of regional development that equally connected with the black route as too expensive narrative

3) the storyline of public / sustainable transport as a priority over road development as the least salient storyline (supported by social and environmental coalition actors).

The relationality of the process of storyline construction emerges as a key finding from the analysis: discourse coalitions are found to actively develop their arguments within the overall discourse on the 'relief road' in relation to alternative rationalities put forward by other coalitions to maximize the take-up of their favoured position (support or resist).

6.2.1. Actor categorisation and discourse coalitions

Most of the participating actors identified in the newspapers analysed were politicians, environmental activists, voices representing Welsh businesses, experts such as Professor Stuart Cole and academics from Cardiff University and residents located across Gwent in South Wales, the region impacted by the proposed development. Majority of the politicians identified in the sample were elected to the National Assembly for Wales (or what is now the Welsh Parliament or Senedd Cymru following the *Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020*) but local governments in Newport and across Southeast Wales were also well represented in the sample. Of the environmental organisations involved, the most prominent were Friends of the Earth (FOE) Cymru and Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT). The voices representing industry were varied with Confederation of Business Interests (CBI) Wales and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Wales being the most regular media contributors.

The voices representing the environmental organisations involved appeared to form a unified discourse coalition prioritising the protecting of the Gwent Levels from the proposed 'relief road'. However, the most prominent participating coalition with the ability to gain most media space and a level of control over how the proposal was framed in the press was found to be that of the economic actors. The economic

discourse coalition both drew from and constituted the economic discourse, working to strengthen and support the Welsh Government's position that a 'relief road' was required. However, the coalition was not unified in its approach to the route options: the prioritisation of economic sustainability was viewed differently by FSB Wales and the rest of the coalition, leading to the promotion of different storylines. FSB was found to be vocal in making an argument against the black route on the grounds that it would be too expensive for the Welsh Government to commit to, whereas the blue route would provide a more fiscally sensible option that would better facilitate local economies.

The coalition discovered to be the least unified in terms of aims, objectives and institutional contexts was around the social aspect of sustainable development. The category included politicians where they voiced place-based concerns about Newport and other localities across Southeast Wales, such as Magor, and private and industry actors who had concerns about the impact of the plans on jobs. Residents faced with changes that would result from the 'relief road' going ahead were also included in the social discourse coalition. In some cases, the actors included in the social coalition also participated in the economic or environmental discourse coalitions, however, this was always through a secondary argument, often made to back up the priority argument made first that concerned the localised social circumstances. Figure 10 provides a visual illustration of the summary of the discourse coalitions and actor split provided in this section, while the following section explores the relationalities between them that emerge from the analysis in more detail, including the relational construction of storylines.

Black route

ECONOMIC

CBI Wales
Edwina Hart AM
Carwyn Jones
David Cameron
South Wales Chamber of Commerce
Welsh Conservatives
FSB Wales
Associated British Ports
Blue route
Wales Online
Newport City Council
ENVIRONMENT
Professor Stuart Cole
SOCIAL
South Wales Argus
FOE Cymru
Future Generations Commissioner
Mark Drakeford
Labour backbenchers
Roadchef
Gwent Wildlife Trust Local residents
Wales Wildlife Trusts
RSPB Cymru
Plaid Cymru
Sustrans
CALM campaign
Councillor Francis Taylor, Monmouthsire CC
Woodland Trust John Griffiths, AM for Newport East
Iolo Williams

Sustainable transport

Figure 10: Discourse coalitions and storyline attachment as they emerge from local and national (Wales and the UK) newspapers

147

6.3.   Visible and powerful: the prominence of the economic discourse in the media

The discourse constructed by the coalition of economic actors was found to be the most dominant compared to the social and environmental discourses in the media during the period of the study. This trend was consistent across all the newspapers examined, including SWA (local), WO (Wales) and the UK national titles who reported on the subject (the Independent, the Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Sunday Telegraph, the Guardian). Overall, 44% of all articles included in the data sample led with an economic framing of the issue. Additional articles referred to a combination of discourses, substantially increasing the total number of media reports promoting the economic discourse.

The prominence of the three different discourse coalitions was determined by the leading argument made in the first half of each article and by the order and space given to each actor quoted in the article. The arguments that emerge in the beginning of each article were treated as with the power to frame the issue discussed in the article thereon (Lakoff 2004). In line with the journalistic norm of balance (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007), articles often described various viewpoints including different actors from the political spectrum, from business coalitions and from environmental organisations for example. In these cases, the number of actors forming coalitions around a particular element in the discourse and the space given to their arguments, including the order of their appearance, were considered in determining the main discourse coalition attachment of the overall article. Furthermore, each of the discourse coalitions were found to utilise different storylines that help to arrange the multiple components from which discourses are constructed, in line with previous research into policy discourses (Hajer 1997; Stevenson 2009; Niskanen et al. 2023).

The plan to expand the M4 motorway in South Wales should be considered as part of the wider economic and political context of Wales, partly discussed in the preceding chapter on Welsh planning policy. The period of 2013-2019 simultaneously saw the development of the sustainable development principle into the *WFGA* and the acceleration of the plans to build the 'relief road'. The Welsh economy continued to struggle under devolution while bigger projects that at the time included proposals for a Tidal Lagoon in Swansea, a new nuclear power plant on the island of Anglesey and plans for improved public transport in the Cardiff city region had failed to proceed. This led to accusations of a *"pattern of under-investment"* into Wales by the UK government in the Welsh press (WO 20/01/2019).

Faced with economic pressures, the Welsh Government saw the M4 as a key piece of transport infrastructure in need of development: *"The Welsh Government is committed to addressing capacity and resilience problems on this key artery [M4], widely recognised as essential to support the Welsh economy"* (Edwina Hart, Welsh Government Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science in SWA 23/09/2013). Key voices from the business community and media supported the Labour-led Welsh Government in this commitment. The following comment from WO highlights this shared view of the importance of the road to Welsh economy: *"The M4 around Newport serves critical economic factors, connecting the whole of South Wales to England"* (WO 05/06/2019). Representing Welsh Businesses, Graham Morgan, director of the South Wales Chamber of Commerce commented in Wales Online that *"We regularly hear from members across South Wales about how the congestion around the Brynglas tunnels brings a halt to their businesses"* (01/11/2013). Furthermore, the 'relief road' became to be seen as crucial in securing long-term growth: *"The reality is that if Wales does not build a relief road we will increasingly miss out on billions of pounds in future investments and hundreds of jobs as major global companies consider modern and reliable infrastructure links a fundamental prerequisite to doing business in a country"* (WO 09/12/2013). The road capacity issues involving the M4 are therefore discursively linked to the wider economic landscape and its development in Wales. The 'relief road' can thus be said

to have become emblematic of Welsh economic growth during the initial period of 2013, providing a key narrative means for discourse structuration of the sustainable development discourse from an economic point of view (Hajer 1997; Hajer 2002).

To realise the road development, Wales needed the UK government to grant borrowing powers for the spend. Leading figures such as Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor George Osborne worked with the Welsh Government to proceed with the road that in its current state was deemed a *"foot on the windpipe of the Welsh economy"* by the two politicians situated in Westminster (SWA 01/11/2913, WO 06/11/2013). In the wider context of austerity politics, granting Wales with borrowing powers was clearly a win-win for both Welsh Labour governing in Wales and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition who could claim spending on infrastructure without having to commit to the actual spending themselves: *"this kind of big investment project shows that we're serious about spending on infrastructure and helping the whole country"* (a Westminster source in The Times, 02/04/2013). Subsequently the *Wales Act 2014* granted the required powers as noted in chapter 5. Support from both the UK and Welsh Governments and the backing of powerful voices in the business community featured in the media led to the economic discourse taking a prominent place in the wider discourse about transport development in Wales. Figure 11 summarises the Welsh governance structure as relating to the 'relief road', including both formal and informal power flows from and into the wider society.

Formal power

UK governance:
- Coalition government (2010-2015)
- Wales Act 2014 granted borrowing powers
- Secretary of State for Wales
- MPs (Labour) for Newport have no legislative power in relation to transport planning

Welsh Government
- Led by Welsh Labour
- First Minister Carwyn Jones 2009-2018
- First Minister Mark Drakeford 2018 present
- Key ministers: Edwina Hart, 2011-2016 and Ken Skates 2016-2019

Senedd Cymru (National Assembly for Wales until 2020)
- Labour backbenchers
- Opposition parties including Plaid Cymru, Welsh Liberal Democrats & Welsh Conservatives
- Committees including Environment and Sustainability Committee

Future Generations Commissioner (2015 onwards)
- Role to advice Welsh Government on delivering social, economic and environmental well-being and sustainability

Local government
- Newport City Council
- Monmouth County Council
- Bridgend and Torfaen
- Individual councillors

Influencing stakeholders

Expert voices, NGOs & businesses:
Influencing through media, committees, participatory planning such as consultations & public inquiry

Media, incl.:
British national media, Welsh media and local media

The public:
Influencing through petitions, protest & participatory planning & media representations

Figure 11: Formal and informal governance structures exercising power in relation to the 'relief road', based on the results of the media analysis

151

6.3.2. The divided economic coalition: storylines of power and resistance

As part of the economic discourse coalition, powerful actors including David Cameron, George Osborne, Welsh Ministers Edwina Hart and Carwyn Jones and industry voices such as CBI Wales and the Welsh Chamber of Commerce voiced prominent support for the black route storyline. Local Labour and Conservative councillors from Newport City Council also provided vocal support for the route that quickly came to be referred to as the 'relief road' in the public conversation, adding to the discursive construction of the road as essential and urgent, a 'relief' for commuters and businesses alike. For example, in an article titled *"Newport council gives qualified backing to M4 Relief Road"*, South Wales Argus uses the terms relief road and the black route interchangeably (16/01/2014).

The storyline was rooted in the decision by the Labour-led Welsh Government to consult on route options across the Gwent Levels, an area of multiple SSSIs in 2013. This consultation presented the black route as the main option for development, while suggesting two other routes as *"alternatives"* (Welsh Government 2013). The alternatives included in the consultation, were a 'red' and a 'purple' route, which also crossed the Gwent Levels: this would later enable the argument over whether sufficient alternatives had in fact been included in the consultation. Following the consultation, the black route was framed in the media as the Welsh Government's favourite option. This position was reiterated in the press regularly throughout the period with statements such as *"the Black Route is the Welsh Government's favoured option for the relief road"* (WO 10/03/2016). The black route thus became the main storyline not only within the economic discourse coalition but also within the wider discourse on the M4 development.

The resisting storylines identified in the sample can be characterised as relationally constructed reactions to the main storyline favoured by those in power in the UK and in Wales, supporting the conceptualisation of the discourse struggle. The main resisting storyline emerged almost immediately after the consultation on the black route had taken place. The Institute of Welsh Affairs and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport published a joint report in December 2013, prepared by Professor Stuart Cole, outlining a new and less costly alternative for the black route.

The route was reported picking up on earlier proposals by opposition party Plaid Cymru's Transport Spokesperson, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM:

> *"The logical conclusion would be to continue to upgrade the A48 corridor and address the Brynglas bottleneck. This would cost less and take less time to complete than an M4 Relief Road, and also leave more investment to spare for integrated transport projects elsewhere in Wales. My concern is that the UK Government's announcement could produce what is effectively a new motorway, over the Gwent Levels, will take decades to complete, and could be held up by legal challenges or even a public inquiry"* (SWA 26/06/2013).

The route option came to be referred to as the 'blue route' throughout the research period.

The estimate of the cost of the black route was £936 million in 2013. This figure further continued to go up during the period of 2013-2019, with the price tag placing it in the category of megaprojects. Contrasting with this, the blue route was estimated to only cost £380 million at the time (SWA 08/12/2013). As illustrated by the comment by Lord Elis Thomas AM referred to in the previous paragraph, the costings became a point of debate both in the Senedd and in the press. This debate continued to have relevance throughout the planning process. The blue route offered a serious alternative, around which actors with differing discourse coalition affiliations, concerned not only with the negatives associated with the road development over the Gwent Levels, but also the expense of the black route, could congregate to resist the main storyline. The actors within the economic discourse coalition favouring the blue route included local businesses and FSB Wales. Opposition politicians from Plaid Cymru and Welsh Liberal Democrats, categorised as belonging to the social coalition, additionally participated in the construction of the blue route storyline. FSB Wales repeatedly emphasised the support of their membership for the blue route: *"The Blue Route is a practical and deliverable option"* (Janet Jones, FSB Wales in an editorial, WO 12/05/2014). Although the black route was supported by actors with most political power and most scope for gaining space for their arguments, the analysis illustrates that the blue route storyline could be

shared more widely across different discourse coalitions, thus gaining power while having appeared as a form of resistance to the main proposal.

The blue route entered the discussion as an alternative that the public was not consulted on. It showed the consultation that had taken place in 2013 in a new light: as a vehicle for those in power to get their preferred black road option pushed through. For instance, Alun Ffred Jones, an Assembly Member for Plaid Cymru, questioned the legitimacy of the consultation, successfully shaking the grounds of the information provided by the Welsh Government on the black route in the process: *"… experts questioned whether the three options assessed as part of the consultation on the M4 corridor around Newport are sufficiently distinct enough to allow for meaningful comparison"* (SWA 17/06/2014). The blue route thus emerged as an alternative that different coalitions could use to construct their resistance against the 'relief road'. Working as a delaying tactic, the blue route storyline took the project back a step too: as the option was not included in the consultation that took place in 2013, it had not been formally assessed. This enabled questions around whether a cheaper and a quicker to build alternative had been missed in the Welsh Government's initial consideration of options.

6.4.   Unlikely collaborations: shared storyline attachment and strategies of delay

Multiple actors participated in constructing an environmentally focused discourse around the M4 development. The coalition's strategies for gaining discursive space in the media were exemplified by joint letters (for example published in WO 07/09/2015), the input into the public inquiry and the establishment of the CALM campaign in 2018 bringing together environmental and social actors, including members of the public. The environmental coalition included organisations such as GWT, Wildlife Trusts Wales (WTW), FOE Cymru, Sustrans, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW), Woodland Trust, RSPB Cymru and other non-governmental environmentally minded organisations in Wales. In addition, the coalition had several famous spokespeople, who were able to gain media space using their public profile. These included for instance the TV presenter and wildlife

activist Iolo Williams, actress Aimee-Ffion Edwards, musicians Kelly Jones and John Lydon (e.g. SWA 04/06/2019). In the sample of analysed articles, the most prominent voices identified were those belonging to FOE Cymru and GWT. Out of the celebrities in this category Iolo Williams' was the most visible voice during the period of the collected sample. The environmental discourse coalition's tactics for gaining discursive space included consistent engagement with the Welsh and national UK-level news sources, attempts to frame the debate from the point of view of environmental sustainability, using the public inquiry of 2017 to gain discursive space, and utilising petitions (SWA 31/10/2018, SWA28/03/2019) and protest (SWA 26/02/2018, SWA 04/12/2018) as vehicles to engage the public and influence politicians. These tactics illustrate that the participatory strategy was not limited to the top-down participatory occasions, opportunities for which were provided by the Welsh Government (e.g. the public inquiry), but instead consisted of a holistic, all-round strategy within which discourse construction in the public sphere played a key part.

Overall, the environmental discourse coalition was given less space than the economic discourse coalition across the full sample. This was especially the case with WO, whereas the local paper, SWA, ran more articles featuring actors from the environmental discourse coalition than WO. In the London-based newspapers with UK-wide catchment, the environmental argument prevailed towards the end of the sample period, illustrating a shifting dynamic of resistance and power through relational positioning of different discourse coalitions within the overall M4 discourse. These dynamics were supported, maybe made possible, by the utilisation of the blue route storyline by members of both environmental and economic coalitions. As the environmental coalition received less space than the economic coalition, those resisting the black route within the economic coalition become an important discursive ally through the blue route storyline. Journalist Martin Shipton summarised the situation stating,

> *"The lead-in time for the project means the new road will not be available for a decade. But small businesses want and need improvements to the transport network as quickly as possible - not in 10 years' time. It's not often that business interests and environmental interests coalesce, but this decision has*

managed to achieve just that." (Journalist Martin Shipton in an editorial, Wales Online 16/07/2014).

The environmental coalition made efforts to establish that they did not advocate for a no-solution and that they knew something needed to be done, just not at the expense of the Gwent Levels. Ian Rappel, Chief Executive of GWT, interviewed by Mr Shipton for Wales Online, took effort to illustrate that he was not an activist who could be branded as out-of-touch with ordinary people who were likely to be in favour of the road development:

> *"Asked how he [Mr Rappel] would respond to those who would say, that's all very well [protecting the biodiversity of Gwent Levels] but we need the road to relieve congestion, he said: 'First of all there's empathy because we are all commuters: there's no point pretending that we're not'"* (Wales Online 03/05/2018).

FOE Cymru echoed a similar point of view when Gerald Kells, representing the NGO, argued that *"Friends of the Earth Cymru is not arguing that we should do nothing to improve the M4 through Newport. We simply do not believe the proposed new motorway is justified"* (SWA 09/05/2017). Considering the prevalence of the economic discourse coalition in the debate, not saying an outright no to road development helped the environmental coalition to gain discursive space while it also ensured stronger support for those viewpoints within the economic coalition that vouched for the blue route instead of the black.

Along with this collaborative storyline attachment aligning with the interests of some in the economic coalition, the environmental coalition's readiness to fill up discursive openings that were brought forward by politicians operating within the multilevel governance system added to the coalition's ultimate success. Throughout the data collection period, opposition parties in the Senedd worked to both resist and undermine the Welsh Government's position of favouring the black route. Along with delays that took place in bringing the project to a close, this resistance to the Labour-led Welsh Government's plans contributed to more discussion about the routes in the media. The environmental coalition thus gained more chances to promote their

arguments for protecting the Gwent Levels, making sure to be available for comments when needed. For example, when the Welsh Ministers were repeatedly criticised for poor financial management of the project, the environmental coalition made sure to utilise the blue route sub-storyline on the politics of costings to save Gwent Levels: *"We think that borrowing £1.2bn to fund a motorway is bad for the environment and a bad deal for Welsh taxpayers, especially as the Gwent levels are home to so many wildlife species. The Gwent levels bring £67m worth of benefits - such as flood relief - every year."* (James Byrne, WTW, in SWA, 04/11/2013). The ability to utilise the economic framing of the case thus granted the environmental coalition more visibility in the overall discourse.

The environmental discourse coalition further benefitted from delays to the project as the longer time frame provided more opportunities for public engagement and mobilisation. The coalition members actively participated in the production of these delays: following the publication of the blue route alternative, FOE Cymru voiced a legal threat to the black route plans. This was based on the 2013 consultation which they challenged as *"unlawful"* due to the lack meaningful alternatives such as the blue route (SWA 17/12/2013). While the legal challenge was not successful, it provided a vehicle through which FOE Cymru could appear in the news several times during the period of the ongoing challenge from the moment the intention to proceed to a judicial view was first announced in 2013 until March 2015 when the high court decided in favour of the Welsh Government's plans. FOE Cymru *"…had argued that Prof Cole's proposed Blue Route, which would see the existing A48 and other roads south of Newport upgraded, should have been included in an original environmental assessment in 2013."* (WO 26/03/2015). The legal case thus worked as a means for gaining discursive space for resistance that could more effectively unfold over time. In effect, while the judicial review ended up backing the Welsh government's position on the black route, the delays to the process had nevertheless shaken its dominant position in the public sphere. In addition, this gave time and impetus to the construction of the two slightly different blue route sub-storylines on costings.

6.5.   Messy discursive spaces: the social discourse coalition, local impacts of road development and the 'sustainable transport' storyline

The social discourse coalition was found to be less defined than either the economic or environmental discourse coalition. This is perhaps unsurprising: the notion of social sustainability escapes a clear definition and has been found to be theoretically the least developed pillar of sustainable development (Dempsey et al. 2011). In practice, this meant that actors were found to participate in more than one coalition and their interventions in the social discourse were focused on localised impacts of the road plans such as noise and air pollution and jobs. Demonstrating this overlap, environmental actors used arguments highlighting the interrelated nature of social and ecological consequences of building a motorway over the Gwent Levels: *"So as the communities here, and the farmers and the villagers have used the land, they've also been maintaining these ditches - and as a result of that, the water is absolutely thick with life […] Our concern is it will change the character, but the ecological repercussions on wildlife, on hydrology and on the local communities will be quite devastating."* (Ian Rappel WO 03/05/2018). The overlaps between different coalitions thus concerned both institutional affiliation and arguments made in favour or against the road.

A variety of actors from local businesses such as the Magor services and the Port of Newport and both residents and politicians from Newport and across Gwent mobilised to construct the social discourse. The local focus of the discourse coalition illustrated the nature of multilevel governance as a system hosting competing aims and priorities across different scales when it comes to policy delivery. For example, where the blue route was used by the environmental coalition as an alternative to black route, consideration for localised noise and air pollution impacts of either route by the social coalition of actors led to ideas about public transport gaining prominence as another storyline. The public transport storyline was further supported by actors in the environmental coalition but, perhaps surprisingly, it was not the main storyline utilised by them as per the news coverage. Furthermore, the social coalition's attachment to the public transport, or any, storyline was less consistent than in the case of other discourse coalitions and their storyline utilisation.

Instead, the use of storylines by actors in the social coalition highlighted the scale-based differences between different actors within the coalition itself, as well as between each of the three coalitions. This point is illustrated well by the example of the dissenting voices within Welsh Labour and differing priorities displayed by the representatives of Plaid Cymru. For example, Newport City Councillor John Richards, representing Labour, raised questions about the impacts of the black route on Newport in a discursive rift against the black route supporting majority of the local party representatives: *"I have concerns relating to the prospect of another major road by-passing the city which may adversely affect our economic and regeneration aspirations [in Newport]. I also have concerns that sustainable public transport is not being considered together with the proposed route for a new motorway."* (SWA 16/01/2014). By utilising the phrase 'by-passing', Mr Richard further questioned the status of the black route as beneficial for the residents of Newport and challenged the aims of those representing his party in the Senedd. The motorway extension could have been termed a new M4 by-pass, as opposed to a 'relief road'. This never caught on, highlighting the discursive construction of the dominant rationality within the M4 discourse. Only those questioning the stated benefits of road development to Newport referred to the road as a 'by-pass' in the press. Consideration of the social impacts of economic development not only led to ideas of sustainable transport being voiced but it is also notable that the members of the social discourse coalition focus on considering the different road proposals from the perspective of their impact on local communities.

Within Plaid Cymru, some Assembly Members voiced concerns about local issues in Newport relating to both black and blue routes, such as noise pollution and impact on jobs, while others in the party called attention to the economic impact of the proposed 'relief road' in relation to Wales's regional development. Lindsay Whittle AM, representing Plaid, echoed industry concerns when he argued:

> *"This road will cause environmental damage and also seriously impact on the operations of the port of Newport which is such an important part of the town's economy. Associated British Ports has invested many millions of pounds and 3,000 jobs are affected directly or indirectly by the port so the real concerns*

cannot be ignored. It's time the Welsh Government admitted they are wrong before more public money is wasted. There is a much cheaper solution [blue route] and the Welsh Government needs to give it proper consideration" (WO 08/10/2015).

In the Senedd, Plaid Cymru had been consistent in their support of the blue route against the black route on economic grounds, decidedly focusing on South Wales rather than Newport per se: *"Plaid Cymru wants to keep the South Wales economy moving by investing in the Blue Route proposals around Newport. This would be a significant and exciting boost to the economy around the city, and would give traffic an alternative route when the M4 becomes too congested. It is a high-quality proposal which would deliver a huge infrastructure boost to Newport"* (Rhun ap Iorwerth AM, SWA 17/06/2014).

These comments made sense in the light of Plaid Cymru's concerns about regional development in Wales if the country's full borrowing powers were used to support the M4 extension. However, the support for the blue route in the Senedd proved problematic for when it came to protecting constituents from negative impacts in Newport. John Griffiths, AM for Newport East highlighted the development of the South Wales Metro as the best option *"in economic terms, environmental terms and social terms"*, rejecting not only the black route over the Gwent Levels but also the blue route: *"There are a number of communities there that would be very badly affected by noise and pollution problems that upgrading that road [for blue route] would bring."* (WO 02/01/2015). In this case, the local implications of the blue route led to support for the public/sustainable transport storyline.

6.6. Resistance in multilevel media discourses

Notable to the place-based nature of the social discourse is the use of local media to influence decision makers and construct resistance. While London-based broadsheets that cover the UK did run some stories on the M4 development, the local struggles over transport development in Wales were not described in detail. The Welsh local media served to highlight viewpoints from multiple different actors,

including environmental organisations such as GWT. Without SWA, the newspaper local to Newport, the public space for the discursive struggle over the development options would have been markedly narrower. The economic coalition featured heavily on WO, but the resisting actors within it would have lacked blue route and sustainable transport -allies from other coalitions to whom SWA provided more of a platform. By including voices from social and environmental discourse coalitions alongside economic actors, the local paper also painted a more nuanced picture of the impacts of the road development to Newport, whereas WO mostly defaulted to impacts from an economic viewpoint such as to do with the growth prospects of the Welsh economy. For instance, the following statement from GWT highlights various aspects important to some of the local residents:

> *"A motorway through this special area will result in huge damage to biodiversity, agriculture, recreation and local tourism, opening the doors for more development proposals in this special protected area. With the recent State of Nature Report stating that up to 60% of species are declining our biodiversity cannot afford further losses."* (SWA 05/10/2013).

Furthermore, local politicians from Newport and Monmouth could both exercise their power and participate in the construction of resistance through the pages of the local paper. While the political arguments over the road that took place in the Senedd were covered by both WO and SWA, more local conversations by both Welsh AMs representing Newport and South Wales East and local councillors in the area were given more space in SWA than in WO. While WO provided general estimates about the impact of the road on the economy, local councillors and businesses debated potential job losses in the area in SWA with for example councillor Frances Taylor building her community-based resistance to the route partly on this subject*: "…I am obviously concerned with the implication of people's jobs"* (SWA 10/02/2015). Local level conversation on job losses, such as referred to by Councillor Taylor, potentially impacting the motorway services in Magor near Newport (SWA 10/02/2015), can be compared to the more generalised level of economic estimates presented in WO throughout the case study period. These differences illustrate not only the multilevel nature of the impacts of transport planning approaches but also the different emphasis of discourse structuration on different scales. This influences the

arguments mobilised by resisting actors depending not only on their institutional context but also the scale they are located at. What could be regarded as power on one level, such as statements expressing a wish to retain jobs made by local councillors, could be taken as resistance as the message travels across scales and is received by the governing Welsh Labour who at the time favoured the black route. A multilevel analysis can thus highlight power and resistance as elements of the discourse struggle that are mutually constructed by multiple actors, helping to understand the complexity that underpins planning struggles.

6.7. The public inquiry (M4CAN) and the promotion of sustainable transport

Following public and political pressure that questioned the case for the black route made by the Welsh Government, a public local inquiry was announced for 2016. Ken Skates, the Welsh Government's Economy Secretary replacing Edwina Hart at the time, illustrated the Welsh Government's reaction to ongoing resistance when announcing the inquiry by noting the intention to consider alternatives, stating:

> *"It's been clear for some time that for businesses, commuters and visitors alike, the current stretch of M4 around Newport is unable to cope with the needs of modern Wales. This inquiry will provide open and transparent scrutiny of our proposed solution, and suggested alternatives, before providing vital feedback to inform a final decision on whether we proceed to construction"* (SWA 15/07/2016).

This can be seen as a victory for the environmental coalition and those in economic and social coalitions who had promoted alternative storylines to the black route. The inquiry eventually took place after delays in 2017, lasting just over a year, giving the resisting actors time to strengthen their coalitions and use the public realm to argue their case in the runup to and during the public inquiry.

The passing of the *WFGA* in 2015 helped to strengthen the storyline of the sustainable transport option, which until now had existed as a less prominent

storyline, mentioned by actors occasionally but overridden by the more prominent blue and black route storylines. Following the passing of the *WFGA*, a new voice also emerged in the discourse around the M4 development. Sophie Howe, as the FGC for Wales, argued that road development failed to take into consideration emerging trends in transport, suggesting she was concerned that there was "*a lack of consideration of future trends in transportation and I don't feel that the Government has paid sufficient regard to future issues, for example the impact of the Metro on reducing vehicle use in the area, changes in working practices, driver-less cars etc.*" (WO 19/07/2016).

Reflecting on the evolving governance context brought up by the tightening of the sustainable development principles through the *WFGA*, Welsh Government sources argued the black route to be "*the sustainable, long term solution to the problems, which would also best meet our social, environmental and economic objectives*" (SWA 26/08/2015). In a WO editorial, Ian Price from CBI Wales argued that the black route "*project is in accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*" as "*over half of the road would be built on contaminated or brownfield land and less than 2% of the Gwent Levels will be affected*" (WO 01/05/2019). Sustainable development thus emerges as important concept in the discourse of the M4 development, however, it is treated as an empty signifier (Brown 2016) by the different discourse coalitions, each attempting to insert their own preferred rationality to gain dominance over what the concept might mean in practice.

6.7.1. Resistance and the mobilisation of social capital

By the time the inquiry was confirmed to be led by an independent Planning Inspector William Wadrup, there had been nearly 9000 objections to road plans compared to 200 letters of support (SWA 19/07/2016). The public inquiry thus went ahead with significant resistance against the black route regardless of its powerful backers such as the Welsh Government who were promising to deliver a 'relief road' in their 2016 Welsh Assembly election manifesto. CALM, bringing together various non-governmental organisations and local residents, was established while the public inquiry was ongoing in 2018. Similarly to Ms Howe, the campaign group

argued for sustainable transport, suggesting that *"There are much better ways to stimulate the Welsh economy and to provide sustainable transport for all. We are calling on AMs to think again on this out-dated transport solution, which would fail to deliver on all its promises […] The Government's proposal is at complete odds with the Assembly's core policies on transport, sustainable development and the well-being of future generations."* (Catherine Linstrum, Chair of CALM, 22/01/2018). Similarly to the attachment to the blue route proposal, exhibited by some in the environmental coalition, the quote from Ms Linstrum illustrates relationality of resistance: instead of an outright refusal to agree with the plan, CALM appealed to AMs to think of improved solutions for the existing transport problem.

Celebrities, #savethegwentlevels -campaign and protests constituted final influencing efforts in the late 2018. SWA (08/11/2018) wrote that *"thousands of people"* signed the petition to save what environmental organisations had termed South Wales's *"Amazon rainforest"*. However, with Carwyn Jones stepping down as First Minister, there was to be an election for the role in December 2018. The Welsh Government thus announced that the decision on the road would be taken by the new FM in 2019, marking yet another delay. Later in 2019, the Newport West by-election in April and European elections in May meant that no decision could be taken until after them, to avoid influencing the election results. This meant that the resisting coalitions were given even more time and the petition against the M4 'relief road' reached nearly 20000 signatures during that time (SWA 28th March 2019). Reacting to public pressure that was building up resulting from climate change protests in the UK and globally at the time, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in April 2019. No direct link was made to the road case by the Welsh Government ministers, yet it seemed that the eventual timing of the decision supported the cancellation of the plans.

6.8. How the discursive struggle of power and resistance influenced storyline construction

The 'relief road' proposal, synonymous with the black route -option, became emblematic in the discourse of economic development in Wales during the early 2010s. Economic development was prioritised as a starting point not only by the business community in Wales but also by powerful backers of the black route both in the Senedd and the UK government. This influenced the black route becoming the default choice of plan and setting the agenda. Instead of challenging what was put forward by politicians, most of the news articles and particularly those in WO, the newspaper placed in Cardiff, subscribed to this agenda from early on. The popular term 'relief road' further affirmed the position of the route as a proposal with only positive consequences. This meant that criticisms made in the M4CAN public inquiry by resisting participants, discussed in chapter 5, barely featured in the public discussion on the M4 'relief road'. Instead, resistance was relationally constructed around the blue route and public transport alternatives as part of the public discourse. Illustrating this, the environmental coalition's focus, as it came across from the media sample, was on protecting the Gwent Levels through providing a level of support to both the blue route and public transport storylines, rather than directly resisting the road development. This may be because direct resistance may not have been a line of communications that was favoured by the editors of the newspapers analysed. Resistance-as-relational therefore aligned with the logic of the media, co-opting power from the economic discourse by employing economic argumentation of costings and value to highlight the importance of environmental protections. This approach to constructing resistance was further utilised by socially focused actors who brought attention to the consequences of road development to residents of Newport by highlighting jobs and regeneration needs. Resistance, therefore, is shown to be in a continuous state of flux in relation to power. Furthermore, the relational construction of resistance illustrates that the dual flow of power and resistance dictates storyline construction, instead of power alone.

This finding is further affirmed by the narrative changes that take place within the economic discourse towards the end of the sample period from 2015 onwards. While

the economic discourse coalition started from a position of power in the beginning of the case study period, exhibiting a position aligned with the Welsh Government's aims, the events leading up to the rejection of the road illustrate successful discursive mobilisation of resistance taking place in and through the local and national news media by actors in each of the three discourse coalitions. With the introduction of the *WFGA* in 2015, actors representing all sides of the M4 debate were found to take part in a discursive struggle over what sustainable development in the case of the M4 might mean. While the use of the blue road storyline by the resisting actors across each of the three discourse coalitions highlights the relational nature of the resistance, the attempts by the proponents of the black route within the economic coalition to place emphasis on *economic* sustainability further demonstrate the fluctuating dynamics of the power/resistance dichotomy: the need to discuss economic sustainability, rather than economic growth was brought on by the emerging need to frame the road development as the sustainable option after the *WFGA* was passed. While it is not within the remit of the act to specify on transport development per se, it seemingly had some effect of shifting the discursive dynamics of power and resistance in the case of the M4. Although the resisting actors across the three coalitions co-opted the economic narrative to gain power, the advocates of the black route attempted to regain power by framing the road development as in line with the Welsh sustainable development framework. This strategy was not successful considering that the road plan was rejected in 2019. However, it aligns with what has been regarded as the shortcoming of sustainable development in theory (Baker 2016): as a concept, the vagueness of sustainable development can enable the prioritisation of economic development over environmental and social goals. Had the decision on cancellation been made without the supporting discursive conditions of the 2019 climate strikes and declarations of climate emergency that were taking place, it may be that *WFGA* would not have provided enough support for a politician wanting to cancel the road plan. Figure 12 offers a visual depiction of the flows of power and resistance between different discourse coalitions, as identified from the media coverage, contributing to the discourse struggle between the different coalitions attempting to influence the development discourse.

Economic

- Black route as an emblem of growth
- Blue route as the more affordable option
- Framing of black route as sustainable

Environmental

- Blue route as co-option of economic narrative
- Public transport as sustainable development

Social

- Black route as threat to local jobs and regeneration

Resistance shapes power

Power shapes resistance

Power shapes resistance

Resistance through joint storyline attachment

Size indicates both weight of argument and power/ resistance flow in the newspapers examined:

Figure 12: Power/resistance relationships leading to a discourse struggle over the M4 plan as reflected by the analysis of media coverage

The Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse formation sees discourses as processes of incremental transformation through continual displacement (Foucault 2002a). In the case of the M4, delays and raising costs that are common in the case of large infrastructure projects (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003; Marshall and Cowell 2016; Carse and Kneas 2019) stood out from the articles through which the case was constructed in the media. The tactics of environmental advocates to actively produce delays through the introduction of and advocating for alternative storylines challenged the project and created public pressure for those in power to provide more opportunities for participation such as the M4CAN public inquiry. Furthermore, the case illustrates that storylines need time to evolve and gain prominence so that they can become what defines the parameters within which solutions to complex problems can be developed. The active construction of delays by activists but also by opposition and local politicians who challenged the plans of the Welsh Government can be seen as part of the process of the incremental transformation of the M4 discourse towards the eventual cancellation of the project.

The events further evoke the question of whether the development of public resistance was considered a significant factor by the ruling party already much before 2019 when the road plan was cancelled. Did Welsh Labour wait for a politically suitable opening in the discourse to announce the decision against the road instead of admitting that the road was becoming too expensive for the devolved administration or that their political priorities had shifted? The weight given to the economic framing of the road plan by actors in not just the economic but also environmental and social coalitions suggests a stronger link between power and the economic pillar of sustainability than with other two pillars, whereas starting from a position of resistance appears more characteristic to those concerned about social and environmental issues. Considering that the status of the M4 project as an emblem of Welsh economic growth was not questioned by the resisting actors per se, at least not in the realm of the public facing media, rejecting a proposal so strongly linked to economic growth in Wales could have been seen as a political failure for the devolved government if it was not for the specific discursive conditions that took place in 2019.

6.9. Conclusion: the usefulness of media discourses as a vehicle for tracing multilevel participation

By utilising a conceptual framework that relies on the discourse struggle as the central element, the research argues that planning outcomes are shaped by the inter-relational dynamic of power and resistance. The results of the media analysis confirm this hypothesis by revealing that actors use media at different scales of the multilevel structure to both mobilise and construct relational resistance. The findings highlight the production of delays and the introduction of alternative plans by stakeholders as impactful resistance strategies as they appear from the media coverage.

The results of the analysis clearly refute the notion of power as the main builder of planning discourses. Actors come together in discourse coalitions, mobilising both power and resistance in and through the media. The media analysis enables explorations of visible flows of power and resistance taking place in and through the public sphere. However, it is not possible to analyse the covert dynamics of power and resistance drawing from a sample of published content. Therefore, further exploration of the less visible strategies contributing to the construction of storylines is argued to help to understand how the fluctuations of the power and resistance shape the transition towards a model of transport planning in Wales that is not focused on road building. The following chapter explores the non-visible flows of power and resistance through interviews of key discourse coalition participants.

7. Resistance and sustainability transitions: analysis of interview data

This section discusses key findings that emerged from the twelve in-depth research interviews with leading members of environmental, social and economic coalitions conducted in the spring 2022. The interviews confirm much of the findings of the media analysis, such as that resistance benefitted from the delays into the M4 case planning process, but also a level of intentionality behind the storylines that emerged in the public realm during the case study period. However, the interviews also depict a messier, more complex and more emotional landscape of conflict and resistance and highlight a more organic development of discourses and storylines, than was alluded to by the media analysis. This chapter addresses the research question, 'How do discourse coalitions work to construct and counter planning discourses in multilevel governance setting, in relation to specific large-scale infrastructure projects?', by focusing on sub-questions B ('What tactics and strategies are used by discourse coalitions to co-opt power to influence planning discourse?'), C ('How do discourse coalitions mobilise alternative rationalities within the policy discourse on sustainable development?') and D ('What relationalities emerge between the discourse coalitions and the multilevel governance system in the case of devolved governance?').

The chapter is arranged as follows: the key findings that emerged from the discussions with members of the economic coalition in relation to their position as powerful allies of the Welsh Government will first be outlined. This is to frame the subsequent discussion on the dynamics of resistance of the environmental coalition as relational to power. The chapter will then move on to discuss the discursive strategies and tactics of the environmental coalition within which the most unified resistance took place. Finally, the chapter will highlight the impact of resistance on multilevel governance dynamics, finding that in a devolved governance setting impactful planning discourses are constructed targeting the decisionmakers on the devolved level. Thus, successful resistance can leave local politicians powerless in the face of discursive change. Furthermore, the dynamics of place-based discourses of resistance and the wider societal discourse on environmental change are noted as

jointly enabling the Welsh devolved government to move away from car-based transport planning and development towards a more sustainable approach.

7.1. Power and the economic coalition

Most of the actors in the economic coalition supported, and had lobbied for, the Welsh Government's proposal for the black route. Interviewees in this coalition recounted how they constructed their support through influencing mechanisms such as interacting with and briefing ministers and making themselves available as media commentators through cultivating relationships with journalists and being willing to make comments to the press at short notice. The organisations with visible profiles around the M4 case all had a level of ability to collect and present data on issues concerning Welsh businesses. For example, in the case of South Wales Chamber of Commerce, I was told that the organisation regularly surveyed their membership of circa 12,000 businesses to identify topical needs and problems. Reports published and circulated to ministers were thus based on the data gathered from businesses in Wales directly. This helped to both strengthen the case for the road, as well as ensure a good relationship between the Welsh Government and the members of the economic coalition. In discursive terms, the data collected from Welsh businesses helped to construct the case as both necessary and urgent economic development for the country. This illustrates an asymmetric flow of power: not all organisations involved had the resources for such extensive data collection.

There were some differences as to each of the contributing organisation's membership structure. Regarding the FSB, who early on vocalised their support for the blue route due to it being significantly cheaper than the black route, I was told that their membership was more spread across all of Wales rather than concentrated in the cities in South Wales, thus differing from CBI and the Chamber of Commerce. FSB's position was therefore informed by their membership, who, as one interviewee emphasised, were not against building roads, but were worried about the amount of money that would be spent in South Wales and there potentially being nothing left for smaller communities in mid- and North Wales: *"smaller businesses are embedded in their communities. It's not like they can move to where the transport is better"*

(Econ3, policy, interview). This meant that while the Welsh Government's support for the black route was clear to all parties, the economic coalition took it upon itself to use its power as a discursive ally to Welsh Government to persuade other stakeholders, including within its own coalition, to support the road: *"Welsh Government actually was on board of this project. So we weren't trying to persuade them. We were trying to persuade the wider business environment and then the wider stakeholders"* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview). Linking back to the media analysis of the previous chapter, this statement illustrates that those in the economic coalition in support of the black route were doing the work of influencing coalition partners and others, in the media and elsewhere, often on behalf of the Welsh Government. While the black route storyline was powerful and dominant, its construction was never quite finished as there continued to be stakeholders who needed to be persuaded. This exposed it to competing storylines, as was illustrated by the previous chapter discussing the blue route, and the related storyline on the black route as 'increasingly too expensive'.

However, the black route storyline had dominated the M4 discourse from the start in 2013. This, together with the position of power the economic coalition held as allies of the Welsh Government in wanting to see the road extension delivered, appear to have stalled any resistance amongst the coalition when the discourse started to turn against the black route. The coalition was not set out for resistance and struggled to respond when finding themselves in opposition. The cancellation of the road by Mark Drakeford was described in terms such as a "*mood swing"* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview) and *"politics"* (Econ4, planner, interview). This is interesting, because the media discourse built on the importance of the M4 'relief road' as a sound economic decision presented the development as an apolitical necessity. In the end, the Welsh administration in power in 2019 went against that rationality despite the previous administration's drive to extend the motorway. For those who worked to construct the economic discourse around the business need for a new stretch of motorway, the decision not to build it was a political one, not a rational one. Moreover, what was political was placed in the realm of emotion: something unreliable, subject to swings and moods. These participants perceived that the devolved government did not just lack funding to fully commit to the motorway extension, but it also lacked the rationality required for a large, costly infrastructure project.

The interviewees acknowledged the funding constraints the devolved government faced including limited budgets and borrowing powers, but they also articulated what they thought of as hesitancy to commit and bring through significant infrastructure development: *"Conversely, rather than actually backing a project that's going to make a significant future statement, there's always this preoccupation with a Labour Welsh Government to share the money as far and wide as it can."* (Econ2, lobbyist, interview). Coalition members were concerned that this more general outlook of the devolved administration would lead to a lack of investment in Wales, particularly compared to England. 'Sharing the money' widely meant that investment was not directed to where it was perceived as economically most sensible to make it. In the case of the road, the interviewees recollected that South Wales brought more money into the economy than North and mid-Wales combined. Therefore, it made sense to focus infrastructure spending on the region. Conversely, it was not sensible to let England have the jobs that could come to Wales if the Gwent Levels area was developed. Development on the other side of the Second Severn Bridge, including the Amazon distribution centre located in Avonmouth behind the Severn Beach, was brought up several times when discussing jobs, as was traffic on the M4, because people would now commute from Wales for work as opposed to having an improved road connection that would enable job creation in South Wales.

It is not surprising that the arguments made by the economic coalition were about making Wales attractive for investors and gaining jobs. However, in order to argue that the road was in line with Wales's focus on sustainable development, the economic discourse would have needed broadening to include considerations of the environmental and social impacts of transport routes upon future development in the area, as well as a discussion on the quality of jobs any investment might attract. Yet these aspects were not considered: environmental concerns were sidestepped or pushed away by questioning whether the area needed protections and the quality of jobs such as offered by Amazon was not brought up. Comments such as *"I think [it] was between one and 2% loss of habitat. So while it wasn't zero, it was minimal."* (Econ4, planner, interview) illustrate a straightforward dismissal of the environmental argument as opposed to an attempt to engage with it. A second example is provided by another member of the economic coalition:

"We ended up creating this sort of wonder world of, say that the Gwent levels is the equivalent of the Amazon. All I do is say go and look the other side of the bridge, right across the Second Severn Crossing, and then cross, then at the junction of the roundabout immediately on the England side […]*, go southwards on the M49. And you will see millions of square feet of new buildings going up on the Avonmouth levels, which fundamentally is the same biology and geography as the Gwent levels."* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview)

Any arguments made by actors in the economic coalition in the press, which alluded that the development of the 'relief road' could be sustainable thus lacked backing. When the environmental coalition countered the economic coalition's hollow notion of sustainability, it was able to do so by giving the concept more depth. This illustrates a previous point about the economic coalition not being organisationally, or discursively, geared to resist: their arguments lacked the ability to relate to the sustainable development policy agenda which was strengthened by the *WFGA* from 2015 onwards. This is interesting: a lack of ability to contribute to *relational* construction of storylines by adjusting the economic viewpoint to cover sustainable development more broadly (e.g. using an ecological modernist lens) could have helped the economic coalition's main argument for road construction. While the economic actors focused their discourse on missing out to England, other actors were building a discourse around what it meant to do things differently in Wales.

7.2.   The organisational logic of resistance

Resistance to power was found to be most unified within the environmental coalition. This finding was uniform across both the interviews and media analysis. Whereas the previous section focused on power held by the economic actors, how it was used and how it was eventually lost in the leadup to the decision to cancel the road by Mark Drakeford, this section's focus is on the actions and arguments put forward by the actors who made up the environmental coalition. This section begins with an exploration of how resistance was constructed both through organisational decisions and by individual actors, followed by a discussion on the theme of time which

emerged strongly as something that coloured the activists' experience of resistance and the case. Each of the actors interviewed had a leading role in the campaign against the M4 'relief road'. Furthermore, each of the organisations they represented had their own role to play in the campaign and by focusing on different tasks they ended up leading at different times.

7.2.1. *The role of emotions in building resisting discourses over time*

The "*zombie*" (Env2, campaigner, interview) nature of the M4 project, which led to its resurfacing in the early 2010s after being debated since the 1990s and rejected in 2009 on financial grounds, meant that many stakeholders from all sides were invested in the case for a period significantly longer than a decade. In practice, this meant that an involved individual may have spent countless hours, over weeks, months and eventually years as part of their working lives or as volunteers and sometimes both, resisting the case. Analysing stakeholder participation in relation to the development thus requires an understanding of how the formal participatory processes, namely the public inquiry and the consultations that took place, merely punctuated what was the longer-term involvement of certain actors in the case.

The interviewees were advised that the research period was limited to the 2010s reincarnation of the M4 extension, starting from the black route consultation in 2013, which had already limited the options for the road as crossing the Gwent Levels, and ending with the decision by Mark Drakeford in 2019 to cancel the plan. The reasons for limiting the research period in this way are covered in chapter 4. Multiple interviewees brought up the earlier history and the several iterations of the M4 extension proposals that took place prior to 2013 as important context for their involvement. Furthermore, the future of transport and road building in Wales was also discussed, illustrating the somewhat artificial limitation of the case study period for purposes of the research. One interviewee, for example, remarked: *"This is the motorway that is like the zombie project that doesn't want to die. You think you've killed it off, and it comes back. And we feel now that we've killed it off, but we know that it might actually raise its head again…"* (Env3, campaigner, interview).

This comment, referring to the 2019 decision against the road, draws from earlier experience: other interviewees recounted how the decision in 2009, made by then-deputy first minister Ieuan Wyn Jones, to not go ahead with the road development on cost grounds, had merely marked a break, rather than an end point, for those involved with the road proposal. One of the main campaigning organisations working to protect the Gwent Levels held a meeting discussing what to do next, deciding to keep money aside for a future fight against the road: *"We even said we still got money in the kitty, how about we spend that on something else, you know, give it as a donation to Wildlife Trusts to spend on conservation. And I was like, you know what, let's keep it in the kitty cos this will come back."* (Env1, lobbyist, interview) Illustrative of conflict in multilevel governance systems, the difficulty in isolating a case from its historical and future contexts is not just a challenge for the researcher, but also for those taking part. Infrastructure development is notoriously time consuming. As illustrated by the M4 development, even the cases that do not end up being built can take years of stakeholder time spent navigating the uncertainties of what the future might bring and how to best be prepared for it.

The interview data thus illustrates that resistance emerged in line with the surfacing and resurfacing of the M4 project, setting stakeholders' lived experiences in sync with what were perceived as *"the swings and flows of industry in Wales"* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview). This meant that the emotional toll of participation in the planning struggle accumulated over time and this was particularly evident for those in the environmental coalition focused on protecting the landscape and biodiversity of the Gwent Levels. Attempts to protect this remaining, both culturally and environmentally rare landscape against what was seen as the dogma of economic development by actors in the environmental coalition stemmed from an emotional connection to the environment, but also from the knowledge and understanding of the wider picture of biodiversity loss and climate change that, uniquely, this group of stakeholders had.

The sense of overhanging potential destruction of the landscape further came through in multiple interviews, with one interviewee articulating the feeling as the M4 "*hanging over us like the sword of Damocles*" (Soc4, manager, interview) and another one describing her *"sense of a potential loss"* as *"a very profound emotional thing"* (Env3, campaigner, interview). For those in the social and economic coalitions

reflecting upon the events of the past twenty years around the M4 development produced different emotionalities, for example, frustration and annoyance at the fact that the problem the road proposal had initially been fashioned to solve had not gone away, while also understanding the environmental reasons for protecting the landscape. One interviewee on the opposing side to the environmental coalition highlighted their concerns for air pollution in Newport for the reason for being upset that the road did not go ahead, however, this was not an emotionally straightforward position: "*I had to think quite hard about what I felt. Because for me, naturally, it's not my natural sort of feeling to want to build lots of roads, because actually, one of the reasons I got into politics, I was sort of inspired by environmental issues*" (Soc2, politician, interview)*. In the economic coalition, no such conflict of emotions took place, however, the stakeholders interviewed expressed frustrations for Wales not being able to commit to large infrastructure projects and thus potentially being left behind compared to England.

Importantly, emotions came through strongest in the interviews with those from the environmental coalition, which was unified around resistance to the M4 extension. The interview data collected thus illustrates a profound link between resistance as an attempt to protect the environment and expressed emotions, built up over time: *"the whole thing was extremely, extremely […] emotional and I am actually just welling up just thinking about [short break]. It's very, what's the word, there was just so much stress and tension, for years, and during the public inquiry it was really really stressful. That was the word, anxiety"* (Env1, lobbyist, interview). This link was not present in the same way with the coalitions where resistance did not take place or took place to a lesser extent, highlighting an imbalance of effort that went into different stakeholders' contribution to the case depending on their positions of power and resistance.

The group of actors resisting the road from an environmental viewpoint or working to protect the Gwent Levels was *"a relatively small community"* where *"you would keep coming across the same people in different contexts"* (Soc4, manager, interview). The coalition therefore utilised a wider discourse of protecting the environment against road development, drawing support not locally, but across the sphere of environmentally minded people in Wales and England, willing, for example, to sign petitions for support. The activists denounced the lack of local public support in interviews conducted for the analysis, yet their successful petitions and regular appearances in the news media made resistance against the road scheme appear more significant than it perhaps was on the ground.

Aside a small number of activists working on the case, there were further constraints that limited the campaigning organisations' abilities to work together and, equally, to be seen to work together. These were to do with each organisation's remit and ability to participate in the discourse because of for instance funding structures, organisational agendas, reliance on volunteers or a very limited number of staff working on the case. Experiences of the public inquiry, for those in the environmental coalition, clearly illustrate the constraints put in place by those in power, for those who took the position of resistance. The interviewees who had taken part in the public inquiry recollected what they in no uncertain terms perceived as the uneven power balance in the room. They described how they were not allowed to collaborate with each other while the Welsh Government lawyers and staffers were able to pass notes to each other during proceedings, for instance. This power imbalance was further exacerbated by the fact that resisting actors without exception were time-poor, whether they were volunteers or paid members of staff of small organisations and would have benefitted from joint working and shared preparation in contrast to the legal professionals defending the motorway development, who were perceived to be "*highly paid by public with public funds*" (Env3, campaigner, interview).

Furthermore, the planning inspector appointed to lead the public inquiry had a professional background as a road engineer, which was pointed out to me by several

members of the environmental coalition. Interviewees representing the other coalitions did not mention the inspector's background, but instead, talked about the public inquiry report as something impartial and as *"evidence"* (Econ4, planner, interview) written by experts, implying objectivity. In stark contrast, the resisting environmental coalition uniformly considered that the inspector would "*rule in favour of the road from day one*" (Env2, campaigner, interview). Each of the factors adding to the imbalance meant that what was essentially a limited number of dedicated activists participating in the public inquiry had a difficult and unpleasant experience, something one of them aptly described as a *"a David and Goliath match"*, where they *"could not be seen as colluding, as it were"* (Env3, campaigner, interview). The public inquiry added to the negative and stressful experience of resisting the road development which coloured the environmental activists' experiences of the long campaign of resistance.

Regarding further limitations to effective joint working, some of the interviewees talked about Welsh Government funding of environmental organisations, alleging that this influenced whether certain organisations took part in the campaign against the motorway extension at all, or whether they did so openly. One interviewee told me that there were at least two environmental organisations in Wales, in receipt of public money, which had been told by *"senior civil servants"*, along with the then-Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science, Edwina Hart, that *"if they did anything to challenge her road, they would not get any more funding"* (Env4, campaigner, interview). 'Doing anything' included work such as the publication of press releases in any way challenging the road, for example. These organisations did not explicitly take part in resistance, yet a few of the interviewees alleged that their support was channelled towards organisations taking a more public stance in less visible ways. The dynamics of storyline construction by discourse coalitions are thus influenced by both visible and invisible actors.

Whether actions were condemned explicitly by those in power or not, funding structures influenced aims and goals of organisations. Provided opposing a given development is not within the stated aims of an organisation, then it understandably becomes difficult to campaign against it even if staff have personal feelings about the issue at hand. A representative of one organisation working to enhance both social

and environmental value of the Gwent Levels explained their funding arrangement to me. He was very clear that the aims of their work were solely focused on protecting the landscape and that their collaborative funding structure, including local government, meant that it was not possible or even desirable to do the work that the funding had been granted for while publicly going against the motorway. While he expressed relief that the motorway extension did not go ahead, he emphasised that this was a personal feeling and not something that interfered with his or his team's day-to-day work: *"I mean, obviously for individual staff members with sort of deep-seated beliefs about these things. That kinda was awkward at times, but officially [we] had to remain neutral on the M4 extension" (*Soc4, manager, interview*).* Illustrating the boundary between personal and professional, the quote also highlights the common reality of working in the environmental sector: many people care deeply about the environment they are working to take care of or improve, but it is not always possible to demonstrate resistance through visible participation in the planning process. Resistance might instead be something as small as a continual work to protect and raise awareness of the value of the landscape, even in the face of impending development that threatens the continuation of the work.

Some organisations can take a dual approach to interacting with development plans, something that is often called a *"twin track approach"* (Env2, campaigner, interview). The term refers to a situation where an environmental NGO or a third sector organisation works with the developing entity to improve the plans to better suit their aims, for example by achieving compensatory actions elsewhere (e.g. tree planting), while also working with their own membership to question or challenge the development. The fact that the approach was used by some in the M4's case caused disgruntlement with other members of the environmental coalition who did not want to accept compensatory actions offered by the Welsh Government, such as planting a forest at a different location to make up for the specific biodiversity of the Gwent Levels that would be lost should the motorway development go ahead. Furthermore, the twin track approach was seen as *"misleading"* by some, as while publicly resisting the development, work would take place *"in the background", "actually helping to smooth the process for the development to go through"* (Env2, campaigner, interview).

GWT was one of the key organisations with a more radical organisational stance, taking a decision not to utilise the twin track approach: they took a decision early on to not help the Welsh Government to proceed with the development *"in any way, shape or form […] but to actually resist them completely as a campaign."* (Env2, campaigner, interview) This was enabled by way in which the Wildlife Trusts are structured, with locally rooted organisations across Wales and a separate more lobbying-focused body WTW which is answerable to all the local Wildlife Trusts. WTW and GWT both worked to protect the Gwent Levels from the motorway extension, yet their tactics were markedly different due to the different institutional aims and their organisational separation. They worked closely together, but differences of opinion were clearly present, such as in the case of the blue route alternative. The organisational structure, however, meant that staff working for each of the organisations were able to make their own individual decisions about strategy. This had the effect of both diversifying and amplifying the storylines put forward and utilised by the resisting environmental coalition.

These examples of differing organisational aims and processes, coupled with the unevenness of power that is part of the formal participatory process and the differences of opinion in terms of what action is best to take paint a picture of certain fragmentation and looseness in the makeup of the environmental coalition. This is in line with theorisations of discourse coalitions as loose categories or groupings of people (Hajer 1997). This exploration of the formation of the resisting environmental coalition adds to an understanding of the mechanisms, such as organisational constraints, that lead to this fragmentation, which is then amplified in the public sphere and the media, where some messages get through and some do not. Within the coalition approaches and opinions varied and some organisations and individuals were more radical than others. From the perspective of planning participation, what is intriguing is that resistance by a relatively small group, experiencing multiple constraints to the ways in which they could work to try to stop the development, had such a significant reach when it came to the outcome. The strategies and tactics of this small core group of people committed to *"principled resistance"* (Env2, campaigner, interview) will be explored in the following section.

7.2.3. Delays and diversions: development of storylines over time and space

Time as it flows through cycles of infrastructure development emerged as a significant conceptual element from the research interviews. Resistance was not only built in relation to the dominant discourse of road construction as necessary development for Wales, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also over time. Time was used by activists as a tool, sometimes purposefully and sometimes by accident, to enhance resistance, while it also emotionally bound those involved to the landscape they were working to protect. There were several delays that occurred during the planning process of the M4 extension, which were first highlighted by the data from the media analysis. This finding was then followed up with the interview participants, many of whom confirmed that resistance both produced and benefitted from delays in the planning process: *"You've got to, if you're campaigning, you can play for time. Because the mainstream have got everything. And you've got very, very little" (Env2, campaigner, interview).* While the media analysis highlighted the potential of using delays to gain time for relational discourse construction, the interviews helped to confirm more specific tactics both of delay production and ways in which resisting activists could use delays that were happening regardless of them to their benefit. The latter is a key example of relational resistance, illustrating how resisting stakeholders adapt to the system where delays with big infrastructure development are commonplace: activists worked within the system to gain time, influence and power over the discourse that shaped the eventual planning outcome. An example of a delay produced by resistance is provided by the judicial review which took place in 2015, initiated by members of the environmental coalition.

One interviewee who had played an instrumental part in bringing on the judicial review against the M4 extension, explained to me that while a judicial review was ongoing, it stopped the Welsh Government making any decision on the project, thus halting progress until the case had been concluded: *"I think everything was also playing into the idea of delay. But at the same time, we thought we could win a judicial review"* (Env4, campaigner, interview). Although the judicial review ended up being in favour of proceeding with the M4 extension, the time spent on it had, crucially, taken the Welsh Government into the pre-election period, which further meant that decisions would have to be delayed until after the general election in May

2015. Furthermore, it became clearer over time, that the minister in charge of the project, Edwina Hart, was not going to stand again in the National Assembly for Wales elections in the following year. Ms Hart's role as a key driver of the project was well acknowledged by everyone interviewed: "*I'm absolutely convinced if we hadn't done the judicial review, then she would have pressed that she wanted that as a legacy. It was so clear from everything she said, and everything she did that she desperately wanted to go ahead*" (Env4, campaigner, interview). The resisting environmental coalition thus had a strong grasp of key actors in relation to whom they were constructing their plan of action. As electoral politics works in cycles, they were eventually able to exploit the departure of a key minister to their benefit.

Another way to work to delay processes is illustrated by shared storyline attachment. An example of a shared storyline identified from the media coverage analysed in the previous chapter is provided by the 'increasingly too expensive' resisting sub-storyline. This sub-storyline was prolific in the discourse around the M4 extension during the case study period and it was propelled by actors from each of the different coalition, thus enabling it to gain strong presence in the public sphere and making it a serious argument against the black route. The storyline narrated that the costs of the project were going up in real time and that it was fast becoming untenable. It worked interchangeably with the second related sub-storyline which narrated that Wales's full borrowing powers would be tied to one project in South Wales taking money and future investment away from other Welsh regions. Both narrative lines had the effect of questioning the reality of figures put forward by the Welsh Government thus propelling doubt into Welsh Labour's ability to govern. The activists exploited both the dominance of the economic discourse and the politics of devolution to produce and benefit from delays: "*The longer we spun it out, the more the costs would escalate. And we knew that, and I think that's the lesson for any campaign. Is that if there's a big infrastructure project, if you can make it delay, delay, delay, it gets more and more expensive*" (Env3, campaigner, interview). The activists thus hoped that if the project was seen as too expensive to commit to, the Welsh Government could be persuaded to cancel it on cost grounds as had been done previously in 2009.

7.3.   Spatial politics of devolved spending and development

The sub-storyline on regional development drew from the spatial politics of Wales, arguing that there was a pattern of uneven spending across the country which the M4 black route threatened to perpetuate. A member of the resisting environmental coalition described how he had sought and found allies in politicians from North Wales, with whom he had worked to frame the black route proposal as *"1.7 billion going to a tiny corner in South Wales"* and how that was *"not going to leave an awful lot of money for your constituency or the rest of Wales" (Env1, lobbyist, interview).* The politics of spatial spending then produced squabbles in the Senedd, further shaking the Welsh Government's authority over the black route storyline. Furthermore, members of the economic coalition were divided over the spending focus on South Wales, as discussed in the previous chapter. FSB's worries about their membership in North and mid-Wales were given legitimacy by this framing of the narrative, whereas CBI and the Wales Chamber of Commerce emphasised the importance of *"agglomeration economics"* (Econ3, policy, interview) whereby investment in South Wales would produce trickle down gains to other areas in the country. To try to make sense of the Welsh Government's rejection of the motorway extension and thus the mainstream business lobby's economic strategy, interviewees from the economic coalition questioned the Welsh Government's ability to commit to large, costly projects.

One interviewee, for example, brought up the money that has been spent on the Heads of the Valleys road (A465) over the last 20 years as a point of comparison. A465 is a trunk road running from Herefordshire to Southwest Wales and towards Swansea. It links the northern heads of the South Wales Valleys, thereby often being referred to as Heads of the Valleys road. The interviewee estimated that the costs of the road upgrades would have been up to two or three billion, however, he speculated that it was less controversial to spend that much over such a long period of time, versus the M4 black route costs and the question over maximising borrowing powers to get it done. Another interviewee highlighted that large infrastructure projects generally did not get very far in Wales, listing the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon and the Wylfa nuclear power station in Anglesey as examples. However,

both energy projects mentioned had been halted for reasons outside the control of Welsh politicians: the Swansea Tidal Lagoon plans were rejected by the UK government and the plan for Wylfa was pulled because of a lack of funding (Williamson 2018; Williams 2021). However, mentioning both in this context and comparing them to the M4 not going ahead either highlights the complex dynamics of devolution upon who gets what and when and how local people might experience the outcome. The narrative around increasing costs thus taps into underlying ideas about devolution and governance, linking back to the finding of the media analysis that the M4 became the emblem of economic growth in Wales.

7.4. Frustrated governance and competing aims: resistance to power through storyline attachment and its local dynamics

The previous chapter used media analysis to identify the main discourse coalition groupings and competing storylines that were used by stakeholders to construct the case of the M4 extension in the Welsh media. One of the main resisting storylines along with the sub-storyline that wanted to see money spread more evenly across Wales, discussed above, was the blue route storyline. The previous chapter addressed the co-option of the blue route storyline by actors across different coalitions and its ability to offer an alternative to the black route, thus creating space for public debate. When discussing the blue route with the interviewees of the environmental coalition, it became clear that while there were actors within the group who worked to actively promote it as a *"better than nothing" "alternative"* (Env1, lobbyist, interview), the support for it was not uniform within the coalition. Similarly, there were members of the economic coalition, namely FSB, who supported the blue route while others did not. I asked each of the interviewees from the environmental coalition whether discussions about supporting the blue route took place within their organisation to find out whether a strategic decision to support this alternative to the black route was taken. The idea of supporting another road option was refuted by all but one person, who held a lobbying role rather than a campaigning one.

The lobbyist from the environmental coalition described his and his organisations attempts to influence the spectrum of stakeholders and the Welsh Government

through different storylines, such as the blue route and the road being 'increasingly expensive' narrative. He argued that the blue route was helpful *"politically"* and that *"it was like giving an alternative, as opposed to speaking in generalities but actually having an actual alternative"* (Env1, lobbyist, interview). Others in the environmental coalition were instead in favour of not supporting any road extension at all because any new road infrastructure would encourage more car use: "*we did make a decision that we wouldn't be advocating any road because it went against what became our core beliefs, which were that you don't build more roads in order to solve transport problems, and that we had enough roads."* (Env3, campaigner, interview).

This example illustrates that the joint narratives identified in the Welsh media were not always supported by everyone in the coalition, but instead, even within coalitions, there were struggles over how discourses in the public sphere could and should be shaped. The contrast between what interviews reveal about these decisions to support or not support a given storyline indicates that storyline attachment is an organically evolving, rather than fully strategized and intentional process. Furthermore, the Welsh media exercised its own framing of the issue, enabling activist voices in relation to some storylines but not others to break through in the public sphere.

The promotion of the blue route was not welcomed by Newport based politicians, mostly unified across party lines in support of the black route, concerned about place-based issues of air pollution and traffic congestion caused by the present motorway arrangement. While the motorway extension would have influenced changes in various localities across Southeast Wales, the biggest stakeholder by population and size was Newport, Wales's third largest city. Newport-based politicians were thus keen to secure the development, which they hoped would address the issue of air pollution by moving the motorway traffic away from the city. The current M4 skirts Newport, causing air quality issues and noise pollution. Newport therefore has several air quality monitoring areas, including Royal Oak Hill, Glassllwch, St Julians, High Cross and Shaftesbury (see: Newport AQMAs). Politicians representing the city were aware of the ecological and cultural importance of the Gwent Levels, as emphasised by Newport's *LDP* (chapter 5), and that these were threatened by the development. Regardless, their priority was to ensure they

delivered what they perceived the city and its residents wanted. The blue route would have kept traffic in the city and thus would have failed to address health issues caused by air pollution that, according to one interviewee, were reported by the city's GPs.

The interviews with Newport-based decision makers from the two main political parties, the Welsh Labour and the Welsh Conservatives, highlighted the significant disparity between the local experience of what they believed the city needed, as opposed to the discourse on national level focused on the economic needs of Wales. Resistance fell in between these two, introducing the blue route as a *"diversion"* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview) and a delaying mechanism that ended with disappointing results for Newport which in the end had to contend with the existing motorway arrangement. The interviews with members of the social coalition left an impression that politicians in Newport, whether based in the city council, the then-National Assembly for Wales, or the Westminster parliament had very little power over the road and transport planning in general.

In the face of resistance directed at influencing decisionmakers in the Welsh Government, it *"felt like there was a lot of people who were talking about the issue who really did not understand Newport"* (Soc2, politician, interview). She described reading various reports about the blue route proposal, with names of places in Newport spelt wrong and with an overall feeling that the people advocating for the route had perhaps not even visited Newport to have an accurate local context about a possible route they were proposing. The proposal for the blue route would have taken *"traffic just closer to, even closer to the people, too close to people's homes"* (Soc2, politician, interview). Those promoting the alternative of the blue route aimed to influence the devolved government, the scale at which decisions were made. Their success meant that solutions would not necessarily be delivered on the level where impacts were felt.

Instead of recounting direct attempts to counter the resisting storyline of the blue route and the costings, the interviews with local decision-makers gave the impression that there was a scarcity of means to influence the debate and especially to regain discursive space for the black route in order to realise what were seen as

benefits for the city of Newport. They knew 'painfully' well that the processes for infrastructure development were laborious and involved work to build rapport and to get stakeholders on board: "*sometimes when I hear ideas about things… you know, these things don't just come easily. It's painful.*" (Soc2, politician, interview). The difficulty of delivering development locally translated not only into frustration and annoyance but also into a commitment to secure a solution in the future. While some still entertained a future road proposal as an opportunity, all were clear that opportunities for public transport now had to be urgently improved. This indicates that the interviewees in the social discourse coalition had accepted the shifting reality of what could be delivered for the city's residents after the cancellation of the M4 plan.

Several interviewees confirmed that the discourse around public transport and active travel was not previously at the forefront of the discussion in Newport, whereas the motorway decision and the subsequently established Burns Commission brought new vigour and crucially, funding, into improving Newport's sustainable travel infrastructure. In this case, resistance, built discursively through the blue route storyline and in combination with other less prominent storylines such as landscape protection, influenced a wider shift in the transport discourse in the city through influencing the Welsh Government in charge of funds. A Newport-based planner explained to me that the Burns commission, established in the aftermath of the M4 cancellation, could potentially be transformative to the city in delivering schemes that Newport historically "*never had the funding to deliver*" (Econ4, planner, interview). While the planner was conflicted about the lack of needed motorway improvements, he was positive about the resources that have been delivered since 2019, enabling "*adult conversations*" (Econ4, planner, interview) about what could and could not be delivered for Newport.

The interviews with decision-makers based in Newport reveal the city's relative powerlessness in the face of a discourse struggle fought on the level of devolved government. The method of discourse analysis advises to not just explore how discourses are constructed through what is being discussed, but importantly what is being left out (Wodak and Meyer 2016). In the case of the discursive shift that took place over several years in Wales, moving from road-based transport policy to

focusing funding on sustainable mobilities, it is important to note the rift between resistance, spatially located in the Gwent Levels and what appeared as strong public and political support for the black route in Newport as narrated by the interviewees located in the city. In the case of the M4, resistance by-passed Newport, targeting the Welsh Government, and the storylines that were developed about Newport were in local representatives' minds left lacking place-based knowledge about the city. This was further highlighted by the reported lack of localised public support for CALM: *"Most campaigns are based on getting a fairly decent grassroots swell of public opinion. But the vocal public opinion in this case was in favour of the M4."* (Env4, campaigner, interview). Resistance was therefore able to have a significantly larger impact building towards a discursive shift in the Welsh Government's policy, away from focus on car-based infrastructure, than the opinions and perceived needs of Newport's residents did.

7.4.1. *Policy discourses and rupture: moving from road-based planning towards wellbeing of the future generations*

In each interview, I discussed influencing strategies with the interviewee. The tactics I learnt about drew from the participants' professional experience as well as developed organically over time. Strategies varied between organisations and coalitions, especially depending on how hard the coalition had to work to get their aims through, i.e., whether they were resisting or supporting the 'relief road' plan. The public inquiry of 2017 formed a huge part of the work for those resisting, but there were also other elements of campaigning such as protest, letter writing, petitions, media work and political advocacy. Each conversation also touched upon the discursive context within which the advocacy and lobbying took place, such as the normativity of car travel and the decision against the road coinciding with a time of increasing awareness of climate change through school strikes and Extinction Rebellion.

The eventual decision not to proceed with the road was often described as 'political' by both sides: *"In the end it was a political decision to abandon the route."* (Env1, lobbyist, interview)*.* The perceived influence of political leadership and particular

powerful individuals, who participated in the public discourse, is clear across the board of interviewees when discussing the final decision to cancel the motorway development. FM Mark Drakeford had cited cost grounds but also, remarkably, stated that he attached *"greater value to environmental objections"* than the planning inspector when he, later on, took the contrary decision to cancel the road (WO, 04/06/2019). Notably, however, those in the economic and social coalitions expressed anger that Mr Drakeford had gone against the recommendation of the planning inspectorate who led the public inquiry into the matter: *"So we spent a huge amount of time, a huge amount of what we call death by consultation over, maybe 20 years. And what's the outcome of it? 150 million pounds spent on nothing. Basically. I'm still pretty angry about it."* (Soc1, politician, interview).

The *WFGA* provided another source of frustration to both politicians trying to secure the road and the proponents of the Act alike. The Act installed an FGC for Wales to observe its implementation across the levels of government and different departments. The duties of the commissioner are to *"promote the sustainable development principle, in particular to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs and encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things they do"* and *"monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met"* (Future Generations Commissioner [no date]). The FGC's remit is within the legislature of devolved Wales and as such her formal powers are more advisory than statutory. However, the commissioner's office made contributions to the discourse around the M4 by calling for investment for more sustainable forms of travel. The interviews scoped for the perceived impact of the much-touted commissioner and the act itself, receiving mixed reviews in relation to the road. While the commissioner's impact and influence cannot necessarily be said to have formal clout in relation to transport planning and the M4 relief road per se, the discursive influence of her intervention would have, at the time, contributed to the array of voices calling for the cancellation of the 'relief road' plan.

The interventions from the FGC arguing against the black route were not seen as democratic by everyone. One Newport-based interviewee emphasised their position as an elected representative, versus what they saw as the political appointment of

the commissioner, explaining, *"It's probably their job to say what they said. But I guess they're not elected. So you know, these things are political appointments. The difference is, I'm elected, albeit locally, from my local area, and I'm elected by my group, will have been for the last 16 years or 17 years."* (Soc1, politician, interview). From a local perspective, the complex mix of devolution and the policy area of sustainable development represented by the commissioner were thus seen to be somewhat muddy and frustrating for the local representatives simply hoping to get something done for their community.

Around the time of the introduction of the *WFGA* into law and the leadership change in the Senedd, the discursive strategies of resistance by the environmental coalition changed. This illustrates relational adaptation of resistance in relation to changes in power and policy whereby *"the narrative shifted from saying, 'you terrible people, destroying the environment', to us saying, 'you wonderful people, wouldn't it be great if you protected the environment, we're all fully behind you'. And that was a very clear shift"* (Env3, campaigner, interview). The described transition to different advocacy coincides not only with the changes in the Welsh Government cabinet and the introduction of *WFGA* but also, the climate movement broke through into public consciousness in 2018 more widely than before, following the well-published IPCC report highlighting that there were only twelve years to keep temperatures below a 1.5 degree raise. Jointly these events point to a discursive rupture or transition taking place in Wales, which could signal a new policy discourse emerging that builds on the "*spirit of the [Future Generations] act*" (Env2, campaigner, interview).

The environmental activists resisting the road felt that the new wider environmental discourse which the climate movement helped to bring to the surface *"helped to change the narrative"* (Env1, lobbyist, interview) away from resistance being simply for "*tree huggers*" (Env1, lobbyist, interview). Instead, resistance to the M4 development could be observed through a wider societal frame, making it easier for the Welsh Government to go against the pre-existing discursive hegemony of economic development in Wales. At the time, activists resisting the road were at the forefront of bringing in this change and as such had worked towards it by attempts of delaying the road process from going ahead while simultaneously working to create a new discourse. For example, at least one activist involved in opposing the 'relief

road', whom I asked directly, also worked with the Welsh Government Minister Jane Davidson to bring in the *WFGA*. In her book "*FutureGen*", Davidson (2020) further thanks the Welsh civil society for working with her to strengthen the act prior to it becoming law. Therefore, even when the activists were seemingly simply opposing the road by 'shaming' the Welsh Government, the environmental discourse coalition utilised not only concrete, case-driven resistance but additionally, its members worked with power to contribute to the wider discourse by participating in the policymaking process. Therefore, resistance influenced power not only through formal participation in planning (e.g. input in the public inquiry), but by mobilising new discourses and connecting with the existing discourses about sustainability, regional politics of place and climate governance. The findings thus highlight the relationality of not just different discourse coalitions and storylines, but also a certain relationality of different discourses and the policy and media contexts, when considering the participatory impact upon planning outcomes.

7.5. A note on devolved politics, conflict and resistance through a novel policy approach

Throughout the interviews, comparisons were made by the interviewees as to how planning is conducted in England and why Wales was seen to be behind the neighbouring country in terms of economic development. Wales ultimately taking a different approach to the Gwent Levels compared to the development on Somerset Levels in England was questioned, as well as the devolved government's ability to commit to and fund large infrastructure projects as discussed above. The poor relationship of Westminster and the Welsh devolved administration was also brought up as an issue influencing planning and development in Wales: *"you know, they don't have a good relationship"* (Econ1, lobbyist, interview). While there is no clear data that emerged about any direct relationship of discourses pushed by Westminster politicians and policymakers and the resisting activists reacting to those, it is important to place the transformation of the M4 discourse within the conflictual governance context involving both the Welsh Senedd in Cardiff and the Westminster Government in London.

Over the years, Westminster had indicated that extending the M4 in Wales was strongly in its interest. The coalition government led by David Cameron granted Wales the needed borrowing powers during a period of fiscal austerity when infrastructure spending was otherwise slow (Kenber 2013). In the period predating the *WFGA*, the commitment to a new stretch of motorway thus worked in the interests of both the Welsh devolved administration and the UK government in Westminster, as no money would need to be spent by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition committed to austerity, while new infrastructure would still be built that would benefit the economies of England and Wales. Furthermore, it would be difficult to remove the contested politics of Westminster from the picture, considering that Wales is governed by Welsh Labour while the Conservative party has held the keys to power on the UK level since 2012. Referring to these dynamics, one interviewee talked about "*the dysfunctional level of governance we have in the UK*" (Soc4, politician, interview). In relation to the M4, this dysfunctionality, or complexity, was reflected by politicians on different levels taking part in the M4 discourse, campaigning on it and answering to their constituents' queries about progress of the black route plans, even when they did not hold direct decision-making power over the case.

As the discourse on sustainable development was strengthened through the *WFGA*, input from campaigners and the change of those in charge of the Welsh Government, the devolved administration was able to begin strengthening Wales's long standing sustainable development approach through decisions impacting planning outcomes, such as the M4, and the subsequent decision to place a moratorium on road building. On the Welsh Government level, the discourse had subtly shifted away from economic development and not being *"anti-car"* (Econ4, planner, interview), to being for the protection of the Gwent Levels and Wales leading the way on sustainable development through the *WFGA*. Interviewees from the economic coalition felt that this placed the Welsh Government in opposition of the Westminster interest of having the motorway extended, however there is, allegedly, nothing the British government could now do: *"I can't see that project being rekindled unless Westminster was able to somehow overrule, which is going to be probably a bit of political dynamite."* (Econ2, lobbyist, interview).

In terms of a discourse struggle, the Welsh government has over time worked to construct its own devolved discourse over what sustainable Wales should look like in relation to England. The M4 case illustrates that through a change in ministers, backed with strong support from the environmental coalition the devolved government was able to prioritise environmental sustainability over economic sustainability, making a decision that conflicted with previously voiced interests of the UK government. Whether social sustainability in the case of Newport will be realised through investments in public transport and active travel remains to be seen in the future.

7.6. Conclusion: powerful, resisting and powerless actors

This chapter discussed the trends and themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews conducted with twelve participants, all of whom played a key role in discourse construction around the case of the M4 development. Discourse coalitions were found to be loosely structured constellations of actors rather than tightly knit groups of individuals making strategic campaign decisions together. It was found that organisations involved took strategic decisions over tactics such as promoting or joining a particular storyline, for example supporting the black or the blue route. However, within discourse coalitions consisting of members of multiple organisations the attachment to these storylines developed more organically as not everyone in a coalition subscribed to the same storylines. Furthermore, there are storylines that became popularised by attracting support from actors across multiple discourse coalitions. While the media analysis established that cross-coalition support ensured a higher chance of becoming prominent in the overall development discourse, the interviews further established the difference between strategic and organic use of discourses and storylines: an organisation might have a clear communications strategy as to which aspects and goals they wish to emphasise, such as saying no to road building in general, but they have little control over the local news media's framing of the events through the storylines that are picked up while others are ignored or given very little attention. It is therefore useful for resistance that different members of coalitions organically pursue different storylines to ensure maximised uptake of at least some of the storylines.

Furthermore, the interviews illustrated experiences of power and resistance with implications for planning outcomes, but also the feeling of certain powerlessness from local representatives of the city of Newport impacted by development proposals. This indicates that even in a multilevel system, planning discourses do not necessarily extend across scales in a way that could empower local actors. Instead, discourse struggles are fought at the scale on which decisions are made as opposed to where the impacts are felt. The process of storyline construction by either powerful or resisting actors may therefore side-line local stakeholders. Interestingly, while it is often acknowledged that powerful interests can render participation in planning processes less than meaningful, what is not discussed is the variety of aims and positions that make up the coalitions of actors outside power per se. In the case of M4 extension, the discourse coalition approach combined with a multilevel lens enabled the identification of a more complex mix of interests, motivations and emotionalities than is presumed by approaches that look at participation focusing on marginalisation: this is because not everyone marginalised is marginalised for the same reason. The M4 case further challenges the notion that it is possible to fit social, environmental and economic sustainability under the same policy umbrella: each actor involved was focused on one of the aspects, which by default meant side-lining of the other two pillars of sustainable development. This is a complex dynamic, further reflected upon in chapter 8: while the actors themselves may have had overlapping concerns, highlighting the process of actor categorisation as somewhat blurry, the logic of pushing for a particular case (economic, social or environmental) required a clear public focus on one aspect of sustainable development.

The interview findings indicate that discourses are formed relationally through both power and resistance. Resistance was found to be an active contributor in the overall planning discourse. Resistance was not only present during formal participatory events such as the M4 public inquiry. It was also found operating in wider society through the construction and mobilisation of alternative storylines, pushing and contributing to a discursive shift from roadbuilding as of central importance in transport planning to a strategy that better balances active travel and transit-oriented development through a redirection of finances. It is thus possible to conclude that

experiences of participation in planning are not only built on specific participatory events but draw also from forms of activism that take place outside participatory planning events and invited engagement. The results of the research illustrate that discursive participation influences planning outcomes and in the case of the M4 it contributed to the project's cancellation.

8. Discussion: discourse transition and the agonistic struggle over meaning in planning for sustainable transport

8.1.   Introduction

Planning has long struggled with questions around participation: is it effective, how can it be done equitably, whose voices get heard and who has power (Flyvbjerg 1998; Innes and Booher 2004; Brownill and Carpenter 2007; Innes and Booher 2010; Monno and Khakee 2012)? These are all important questions, but they miss important context: participation is not just about the planning process per se but, instead, like planning itself, it is always influenced by societal rationalities that shape what we think our environment, cities, infrastructure and transport should look like (Marshall 2013). These rationalities take shape within contemporary systems of multilevel governance and are articulated through discourses (Flyvbjerg 1998; Foucault 2002a). This research has focused on Wales where the planning process is guided by a specific sustainable development framework, constructed during the past two decades of devolution. While devolution as a process of governance brings with it questions around the sharing of power and accountability across different scales, the case of Wales illustrates that it can also provide new opportunities for policy change and scaling up local protest. Devolution further creates not only another layer of political administration, but also a new scale for targeting resistance, something that the analysis I have provided strongly illustrates. The empirical case study selected, the proposal and development of the M4 'relief road', took place during a time of increasing climate awareness and in the run-up to the school strikes, the emergence of Extinction Rebellion and the 2018 IPCC report which highlighted there were only 12 years to curb emissions for the 1.5 degrees target be achieved. I argue that these factors, together with opportunities for resistance presented by devolution, created a discursive opening which shaped the conditions for the rejection of the road plan in 2019.

In this chapter, I consider the results of the case study analysis from the three preceding chapters against the theoretical framework provided in chapter 3 and the research methodology described in chapter 4. This chapter offers a reflective

account of the whole research process that has taken place over the past four years including the construction of the theoretical framework, designing the methodology and researching the case study using three different methods. While the theoretical underpinnings of the framework were discussed in detail in chapter 3, this chapter includes a discussion of the framework, assessing the appropriateness of it against the case study findings. Empirical findings from policy analysis, media analysis and semi-structured interviews were discussed in detail, per each method, in chapters 5-7. This chapter focuses on bringing the results together and exploring them as interconnected against the institutional backdrop of multilevel governance. It further reflects on what was uncovered using the methodological approach selected.

8.2. Power, participation and planning in the context of sustainable development and multilevel governance

Using data from interviews, media and policy analyses, the thesis has explored the relational formation and operation of resistance within structures of power. I showed that participation and activism act as parallel processes influencing the sustainability transition that has been taking place in Welsh transport planning. This is in line with Legacy's (2017) argument which questions claims made by some planning theorists (Monno and Khakee 2012) that there is crisis in participatory planning. The question I have thus far not addressed in detail, is about what resistance, as the combined effect of invited (consultation, information sharing and public inquiry) and uninvited (campaigning, advocacy and lobbying) participation, can tell us about the realities of planning and participation in multilevel governance systems. I have presented one type of multilevel system, that being the devolved Welsh structure. The Welsh case has some of its own specific features, such as the *WFGA*-led suite of legislation aimed at achieving sustainable development, as well as a distinct culture and political tradition shaped by geography and Wales's relationship to England. Nevertheless, the challenges involved in transitioning towards a planning system that can mitigate and address issues ranging from social development and wellbeing to nature depletion and climate change in the Anthropocene are undeniably being faced by most planning authorities across the world. The scope of the devolved scale to respond to these challenges through its distinct sustainable development

framework may offer a learning opportunity for others battling with similar, pressing challenges.

Planning systems can play a crucial role in realising emissions reductions and mitigating against the already unavoidable effects of climate change on a local scale through, for instance, reducing car dependence and providing integrated public transport opportunities (Hagen 2016). Although the impact of sustainable development policies across the world remains limited at best (Biermann et al. 2022), the case study period saw the Welsh planning policy as reformed around the *WFGA* and the sustainable development principle. The post-M4 black route planning policy highlights the planning system as fundamental for "sustainable development and achieving sustainable places" (*PPW*11, p. 4). While the policy rhetoric illustrates an ongoing sustainability transition in Wales, the results on the ground and the actual extent of sustainable development that can be achieved with current planning policies remain as questions for the future. However, the events that have taken place since the cancellation of the M4, regrettably outside the scope of this thesis, indicate the potential for an ongoing transition in transport planning in Wales. The discourse struggle that led to the cancellation of the black route provided backing for those Welsh decision makers who are currently pushing away from car-based transport planning within and across different regions of Wales. This is a conversation that continues to present day, with a more recent Wales Roads Review initiated by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, with conclusions published in early 2023. The purpose of the roads review was to assess the alignment of the existing road building schemes to the wider devolved policy environment, and it concluded that new developments could only be agreed to where they are shown not to lead to increased emissions, increased road capacity for cars, or adverse impacts on ecologically valuable sites (Sloman et al. 2023).

This illustrates the difficulties involved in selecting and defining a research period for case study research both from practical and theoretical point of view: in reality, events hardly end with a cancellation (hence the use of the term 'zombie' in relation to infrastructure projects) or start with a consultation. Instead, they are continuous processes built upon actions taken in the past, with ever-unfolding futures. In the above paragraph I discussed a transition and in previous chapters, I have

occasionally referred to a discursive rupture (Foucault 2002a). On the face of it, these terms seem to allude to continuity: there is the state before and the state after an event. It could also be easy to assume that from following a new policy adoption (*WFGA*), the cancellation of the road progressively followed. In reality, such an assumption of linearity cannot be said to apply. Instead, I use the term rupture in a Foucauldian vein to articulate a certain discontinuity of events and to challenge the notion that the cancellation of the road can be attributed to specific actions, individuals or policies.

In what follows, the focus is on "relations between statements" and "between groups of statements" which I have explored using the categorisation tools of discourse coalitions and storylines to include the subject-level interactive processes that contribute to the production of discursive rationalities (Hajer 1997; Foucault 2002a, p. 32). Discourse coalitions and storylines, explored as forming across the scales of the devolved system are regarded as types of statements, which have been explored using a combination of methods. Media articles, policy documents and interview material have been treated as units of analysis, a set of relational statements that I have used to construct a picture of relationalities between actors, newspaper coverage and existing planning policy. The aim of the chapter is then to set the findings in the context of sustainability transitions literature, highlighting the fluid power relations that occur between discourse coalitions and storyline formation, with focus on the discursive operations of resistance. The findings presented in chapters 5-7 challenge any notion of sustainability transitions as linear development and contribute to a better understanding of how multilevel governance can foster conditions for change.

8.2.1. The empirical case of Wales

Wales's case is used to provide an example of how a sustainable development approach might function in infrastructure planning on a devolved scale in the context of pressures being applied from other governance scales from above (state) and below (local), as well as from the horizontal stakeholder networks including private and third sector actors. The concept of agonistic relationality is articulated by Mouffe

(2013, p. 3) as "the creation of an identity always implies the establishment of a difference". The preceding empirical chapters explore this relationality, finding it to be embedded in governance structures and working to influence the construction of plans by the Welsh devolved government (in relation to the UK government, local government) and the process of implementing those plans (through stakeholder participation). Crucially, the agonistic struggle over meaning (of sustainability) became a public conflict at the stage where plans for the M4 had been drawn and were in the process of scoping for implementation.

Based on the results of the three empirical analyses, I argue that inserting a new devolved governance scale into an existing structure brings with it emergent political qualities. This means that the agonistic struggle is not simply limited to groups or individuals, but that their scalar location and the target of their aims influence their opportunities to hold or gain power through resistance. There is also scope for different knowledge being produced at the devolved scale, relevant to planning decisions, compared to for example the existing system in England. The framework has applicability to a) governance situations where a new scale or level has been created within an existing structure, whether it is type I or type II governance (Hooghe and Marks 2003) and b) complex planning processes taking place across several governance scales, involving multiple actors.

8.3.   The Discourse Struggle Framework: multilevel participation explored through the lens of discursive resistance
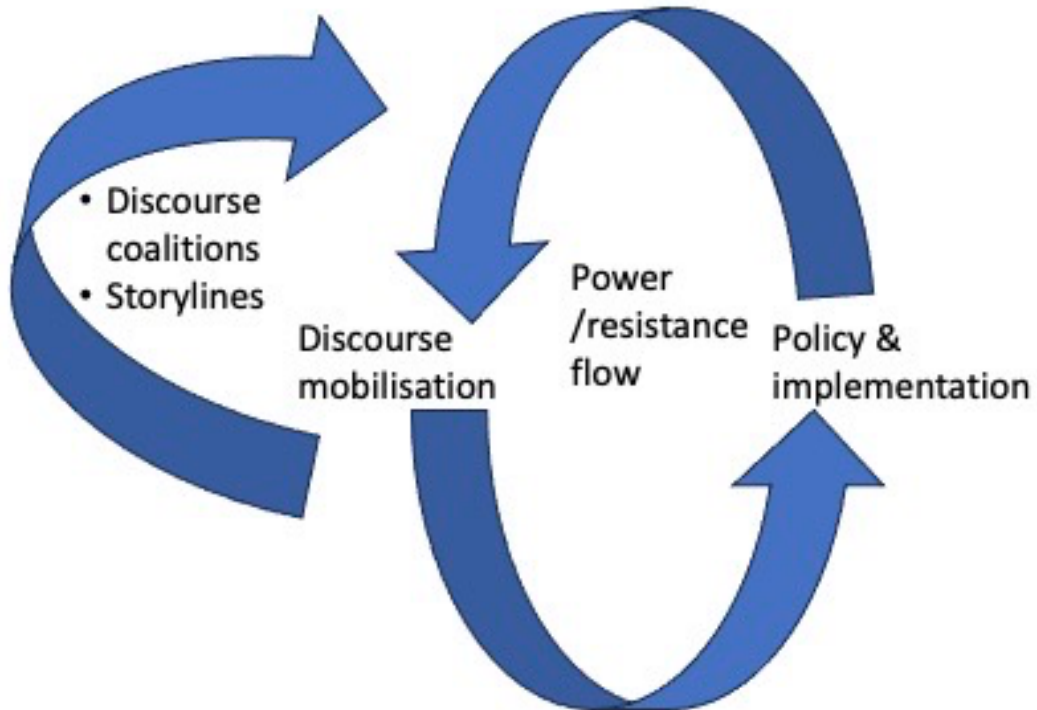
Figure 13: Discourse Struggle Framework, introduced in chapter 3

Figure 13 illustrates the framework first introduced in chapter 3. The framework was selected, and a visual illustration was provided to help to untangle the process of discourse construction by different stakeholder groups during planning processes. The framework aligns with conceptualisations of participation as an integrated social process that belongs to the realm of the political, rather than exists as an isolatable unit of analysis within the formal participatory elements of planning processes (Mouffe 2013; Legacy 2017; Swyngedouw 2018). The results yielded using the framework further contribute to an ongoing discussion about power at transitionary moments in society (Avelino 2021), by providing an account of participation that follows Legacy (2017, p. 429) and Rydin (2003) by including forms of "informal campaigning" such as the use of media platforms for examination. However, by providing a detailed account of the discursive dynamics of resistance in relation to a

devolved case of road planning, the framework is applied in a governance context that has thus far not been explored in detail. Using the framework, discourse mobilisation, by discourse coalitions using shared storylines, is explored as taking place across the scales and networks of a multilevel, devolved Welsh governance system. The actors are found to target their resistance at the Welsh devolved government, using a mixture of strategies that together end up shaking the discourse of the necessity of the M4 development. Furthermore, actors use different means, such as contributions to media discourses, petitions and a legal challenge, to scale up their resistance, making it appear more notable that it perhaps would otherwise be.

The use of a discursive framework enabled the examination of the relational formation and operation of resistance within and influencing structures of power, with a focus on participation and campaigning as parallel, joint processes. Using the concept of resistance to account for the often messy and unpredictable, but to an extent coordinated, flows of participation and campaigning yielded a complex picture of multiscalar relations and the process of production of meaning through storyline promotion. What emerged illustrated the impact participation can have on planning outcomes under devolution in Wales. For instance, the ability of stakeholders to influence the planning process was evident in the case of discourse coalitions exploiting the "iron-law of megaprojects", a notion that refers to the tendency of large infrastructure projects to end up significantly over budget and with a longer delivery schedule than originally promised (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003). The stakeholders effectively participated in the construction of a culturally specific discourse, directed at the devolved layer of governance, which utilised the regional disparities in spending and investment within Wales to delay the case. This suggests that upscaling economic arguments over place-based environmental campaigns can be a useful strategy for resisting development even when the resistance takes place on environmental grounds.

As discussed in chapters 6 and 7, the judicial review fed into the discourse of increasing costs of the development and consequently, shook the credibility of the Welsh Government. This finding would not have materialised through a focus limited to participatory events based on the collaborative planning paradigm (Innes and

Booher 2010), because frameworks utilising a collaborative lens tend to be focused on communicative events that take place within conditions predefined by the said theoretical approach. Using a discourse-driven framework, I argued that viewing participation as inherently entwined with the institutional conditions of multilevel governance, rather than more narrowly defined within the context of the planning process per se, would extend the understanding of how participation as a combination of communicative actions and more activist-leaning actions contribute to planning processes.

Using the discourse struggle framework further enabled me to engage key stakeholders from all sides of the discourse struggle, rather than focus on one group of actors. This ensured I could explore the relationalities involved in sustainability transitions (Markard et al. 2012), highlighting the non-linearity of events (Foucault 2002a) and the flows of power and resistance that shape what takes place and how, during transitionary events (Avelino 2021). The following sections focus on the relational dynamics that become available for analysis following the conceptual change in how participation is viewed. Particular attention is paid to exploring the different elements of the framework and whether the initial diagram presented the links and relationships between these accurately, based on the results of the data analysis. The findings laid out in chapters 5, 6 and 7 are discussed, for the first time exploring the connections between results produced by the three different methods.
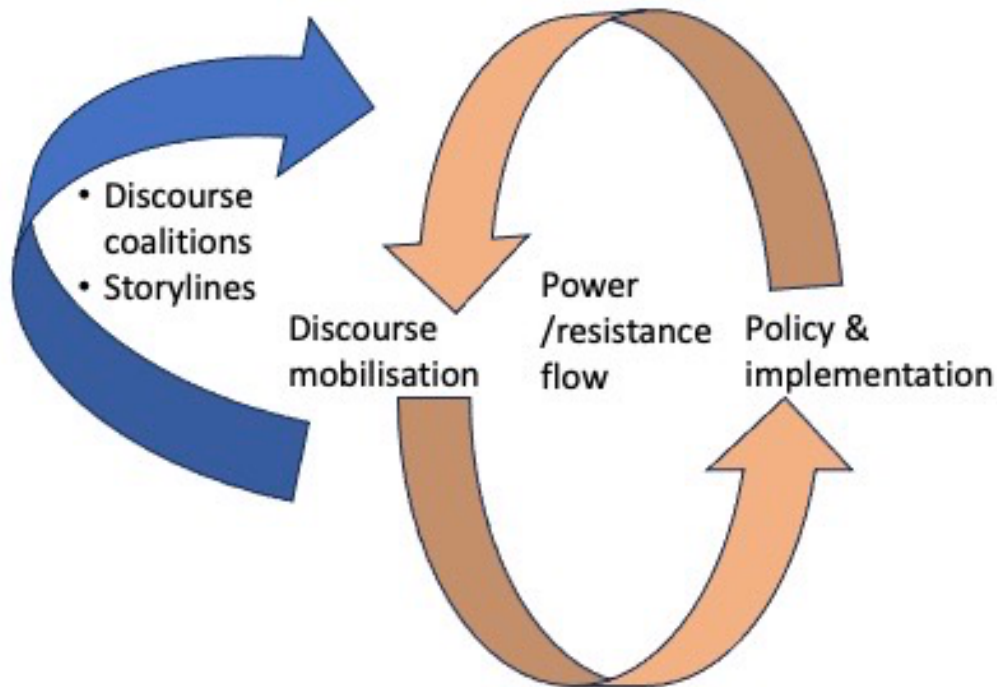
Figure 14: DSF with sections under discussion highlighted (agonistic discourse struggle comprised of the fluid dynamic of power/resistance)

This section discusses the conceptualisation of agonistic discourse struggle as of central importance to the research. The framework is based on the hypothesis of public participation as a significant contributor in sustainability transitions taking place within and across multilevel governance systems. This prediction was shaped by emerging literature challenging the notion of crisis in participatory planning (Monno and Khakee 2012; Legacy 2017), the case that moments of social change require novel frameworks for exploring power flows (Avelino 2021) and multilevel governance as the prevailing institutional framework within which planning takes place. Conflict became the unifying factor between these different strands of literature: institutional arrangements in some multilevel systems are set to produce conflict between different scales and in planning literature the prevalence of conflict between stakeholder groups has led to explorations of agonistic models for participation (Salet and Thornley 2007; Inch 2015; Pløger 2018). Yet little research

had addressed the social production of conflict and its dynamics across multiscalar devolved systems, making research into planning participation within these types of institutional structures both challenging and necessary. In the case of Wales, the research revealed that broad participation could actively reshape the discourse around sustainable development and the case of the M4 and provide support for the wider discursive conditions that enabled the political decision to cancel the road plan. This illustrates that localised resistance can effectively scale jump (Hajer 2003; Cowell 2015) to influence the powerful actors charged with making decisions on the devolved level. The resisting actors further illustrated capacity to successfully mainstream a stronger conceptualisation of sustainability in devolved policymaking.

When drawing up the framework, the agonistic discourse struggle was predicted to take place in relation to infrastructure proposals based on literatures concerning NIMBYism and public resistance to development (Burningham 2000; Rydin 2011; Marshall 2013). To explore these realities discussed in the existing scholarship but this time specifically within the context of multilevel governance, I conceptualised the agonistic discourse struggle as discursive, operationalising Hajer's (1997) concept of discourse coalitions to explore it. This enabled the tracing of the struggle across different scales, geographical locations, policy, public conversation and over time. Hajer's approach further relies on a Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse as a vehicle for legitimation of meaning in society, intricately enmeshed with power: this shapes what is politically possible (Foucault 2002a; Niskanen et al. 2023). Discourses were thus seen to have the capacity to detect flows of power and resistance (as linked to power) within a given governance system and in relation to the society (Foucault 1990). The identification and analysis of the formation and operation of the agonistic discourse struggle is explored through the written and spoken statements by different actors, the groupings of statements and their links to Welsh policy, providing a pluralistic perspective into the formation of conflict.

While the conceptual framework as presented above provides an abstracted version of the participatory process, the empirical research and data analysis highlighted certain realities of a multilevel system where the devolved scale brings with it subnational opportunities for campaigning, advocacy and lobbying to influence planning outcomes. The following provides a summary how the agonistic discourse

struggle took place within the devolved system's institutional boundaries and how agonistic conditions were fulfilled: the discourse on the planning proposal of the M4 black route was (re-)initiated by the Welsh Government, when the consultation on road options crossing through the Gwent Levels was published in 2013. The interviews further uncovered how the road had been brought back in as an option in stakeholder engagement events following the cancellations of the plans in 2009 prior to the 2013 public consultation, indicating a continuous quality of the agnostic discourse struggle and its fluid existence across both public and private spaces. Once the new black route consultation started gaining press coverage, the discourse coalitions that had already become politicised through ongoing engagement in the road plan and the knowledge that it might resurface, were able to mobilise to push their preferred narratives in the public sphere by cultivating media strategies to communicate campaigning tactics and actions. The discourse struggle thus formed around the motorway, provoked by resistance from stakeholders hoping to protect the Gwent Levels. Furthermore, the agonistic quality of the struggle was evidenced by the activist engagement both inside and outside the formal planning process that included activities that cannot be characterised in communicative terms (stakeholder events were included, as were media strategies, social media, advocacy, legal challenges and lobbying, for example). Discourse coalitions competed to gain power through engagement and resistance to be able to define the discourse around the motorway in the context of sustainable development. This illustrates the political aspect of agonistic thinking: both individual and collective discourses are constructed in relation to what is being opposed to or countered. The actions by resisting stakeholders constituted a response to the discourse initially set by the Welsh Government and introduced alternative options for the road thus making the initial road plan appear uncertain. Furthermore, the same discursive tactics worked to insert alternative meaning to the notion of sustainable development that in the then-Welsh Government's emphasis leant towards prioritisation of economic growth at the expense of social and environmental goals.

8.3.1.1. The role of the news media in illuminating the agonistic quality of planning struggles

In the media, as discussed in chapter 6, the favourable coverage of the Welsh Government's road plan focused on the need for the motorway from the start, serving the governance authority's aim to construct the extension. The news media's scope for objectivity and bias are considered in chapter 4. By providing a public outlet for discourse coalitions to engage with the discourse that followed the initial framing of the issue by the Welsh Government, the Welsh media also provided an ample data source for the exploration of the public face of the agonistic discourse struggle that took place in relation to the road plan. Discourse coalitions were found to construct and share storylines in a relational manner, whereby different statements made by individual actors or actor coalitions were shaped by the conditions set by other statements made by other actors about the road, as well as by the discursive logic of the media as the publication platform (Carvalho 2008). The use of media by the discourse participants can be defined as an agonistic mode of communication, defined by Inch (2015, p. 409) as "passionate range of political protest and argument". This is in line with Rydin's (2003) reminder that the media tends to foster conflict rather than collaboration around environmental matters: however, it should be noted that the resisting actors we found to be able to exploit this tendency of the media through agonistic, rather than antagonistic means of communication. It is thus important to point out that the newspapers' editorial preferences and news values do not only shape the argumentative discourse around planning matters, but they would further prevent any debate from spilling into the sphere of antagonism, at least in the public sphere. While the media outlets held the power to frame discourses around the issue, and to position certain storylines into relationship with others (Carvalho 2008), it can nevertheless be concluded that local newspapers provided an outlet for planning participation outside the deliberative framework in relation to the case study.

As a consequence of the nature of the M4 development as a large and costly infrastructure project, it received a significant amount of media attention both in local and national media. The media outlets examined as part of the research emerged as actors in their own right. This was something that I had not initially included as a

consideration in the theoretical framework focused on the planning process and related actors. The finding further highlights the importance of exploring planning processes within their societal context, since the news media is traditionally regarded as an agenda-setter and influencer of discourses on the public sphere (McCombs and Shaw 1972). While media studies have rightfully decried the ever-diminishing resources available for local media, needed for it to continue to do its job of scrutinising the actions of those in positions of power on local, regional, and where relevant, devolved levels, the media analysis undertaken in chapter 6 illustrates planning as a frequently covered topic. Local news can reveal a lot about planning actors, their views and power relations. However, the danger is that the lack resources can contribute to content that repeats what press releases from powerful actors say, instead of scrutinising events that take place (Lewis et al. 2008). In the case of the M4 proposal, while almost all news articles analysed were short and did not proceed into any further analysis beyond stating what experts, decisionmakers and the resisting activists had said about the issue at hand, there were differences between the local, Newport-based publication SWA and WO, Cardiff-based news platform covering all of Wales. This underscores that each news platform uses their own organisationally specific selection processes that guides who get to speak and how a particular subject is framed. Furthermore, there was variation between different discourse coalitions in terms of how effective they were getting their messaging into the local papers and how much framing power they could gain from the media outlets themselves. Both SWA and WO thus actively participated in the process of agenda-creation, whether it was through allowing more local voices and locally based arguments (SWA) or more focus on the economic case made by Cardiff-based experts for the road to go ahead (WO).

8.3.1.2. *The agonistic discourse struggle, devolution and protest*

While the framework did not specifically focus on the devolved scale over other scales of multilevel governance, the relationality of the devolved scale within an existing multilevel governance structure became a strong focal point following the case study selection. Interviews with key stakeholders together with media and policy analyses highlighted the role of the devolved scale both as a target of

resistance and as an emergent factor in the construction of a Welsh administrative identity. Applying an agonistic lens to exploring planning participation within multiscalar governance structures further revealed that conflicts over meaning can exist within and across multiple levels. Localised discourses that vary between places and scales and multiple actor groups mean that relationality is also pluralistic. Conflicting aims do not occur only between different types of governance structures, for example the elected local representatives and the non-elected FGC, but also between scales and places from the Gwent Levels to different local governments within the planning area, Cardiff-based decision makers and politicians based in Westminster. This was exemplified by the locationally uneven take up of the blue route storyline. There are further conflicts within the discourse coalitions, for instance, to do with resistance tactics: different members of the environmental coalition advocated for 'principled resistance' (i.e., a refusal to engage in consensus-building processes) vs 'twin track' advocacy whereby a resisting actor would also engage in a consensus-driven process to improve proposals put forward by the governance authority.

Both individual and collective positionalities were found to be relatively fixed within certain discourses about the road development, emphasising the inherent conflict-producing qualities of agents and their groupings. This was particularly the case with actors subscribing to 'principled resistance' (e.g. community resistance based on the Gwent Levels), who did not wish to put forward alternative road development options. However, this tactic did not exist in isolation, as the alternative approach of the blue route, pedalled by others in the environmental coalition and some in the economic and social coalitions, gained more visibility in the public sphere at least. The finding that the blue route emerged as a destabilising alternative from outside the formal planning process was made visible by the conceptual approach and warrants further consideration. From the media analysis, it was possible to conclude that the blue route narrative was, in fact, often referred to by environmental campaigners, who were also sympathetic towards the problems caused by congestion on the existing M4. From the interviews, however, the picture that emerged was more fragmented, with different coalition stakeholders advocating different approaches. This meant that positions that appear to have been adopted by coalitions were not necessarily consciously selected, or advocated for, by the

majority in a coalition: some individual coalition members were more focused than others on providing alternatives, as opposed to rejecting development outright. Furthermore, the actors did not always exercise control over discourse structuration: the media influenced the saliency of discourses by applying its own selection processes upon storylines put forward by different stakeholders.

What appeared to change over time were the discourses, due to them being relationally influenced by the power/resistance struggle, rather than the aims of the actors themselves. For example, reflecting on the changes in the leadership of the Welsh government in 2018, the campaigners resisting the road articulated a change in their tactics. Instead of a continued focus on denouncing the policymakers in favour of the planned development, they articulated support for the emerging position of the new ministers to focus on protecting the environmental value of the Gwent levels. Furthermore, the environmental groups were more agile than pro-growth groups in shifting their discursive position as the unfolding discursive change created new opportunities. Thus, while some were able to change tactics and others were not, the broad positions of protecting the Gwent Levels or hoping to attract economic growth to Wales remained as fixed goals from the start to finish. When theorising agonism, this finding provokes an interesting question about the relationship of discourses and the material reality, and how individual positionalities are built through discursive practices which are further shaped by the power/resistance dynamics that take place within specific institutional conditions such as multilevel scales. Furthermore, the logic of the public sphere influences what kind of storylines can get through and contribute to the construction of planning discourses.

It may then be that relationships between individuals or groupings avoid collapsing into antagonism when means are provided for coalitions to construct agonistic discourses around the issue that is producing the conflict. In interviews, some participants used stronger language in denouncing other participants both in their own and other coalitions than was detected in media coverage for example. It might then be that the societal opportunities to participate in the public discourse, advocate and lobby, along with participation in the public inquiry, which many found a stressful experience, kept antagonisms at bay. In his treatise of the political, drawing on

agonism to theorise insurgent activism, Swyngedouw (2018, p. 58) discusses resistance as "the ultimate horizon of social and political movements [that] has become a subterfuge that masks what is truly at stake – how to make sure that nothing really changes". Resistance outside the formal process regarded thus therefore becomes something that is invited, rather than uninvited, just through a more subtle societal mechanism than formal planning participation (Zizek 2002; Swyngedouw 2018). Not only does Swyngedouw's argument further point to a fuzzy difference between invited and uninvited participation, but it also highlights that formal participatory opportunities defined in the planning process for example as public hearings and consultations, do not work alone to mitigate the relations between power/resistance from collapsing into antagonism. Instead, had the M4 public inquiry been the only avenue for those participating in the planning struggle, resistance would have been constrained by the legal purpose and remit of the event. This certainly would have left environmental campaigners with even more negative feelings about the process than they were left to harbour regardless of their eventual win.
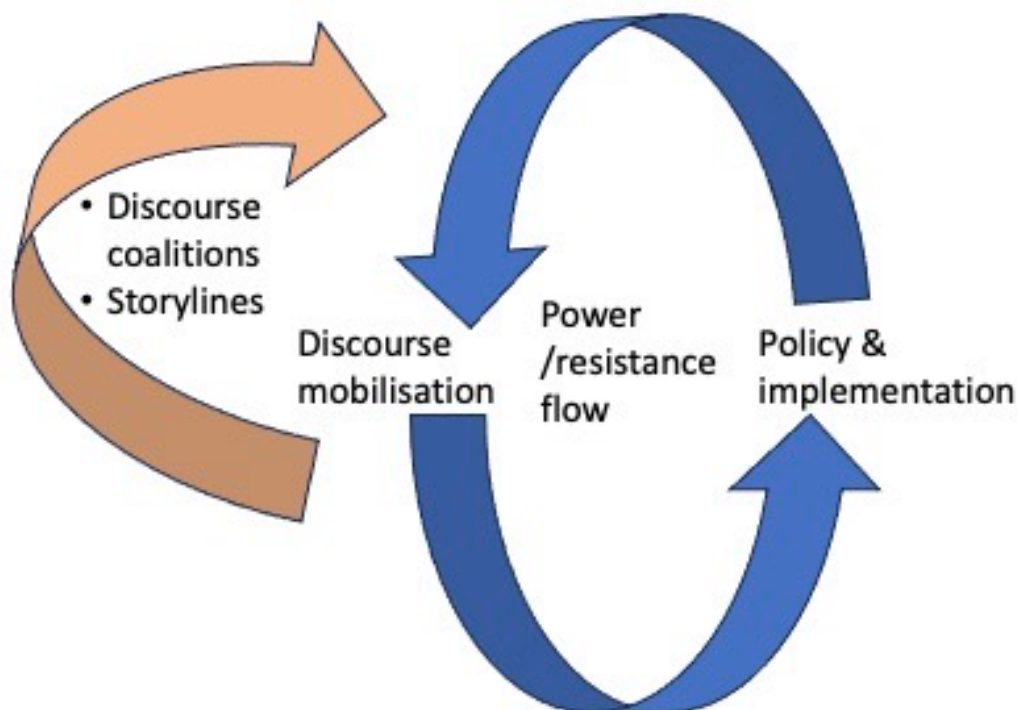
Figure 15: DSF with sections under discussion highlighted (discourse coalitions and storylines feeding from and into the agonistic struggle)

The construction of resistance by discourse coalitions was found to infiltrate different parts of the planning process where power, including the spaces dominated by those communicating from the powerful position of support for the black route, was present. Power and resistance existed alongside each other in a relational struggle that took shape through discourse coalitions and storyline production. Firstly, this was evident in the public sphere, where local media was not only used as a forum to push different storylines around the topic but where media outlets influenced the development on its own right through the framing of the M4 issue as first and foremost a case of economic development. Secondly, I spoke to individuals from both the business community and the environmental groups whose work was focused on influencing politicians and decisionmakers through lobbying and advocacy while also coordinating inputs for the public inquiry. These individuals described their work in great detail, helping to uncover the relations between

statements made internally and what filtered into the public sphere through the media. Based on the interviews, it was also uncovered that the formal participation in consultations and the public inquiry by advocates, lobbyists and citizens took place in relation to the other ways of influencing, drawing from arguments already made in the public sphere. This worked to mobilise individuals already enmeshed in the process through their institutional affiliation or personal motivations, illustrating that both power and resistance used a dual track approach of formal participation and advocacy to influence the process.

Furthermore, discursive resistance was found to be relational to power in the sense of the environmental coalition's co-option into economic discourse through the utilisation of the 'iron law of megaprojects' and the attachment to the blue route discourse, even though within the coalition not everyone was happy in supporting this storyline. In this sense, a resisting storyline was worked into the economic discourse through optionality. The differing opinions about resistance tactics highlight a discrepancy between what is salient in terms of public discourses as reflected and shaped by the news media, versus other strategies and tactics utilised to promote the argument against the road that one interviewee described as 'principled resistance' that sticks to its goals without compromising on them. This idea of principled resistance exists perhaps within a different set of relations than the one co-opting into the economic discourse, highlighting something missing from agonistic theory focused on the conflictual us/them relations as the root of the political in society: the fragmented streams of work involved in the construction of these relations that make the experience of discourse participation harder for some groups than others. In interviews with environmental coalition members, this came through as expressions of negative feelings and exhaustion.

Agonistic theorisations of relational identity construction therefore need to consider what happens when resisting groupings become too exhausted to participate, even within situations where agonistic conditions are accommodated for. This is especially the case during struggles that last a long time, such as the M4, with implications to designing a theoretical framework: time to build discourses, and time as experienced by individuals in discourse coalitions could have been considered more thoroughly as part of the framework put forward in chapter 3. Furthermore, agonistic theory

needs to consider that the material realities of participation and its personal costs are not shared equally between societal groupings or even individual members within those groupings. Similarly to the marginalisation that can take place in relation to the post-political paradigm, this may influence participants' ability to engage in agonistic participatory processes. Agonism as such does not remove all barriers for societal participation, politization and activism; in some cases, it may work to further cement existing divides.

8.3.2.1.   Actor categorisation and the relationality of sustainable development

The discourses around planned projects are constructed via a combination of discourse coalition attachment and storyline attachment. Based on the media analysis, I categorised actors into broad categories based on which aspect of sustainability (environmental, economic, social) they were most focused on. Discourse coalitions were found to be, in line with earlier research within environmental policy topics, fluid categories that instead of being set in stone, provided a tool that helped to organise actor-related information. It is true that different categorisations could have been used and the actors could have been divided into groups in different ways. However, the position of the sustainable development paradigm as the central organising principle for the Welsh planning policy meant that the separate consideration of social, environmental and economic aspects was relevant throughout the M4 planning process, including the positioning of the actors who were found to have an organisational or issue-based affiliation mostly with one category.

It was relatively easy to categorise actors who acted from an economic or environmental position as their personal or organisational aims did not directly overlap with those of the actors situated in the other categories. It was more challenging to identify and categorise those who were focused on social matters. These individuals were mostly politicians, who emphasised that they represented their communities' needs. For example, while air pollution caused by automobile traffic is an environmental problem, it was discussed by the social category

participants as an issue that was first and foremost causing localised health problems to their constituents. Prioritising social needs over environmental ones, this position led to support for the black route, unlike with those who thought of environmental problems per se as the most important aspect for consideration. It is, however, important to note that participants' interests were often complex and not always limited to the category assigned. Furthermore, their decisions to focus on one aspect of sustainable development was not always without an internal conflict over what their priorities should be. In this way, the discourse coalition categories only present the best possible division of participants into coalitions in order to observe their working tactics and the inter-relationality of arguments associated with each grouping. Simultaneously, they reflect a real-life political reality: campaign objectives need to be clearly defined and argued through one aspect of sustainable development, rather than sustainable development as an overarching concept, for them to be effective and gain traction in the public realm.

The challenges posed by actor categorisation thus further highlight the inbuilt contradictions of sustainable development: separating environmental, social and economic needs into separate 'pillars' within sustainable development (Rydin 2010; Baker 2016) introduces relationality into the process whereby identities are defined by one category but not all. Based on the analysis, it is not possible for a stakeholder to be simply for or against sustainable development: sustainable development takes on different meanings depending on each actor's organisational and/or personal context, i.e. whether this is in an organisation representing an economic lobby group, a political party hoping to improve the lives of the electorate, or an environmental organisation first and foremost focused on protecting nature and biodiversity. While the Welsh planning policy favours the notion of balancing the different aspects of sustainable development, the reality on the ground and between actors appears conflictual: research results presented in chapters 6 and 7 indicate that an appropriate balancing of environmental, economic and social factors is differently constructed and perceived by each discourse coalition. Furthermore, the journalistic selection processes for who gets heard in the local public sphere seem to further impinge on the ability of actors to address multiple sides of a complex issue at once: actors were found to be commenting on from one side of the topic only, rarely bringing in both social and environmental conditions, for instance, or considering

both environmental and economic sides of the plan in the short quotes they were given space for.

Therefore, while each actor's personal views might overlap categories, making the boundaries of each pillar somewhat fuzzy, at the same time one aspect of sustainable development is selected for argument construction over the others. This selection process was found to be influenced by the actor's personal priorities, organisational context and the relational opportunities provided by the remit of the agonistic struggle. In a devolved multilevel governance system, the selection process is further complicated by the actors' varying positionalities on different scales, where what is locally considered sustainable (less air pollution) is challenged by resistance targeting the devolved level with a different idea of sustainability focused on landscape protection. In critiques of sustainable development, it is commonly acknowledged that the concept privileges economic development over environmental protections, while the conflicted relationship of social and environmental objectives is something that has been highlighted in more recent explorations (Baker 2016; Jon 2021). Within the conceptual framework provided, the multiscalar discourses can be specified as related to these different pillars of sustainable development in the case of the M4, meaning that mobilisation of the discourse coalitions takes place in relation to each other, and the power/resistance dynamic continues to play out as the discourses are constructed and unfold.

8.3.2.2. Spatialisation of planning discourses

The framework highlighted planning realities as something that could be shaped by relationally constructed discourses and loose discourse coalitions, as opposed to the more material aims of planning actors such as protecting the Gwent Levels or building a new, concrete, stretch of a road. This separation is exemplified by the way these realities are discussed, such as the M4 as the emblem of Wales's economic development, or the current road layout as the 'foot on the windpipe of the Welsh economy' (chapter 6), actors referring to sustainable transport in a non-specified manner or discussing the social and environmental value of the area threatened by the development proposal. Both the road and the related places became something

detached from their physical realities in the public discourse. This is not an attempt to discredit the physical reality of the Gwent Levels as an important ecosystem for habitats, or challenge the congestion experienced by people on the M4 when driving past Newport in South Wales. Instead, it is important to highlight that at times, the discourses built around these material realities that consist of places are not only rooted in them but also built in an argumentative relationship between the different discourse coalitions that form around the planning struggle. This is where it becomes useful to apply a level of separation between actors and the discourses they participate in: discourses are a means of participation, they are formed, and they form around the material realities of a case but are simultaneously separate from them. As discussed above, the actors do not exercise full control over what takes place: they can only contribute to a complex reality by attempting to maximise the range of strategies and tactics that are used to resist planning proposals.

8.3.2.3.   Storylines and relationality: constructing relational identities across scales

Considering the case study using the theoretical framework revealed that the mobilisation of actors both resulted in and stemmed from an agonistic discourse struggle. This led to the formation of resisting storylines utilised by actors in different discourse coalitions in response to the discourse initiated by the Welsh Government. From the research data, economically, socially and environmentally driven concerns emerged as not only discursively but also spatially separated. The mix of discursive and spatial positionalities led to a complex dynamic of power and resistance where some discourse coalitions were able to co-opt into power (spatially focused environmental coalition) and others (spatially dispersed social coalition) were not. This finding has scalar implications in the sense that resistance aims for power by influencing the planning authority or public mood, but it is also tied to certain locations and places along the planned road, such as the Gwent Levels or the municipal authority of Newport.

Resistance was found to be formed over time and in relation to power, which meant that where a position of resistance would have been necessary to achieve objectives

later in the process when the discourse had turned against the road, no such resistance formed and actors in Newport appeared somewhat powerless in the face of an outcome that was not desired by them. Since their capacity for resisting discourses constructed by more powerful actors was lacking, as explored in previous chapters, they had to accept the changing discourse and its implications for planning projects and their implementation. While the framework enabled the recognition of the multitude of actors arranged in discourse coalitions across different scales of governance, it lacked the spatial aspect that influenced participants' attachment to storylines such as the blue route making it more challenging to consider the discourses that emerge around planning processes as materially rooted in their spatial locations instead of through the governance scale they target.

The blue route served as a focal point in illustrating that both power and resistance can scale jump and thus ignore or lack ability to engage with the objectives of stakeholders in particular localities impacted by the planning proposal. In the case of road building and regional transport planning more widely, both human and non-human communities that exist along the routes will have different needs in relation to proposed developments, causing uneven power/resistance dynamic to which powerlessness should also be added as a third category. These do not need to be fixed categorisations given to a particular community or a coalition of actors. Instead, the categories can change and evolve over infrastructure planning processes that in most cases take several years (Marshall and Cowell 2016). It is evident from the analyses of storyline take-up and variance between discourse coalitions that it is not just power that can ignore and by-pass local needs and wants, but resistance can do this by scale jumping and targeting its advocacy and protest tactics towards the planning authority at a higher level, in this case the Welsh devolved government. Including powerlessness (i.e. voicelessness, inability to build or spread discourses) as something built into discursive participation alongside power and resistance can also help in extending the notion of stakeholdership and including non-human actors in future research concerned with planning discourses.

Storylines were found to introduce optionality to the process of planning for the motorway, enabling actor selection of different narratives that could benefit their own viewpoints or discredit those representing the other coalitions. They can be used

both to advance planning proposals (including by the planning authority) and counter and promote alternatives. As with discourse coalitions, storylines were used as rough categories to help map out the research data around the wider M4 discourse. Their purpose was to identify popular narratives about the M4 development. Three main storylines, including sub-storylines were identified. The main storylines were as follows:

1) the black route as the best option for Wales economically,
2) the blue route (including sub storylines 'the black route is too expensive' and one relating to unevenness of regional development funding),
3) a more undefined public transport storyline (interchangeable with the storyline of a sustainable transport option).

The main sub-storyline related to the costs of the motorway and concerned regional spending. It was regarded relevant due to the purposeful introduction of it by certain resisting activists, designed to evoke discussion about the limits of transport spending and whether the M4 project was directing too much money into South Wales at the expense of other Welsh regions. The implications of this in terms of scalar interrelatedness and culture are discussed above.

The storylines were picked up by different representatives and stakeholders across the multilevel governance system as well as by individuals in different discourse coalition categories. By providing an alternative option, as discussed in the chapters 6 and 7, the blue route both united stakeholders across different categories and scales while simultaneously causing conflict between representatives within each scale and grouping. If assessing participation as related to the formal planning events only, rather than as a discursive societal construction, much of the significance of the blue route as a storyline that questioned the main black route storyline would not have been uncovered, since the blue route was not formally part of the planning process but was proposed after the initial consultation on the black route and by an external expert rather than the planning authority itself. Furthermore, related activities such as the judicial review, operationalising the blue route storyline as a challenge to existing plans, that took place prior to the public inquiry would have been left out of consideration. The blue route narrative, however, conflicted elected

representatives within the Senedd by providing a focal point for arguments of not needing to spend such a significant sum of money on one motorway scheme in South Wales. It further irritated local representatives of Newport, to whom the blue route merely represented a lack of local knowledge of those putting it forward, as well as a challenge to their power as local decisionmakers. The utilisation of the blue route storyline demonstrates both complexity and interrelatedness of planning discourses and that with projects such as large infrastructure that draw attention from the wider public it is challenging for the planning authority to dominate the process with its own preferred storyline. Instead of responding to the black route proposal with support or no support, the blue route shows that promoting alternative options can produce multiscalar uncertainty which impacts planning outcomes.

8.3.3. Planning outcomes

It was not without its complications to hypothesise how relationality would take place between discourses across different governance scales and visualise this in the conceptual framework. This was because of the complexity of relationships that take place within large, multiscalar governance systems and processes that involve multiple stakeholder groups and individuals means that clear cause and effect relationships between specific discourses and real-life events cannot be identified. This was also the case, as it emerged from the fieldwork, in Welsh infrastructure planning. Therefore, it is not possible to draw a conclusion that because of specific actions by certain activists, for instance, the road development was cancelled. Rather, the picture that emerged is of multiple, both targeted and untargeted, discursive actions that aim to influence the process, drawing from wider societal discourses taking place around climate change, environmental loss and interestingly, sustainability policy as a shaper of the Welsh identity. These actions aim to influence and counter the rationality put forward by the governance authority at the time, those in support from the Welsh business community and certain politicians based on different scales from the national to the devolved and the local, illustrating that power and resistance engage in a discursive struggle as per the conceptual diagram (figure 14), which does not, however, fully represent the importance of the devolved scale as the creator of the space within which the sustainability discourse takes place.

Based on the above, the impact of the agonistic struggle on both implementation outcomes and policy change are regarded as unpredictable and not generalisable in a sense of the direction taken, due to complexities of space, time and stakeholdership involved in planning for large infrastructure projects such as the M4 extension. Regardless, it is important to highlight that resistance does have an impact on the planning discourse and through it, on the outcome of the planning struggle. This finding is in line with more recent explorations by Legacy (2017) who argues for a reconceptualisation of participation to include campaigning to fully understand its influence on outcomes.

8.4. Devolved identity, relationality of governance scales and planning policy

The impact of the devolved scale to the formation of political identities was reflected in the way in which the interview participants regarded the different political traditions of England and Wales as a potential force pushing Wales to go towards its own direction in aiming to provide a strong sustainable development framework to underpin law-making and, subsequently, implementation. There was a strong recognition that Wales was very much part of the UK and, as discussed in chapter 7, this came with challenges such as lack of money for infrastructure investment, alongside some cultural obstacles like hesitancy to spend large sums of money. Research participants had different interpretations, linked to their aims, regarding whether doing things this 'Welsh way' had positive or negative connotations. Those advocating from an environmentalist perspective, talked about the opportunity for the sustainable development and wellbeing framework to help to form a stronger sustainability approach for nature protections, whereas those focused on the economic aspect were more likely to emphasise their disappointment at the Welsh Government for not understanding the importance of economic growth for future sustainability. Perhaps because of these different constraints and possibilities vocalised by the research participants and, due to the practical limitations of the devolved governance structure, it has been important to form the Welsh planning policy around the sustainable development approach. The policy thus aims to facilitate local responses to the challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity

loss, while also attempting to provide a vehicle, within its devolved remit, for economic development for the country.

Towards the end of the research period and after, the Welsh planning policy has evolved more strongly towards its own direction. How the policy will perform in relation to protecting or improving biodiversity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions remains to be seen. The scope of achievement of the evolving planning policy from 2019 onwards is not within the remit of the present analysis. However, when considering Wales's planning policy evolution in relation to my discussions with the research participants, it becomes intriguing to consider the sustainable development policy framework as something that contributes to relational identity-building across multilevel governance scales, supporting the national identity-building of the devolved authority. The devolved scale of governance was inserted into an existing governance structure less than 30 years ago and it continues to evolve in relation to the legislature of Great Britain that is further facing changes since Brexit. It therefore seems crucial that the devolved scale should develop its own specific identity and it is arguably doing so using what it has control over, planning policy. Thus, the agonistic notion of relational identity construction applies here too: the Welsh direction is shaped not only by what is possible within the devolved competencies that Wales has, but also by the relational development of a distinct policy approach that can help in creating an identity separate from what might be felt to be English-centric governance of the whole of the UK. This is evident from the way the Welsh planning policy was reformatted during the case study period: as discussed in chapter 5, the *PPW* 10th edition published in December 2018 offered a completely restructured planning policy, centring the *WFGA* through its stated objectives to create a more prosperous, resilient Wales, able to support ecosystems and with inbuilt recognition for limits of the global environment. While the relationalities between stakeholder actions and the different editions of planning policy illustrate potential for change towards stronger sustainable development in Wales, it is important to highlight the nature of this rupture as non-linear and subject to continuous agonistic discourse struggle. Whether the reformed planning policy will have a real impact in influencing a sustainability transition in Welsh planning remains to be seen in the future.

8.5.　　Production of delays, discourse transformation and time

Time has been brought up throughout this chapter and the preceding empirical chapters. Because of delays and lengthy time spans being characteristic to infrastructure development (Marshall and Cowell 2016), it was considered important to explore the process over a longer time frame. In addition, the temporal aspect of planning has been left without wider scholarly attention and has not been explored from the perspective of different stakeholders (Marshall and Cowell 2016). Focusing on the case study over relatively long time also enabled the examination of participatory strategies and tactics without limiting the research to formal, time-limited events such as the public inquiry. Furthermore, extending the research period to cover seven and a half years was essential to explore indictors for discourse transformation and uptake, storyline development and discourse coalition formation as these are processes that occur over lengthy time spans. Additionally, a lag might occur between actions and their impact on the discourse. The focus of this section is on considering stakeholder action and discourse formation through storylines in relation to time as both experienced and constructed by the research participants.

When conducting fieldwork, time and temporality appeared as consistent themes throughout. The notion of non-linear time was implicitly built into the framework as per the framework diagram, illustrated by the cyclical visual form of the power/resistance struggle. Furthermore, policy development and implementation were regarded as evolving throughout the agonistic discourse struggle, being influenced by it while also influencing the conditions for what can be proposed or planned in a circular manner. In practical terms, the research period was adjusted to cover almost a decade, something that came with challenges such as interviewees not always being able remember detailed information about events that happened nearly ten years ago. One interviewee also mentioned Covid-19 as an event that inserted a divide between the time then and time as experienced now, which made it harder to recall what took place before. Contrasting the fuzzy memories of some of the research participants were the sharp and specific recollections by others, involving different articulations of time as experienced throughout the process: the emotional toll that exacerbated over time, the zombie process that had seemingly

ended in 2009 but was brought back and the frustrations of the long-time advocates of the motorway plan when delays continued to take place.

While previous research has highlighted the toll of prolonged public participation on stakeholders (O'Riordan et al. 1988), planning delays have previously only been considered from a procedural perspective, with focus on the slowness of planning processes rather than on how delays may benefit or help to construct a discourse transformation (Marshall and Cowell 2016). Reconceptualising participation to include forms of campaigning including media tactics helped to understand how the combination of manufactured and procedural delays ended up favouring the resisting stakeholders through incremental discourse transformation influenced by the agonistic discourse struggle. The notion of delay was flagged up during the fieldwork stage of collecting and analysing newspaper coverage: delays were found to have been generated by resisting stakeholders and their actions. The media analysis then led to the development of interview questions to further find out whether delay-causing tactics were used deliberately, or if delays were an unintended outcome of resistance. Interviewees from the resisting environmental coalition regarded this as a mix of both, as discussed in chapter 7.

Time worked to influence the planning process in multiple ways: the discourse around climate change, school strikes and the 2018 IPCC report contributed to a sense of needed urgency to take responsibility and tackle emissions from road transport. This combined with the production of delay that slowed down the road planning process meant that political changes (e.g. *WFGA*, the new leadership in Welsh Labour) could and had taken place by the time the Welsh Government's decision on the road was eventually called in 2019. These changes made it politically possible for the new FM Mark Drakeford to draw from the discourse that prioritised environmental protections in his announcement of the cancellation of the road plans: he cited the "adverse impact" of the motorway project on the Gwent Levels and its wildlife and said that in his estimation the environmental concerns "outweigh" the advantages the road could bring (BBC 2019). The use of the word "weigh" is intriguing as it implies that the planning policy approach – insistent on the balance of economic, social, and environmental sustainability – veils a net of relational power flows that influence the makeup of this balance. Constructing balance in planning

terms can thus be said to be a political process unfolding over time where delays can contribute to the changing definitions.

Based on the above finding concerning delays, it becomes evident that planning participation unfolds not only across space but also time, bringing with it a fluid dynamic of potential discourse transformation influencing outcomes. It is important to highlight this finding emerging from the research, since time and temporality are not only under researched in relation to experiences of infrastructure planning but also to Foucauldian terminology on resistance (Lilja 2018). In Foucauldian thinking, resistance is seen as bound with time in the sense that those working to establish new discourses to counter present "hegemonic truth regimes" (for instance, economic growth is necessary for sustainable development) are faced with a "time-lag" between the initiation of the new narratives (e.g. environmental protections are key to sustainable development over economic growth) and when they become effective and able to challenge existing discourses (Lilja 2018, p. 426). This time lag between the initiation of resisting narratives and their taking effect, in the case of the M4 black route, was evident in the ways in which different stakeholders interpreted sustainability and the way the related storylines came to compete for attention in the public sphere. Without the resisting storyline development over several years, the later political decision against the M4 would potentially have lacked justification as it would have gone against the prevailing discourse on the importance of economic development to Wales. In addition, had the storylines, particularly the blue route, not contributed to the delays in the process, the decision would have come earlier, and it would have been made in a different political and discursive context, by a different set of decision makers. The assessment of balancing different aspects of sustainability as per the Welsh planning policy could thus have fallen differently. Time, therefore, becomes of key importance when discussing concepts such as a sustainability transition. From the empirical research it can be concluded that any transition taking place in policy and across the implementation pipeline would unfold at differing speeds over time, with resistance to existing status quo playing a crucial part by attempts to take ownership of the command of time normally perceived as belonging to those in charge of planning governance (Booth 2002; Marshall and Cowell 2016).

Hajer (1997) notes that discourse institutionalisation is achieved when new storylines, put forward by a discourse coalition, are acted upon by governance actors, i.e., stakeholders with power over the process (Rantala and Di Gregorio 2014). Discourse institutionalisation follows a point of saturation, where a given discourse gains enough leverage for wide enough adoption within a given institution. Considering the outcome of the M4 extension plan, it can be said that resisting stakeholders co-opted power to influence the final result through storyline construction, contributing to institutionalisation of a new sustainable development discourse that gave more weight to environmental protections than the previous one. In this case, the discourse struggle can be said to have influenced new discourse institutionalisation, however, how this institutionalisation is articulated in policy is a process with an obvious time lag: it takes time to write and pass new versions of policy and regulation. The evolution of planning policy Wales during the case study period towards a more holistic emphasis on sustainable wellbeing further points to a successful campaign of resistance contributing to a sustainability transition in Welsh planning. There are questions about the extent of change going forward and the effectiveness of the sustainable development approach adopted following the road cancellation. Because of the necessary limit to the data collection period, set in mid-2019, these are questions for future research. In terms of the framework used, it may be that fully understanding discursive change and its policy ramifications require longer term research periods: this is challenging considering the scope of a PhD thesis. However, regardless of the case outcome against the motorway development, taking into account the uncovered relationalities between different units of analysis included in the research (policy, newspaper articles, statements and thoughts collected through interviews) challenges any notion of straightforward discursive change that would, in a linear manner, mean that all future planning decisions will regard a similar weighting of different elements of sustainable development.

Instead, the findings highlight the uncertain power/resistance dynamic and uneven timespans that are involved in attempts to transition towards sustainable technologies. Focus of the empirical research on policy wordings, stakeholder agendas, arguments made by politicians on different governance scales and across the political spectrum, has helped to understand the relationalities within which

storyline development around the M4 case has taken place. The relations that were traced to take place between different units of analysis as contributors to an emergent discourse about sustainable development in Wales appear shifting, uncertain and subject to continual agonistic struggle beyond the case study period. Over time, the balance of power and resistance shifted towards resistance, due to the continuous work campaigners put in at multiple fronts, including lobbying for a strengthened sustainable development legislation outside the immediate scope of the M4 plan. This resulted in changes to the planning policy that, on their own, perhaps were not strong enough to result in improved environmental protections (discussed in chapter 5). However, the policy changes taking place simultaneously to the M4 case produced a certain relationality between storylines questioning the economic sustainability claimed by the proponents of the black route, decision makers and the policy, that together helped to tip the debate against the road extension.

While the analysis conducted illustrates that the power/resistance dichotomy has the potential to produce shifts that contribute to discourse rupture, making sustainability transitions possible, over time, the relevant discourses may not become solidified enough for a significant transition toward more sustainable forms of transport to take place. Instead, what takes place are policies that do not necessarily have the scope to fully guarantee necessary environmental protections on their own and political decisions that assess balance based on present conditions, subject to change over time and depending on context. Sustainability transitions thus are an ongoing process: the case study discussed here illustrates only a potential beginning of moving away from car-based travel as the default mode of regional travel in Wales. This research illustrates the importance of exploring flows of power and resistance, over time and across different layers of multilevel governance, as contributors to discourse transformations and thus, unpredictable, prolonged planning outcomes.

8.6.   Reflective note on the methodology

I used interviews to tease out more detailed information about joint working practices within the discourse coalitions that were first identified through the media analysis. I

asked questions about working together across organisational boundaries but while the answers provided good insight into limitations of collaborative working within discourse coalitions, not much emerged in terms of documentable joint working practices. Participants had a good awareness of each other, and they willingly recommended who else I should speak to, highlighting the importance of networks without necessarily providing something quantifiable about their value. The internal workings of discourse coalitions turned out to be something participants either did not want to discuss in detail, or they could not, simply because formal joint practices were not there to be analysed. Thus, the method of media analysis was perhaps more useful than interviews in providing data for what *discursive* coalition working might look like across the different societal categories of sustainable development.

While organisations have limited categories for joint working, e.g. rules relating to funding, lack of time or capacity for engagement, the difficulty of coordinating joint responses amidst varied organisational coals, building joint discourses is a much more informal and organic process. Some limitations may exist, e.g. overtly criticising powerful political actors was not something everyone wanted to, or could, do. However, once certain discourses and frames are pushed out, they can be repeated, shaped and shared by anyone able to get their voice heard in the public sphere. They come to constitute knowledge – something discussed in the press can be repeated as legitimated and factual information elsewhere too. Furthermore, all organisations and individuals interviewed, who participated in the lobbying both for and against the M4 black route, were skilled media commentators with engagement plans and an ability to push out press releases. As the scholars of political economy would remind us – and the point is further illustrated by the finding of media as an actor in the debate as discussed above – the public sphere is a space enmeshed with power relations that constitute the production and distribution of knowledge (Mosco 2009). However, it is also a space of struggle and contestation, a place in society where different ideas and notions can emerge and come to challenge prevailing discourses. Thus, using media analysis as a tool tracing the contours of discourse coalitions and how they shape and attach themselves to storylines was useful for helping to uncover what loose, predominantly discursive coalition working might look like.

9. Conclusion: the evolving landscape of Welsh transport planning

9.1.   What happened next?

In previous chapters of this thesis I have discussed the difficulty of limiting the research period to 2013 – June 2019. The case began in the 1990s with conversations around what the economy of South Wales could look like if motorway infrastructure in the region was improved. The M4 development thus invokes longstanding ambitions for what Wales could achieve, should it have the appropriate, well-functioning motorway connection, facilitating economic growth in Wales, that it has thus far been perceived to lack. In the 1990s, the visioning for the motorway was done by what was then the Welsh Office; in 2013 it was the devolved Welsh Government who laid out the plans again. In chapter 2, I discussed the idea of the sublime as invoking feelings of both awe and terror, and its technological, economic, aesthetic and political qualities through which infrastructure imaginaries are constructed (Flyvbjerg 2017). The changing governance landscape underpinned by the process of devolution evokes questions around whose vision it has been to realise the road, and what vision of Wales has been projected through the plan during its different stages? To whom have the different qualities of the sublime appealed in relation to the motorway development, and why? What does the development of the motorway plan tell us about the devolved nation pursuing it, and about the devolved nation redirecting its objectives by eventually cancelling the plan?

These questions apply equally to the current post-M4 'relief road' phase, which has been taking place since late 2019. Much has happened in Welsh planning and transport policy since June 2019 when the road plan was cancelled: *Planning Policy Wales* and *Wales Transport Strategy* were updated in 2021 to better align with *WFGA*, new transport planning guidance involves an updated transport appraisal process (*WelTAG 2017*), which came into effect during the study period (the plans for the motorway would initially have been assessed using the predating process),

there is a new *National Transport Delivery Plan 2022 till 2027* and an extensive plan for South Wales Metro is going ahead. Yet the implications of how the updated policies will be implemented are still unclear.

On a local level, the question of what could be achieved in realising regional transit options and reducing the perceived need for the new motorway was considered by the South East Wales Transport Commission (also referred to as the Burns commission), established in the immediate aftermath of the cancellation. The Commission's objective was to consider options for easing congestion in South Wales in a sustainable way. The report of final recommendations was published in November 2020, containing a proposal for a "network of alternatives for South East Wales", focused on integration, "allowing for flexible journeys, reflecting the diversity of trips that people want to make" (*SEWTC* 2020, p. 3). As reported in chapter 7, resulting from the work of the Burns commission, some feel that "*adult conversations*" (p. 177) about what is possible to achieve in terms of local transit options going forward are now taking place in Newport.

On a national level, the transport strategy prioritises the need to reduce travel by focusing on bringing services closer to people while additionally attempting to change people's travel behaviour and highlighting the need for sustainable transit infrastructure (Welsh Government 2021). In addition, in 2021, the current Welsh Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, appointed a panel to review all road building schemes in Wales (Sloman et al. 2023). The resulting report was published in September 2022. The Welsh Government's response to the report stated: "all new roads need to contribute towards achieving modal shift – both to tackle climate change and to reduce congestion on the road network for freight" (Welsh Government 2023). The criteria for new road building projects has thus effectively been tightened. The Welsh Government additionally highlights the "deteriorating fiscal and economic situation", resulting from lack of additional funding from the UK government to address inflation as the context within which the response to the roads review is taking place (ibid.). It might thus be that not only the worsening environmental qualities, but also the realities of increasing infrastructure costings and of declining funding for devolved and local governments contribute to the need to fashion new imaginaries for what infrastructure can and should look like

in the current era. This has further implications on what we conceive as aesthetically, technologically, politically and economically sublime: at some point going forward it may not be possible to dream of megaprojects that define a nation, it may be that it is something entirely different to our traditional adherence to sublime infrastructure that becomes desirable as the climate crisis unfolds.

As a devolved nation, it will be the task of Wales to define what kind of national imaginary its infrastructures will project. At the time of writing, it certainly feels hopeful to think that business as usual approaches to transport planning (Schiller and Kenworthy 2017) are being questioned, and alternatives are being conceived of by those in power, alongside an active Welsh civil society. The challenge is to ensure that all municipal authorities located in devolved areas (or within regional governance bodies, such as in England) are given power to influence what transitions towards sustainable infrastructures might look like for them, and not left powerless as in the case of Newport and the cancelled M4 development.

9.2.   Reflecting on key findings and the single case study

Although the reality of infrastructure planning remains complex, this thesis provides some answers to the questions about democratic realities within multilevel governance structures by tracing how stakeholders from multiple discourse coalitions navigate the system to engage in a struggle about the meaning of sustainable development. To do this, I used a framework that conceptualises participation as relational power and resistance in a way that is fluid and can help to illustrate the changing conditions for power that come from being challenged by resistance. This has implications for planning theory, too: the discursive approach enabled the inclusion of media representations which, in turn, enabled the consideration of storylines as they appeared in the media against planning policy and specific events that took place during the M4 planning process, yielding results which can help to understand unpredictability when it comes to planning outcomes. For example, the introduction of the blue route, which appeared from outside the formal planning process, completely shook the grounds of the M4 project, destabilising the black

route storyline and thus shaking the Welsh Government's authority as the project agenda setter.

The discursive framework additionally helped to identify asymmetries between different coalitions' abilities to shift the discourse or take advantage of transitionary moments: through the analysis of both textual discourse and actor interviews, it became clear that environmental groups were able to reword and redirect their resistance as advocacy as opposed to adversarial argumentation. It may be possible to view this as a shift from argumentative resistance to a more consensus-seeking approach, illustrating that some actors can change their behaviour (if not overall aims) in a fairly agile manner subject to the changes in the overall discursive environment. Contrasting with this, it is equally interesting that those in the economic pro-growth coalition, who were in the more powerful position of aligning with the Welsh Government in their initial goal to proceed with the road project, could not so easily shift to a more argumentative or adversarial position: they noted the shift in the discursive environment but were not able to effectively react. Yet, the reaction may come much later: in his study of British road protests, Melia (2021) argues that while resistance in the 1990s had some impact on refocusing transport policy towards less road funding in the 2000s, the pro-road building actors have again benefited from policy shifts in the 2010s. For now, the Welsh M4 case shows that the pro-road actors ended up being disappointed with Drakeford's cancellation announcement in 2019, perceiving this as a political decision they could do nothing about.

Clearly the cancellation of the M4 project illustrates that resisting dominant discourses can have material impacts when it comes to planning outcomes, whether the dominant discourse is pro-growth or pro-environment (or something else). The case of the M4 illustrates that while environmental viewpoints are often marginalised in formal processes (Smyth 2020) as well as in the public sphere (as illustrated by the present thesis), a relatively small but defiant discourse coalition can still promote and achieve changes in the discursive environment. The devolved scale of governance enables culturally specific arguments of taking a different path, or a *new path* (as in the case of: *Llwybr Newydd*: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021), however, this required consistent advocacy at multiple fronts over several years. The actions taken by the resisting environmental coalition included presenting a case

against the M4, helping to introduce and highlight the blue route in the public debate, co-opting into the economic discourse by pointing attention to regional equity of road spending, operationalising a legal challenge (judicial review) and working with government ministers for legal change (e.g., WFGA). Resistance is thus multifaceted: the M4 case suggests that for resistance to be successful, it has to participate in and work to develop different storylines while also working to change the discursive environment within which planning decisions take place, including existing policies. This might be substantially easier in a devolved system: some of the resisting actors had a sense that this was the case, but confirming whether devolution presents more opportunities for successful advocacy than, for instance, the British government, would require a comparative study to confirm. In addition, being able to react to discursive change quickly to create support for political decisions that might have previously been considered too radical to materialise appears essential based on the results of the analysis.

While the cancellation of the road cannot be attributed to a particular action or directly to the specific actions of the environmental coalition, the conditions that the coalition worked to create, including the support they provided once the ministers signalled potential for the prioritisation of the environment of the Gwent Levels over the road, was crucial to the rejection of the road plan. The decision to cancel the road in 2019 illustrates that the pro-environmental discourse against road planning had, at that point, started to become institutionalised. This would later lead to updates in planning policy and the transport strategy. Importantly, the M4 case illustrates that discursive change has the capacity to not only create, but also support, the ministers in charge of making decisions and policy updates. This is illustrated by, for example, the ability of the environmental coalition to project their presence as bigger than it was through publishing news of popular petitions: public support for road cancellation appeared large enough, if not to help make up a politician's mind, but at least support the decision and enable Mr Drakeford to cite environmental reasons as part of his reasoning. Therefore, it can be concluded that while discursive change is not the only factor (individual politicians and political will matter too – as can be seen in the case of Carwyn Jones' goal to realise the road discussed in chapter 7), it is crucial in providing a supportive context for decisionmakers to make decisions in. If the planning balance of the social,

environmental and economic aspects is socially constructed, as is argued in chapter 5, then the discursive environment within which planning decisions are taken is key to what is perceived as an acceptable weighing of that balance in decision-making by politicians.

Accounting for the nuanced interrelations of individual impact, political will and the discursive environment is not straightforward, as has been shown by the complexity of the case study explored in this thesis. Generally, the impact of activism can be difficult to quantify: a problem that is commonly acknowledged in literature on social movements (Thiri et al. 2022). Furthermore, focus of previous research has often been on larger and more successful social movements, rather than smaller campaigns (Sicotte and Brulle 2017). Generalising from successful smaller campaigns is no doubt without challenge. Flyvbjerg (2007) reflects on his attempt to select a 'critical' case study that would enable generalising in the manner of 'if x applies in the case of Aalborg, then it applies in all cases'. Yet by assuming ability to generalise at the start of his research, he notes that he had not taken into account the specific and potentially unique combination of conditions for rationality to emerge in Aalborg (Flyvbjerg 2007). Taking place within a specific governance arrangement, shaped by both the local and British cultures (including regulatory and governance cultures) the context for resistance as set out by Welsh devolution is potentially unique. However, what is not unique to Wales, is the contentious struggle over weighing of the balance in relation to sustainable development. Furthermore, the contested processes of infrastructure governance take place elsewhere too.

Based on the results of the research, I thus argue that for resistance to successfully challenge the hegemonic discourse, it needs to understand its unique governance context. In addition, the finding that actors utilised infrastructure delays to their own ends can be generalised as a workable resistance strategy in most contexts, as it aligns with current understandings of delays embedded in the planning process for large-scale infrastructure (Marshall 2013; Flybjerg et al. 2003). Any strategy, whether planned or organically developed over time, of utilising delays embedded in infrastructure planning needs understand the context within which delays can be manufactured or how they might appear as part of the process. While generalising from a single case study is complex, more research into how decisionmakers located

between the national and the local governance scales respond to resistance is needed. This would help to understand the extent to which different scales of governance are open for resistance that aims to contribute to policy change.

9.3.   Research contributions

This project contributes to several gaps found in academic literature of planning, sustainability transitions and multilevel governance. While much theory exists on multilevel governance and how power operates within its structures, the democratic implications of the shift towards complex, multiscalar governance processes have remained unclear (Bache et al. 2016). At the same time, literature on sustainability transitions argues for a more fluid conceptualisation of power than is customary in governance literature, with the aim of understanding change as it takes place in these systems (Avelino 2021). Furthermore, it is not uncommon that large infrastructure projects exist suspended in time or end up cancelled, yet planning literature concerned with participation does not always consider the power dynamics involved when this happens, let alone the implications of changes in societal discourses that might lead to complications and cancellations (Carse and Kneas 2019).

The contributions of this thesis are thus as follows:

1. This thesis contributes to multilevel governance theory by providing "empirical flesh" (Bache et al. 2016, p. 489) on how different types of governance structures interact and mobilise stakeholder participation with a specific focus on devolved governance. The research highlights the capacity of and the need for the devolved governance layer, inserted into an existing structure, to develop its own identity. It further demonstrates how Wales is doing this through the development of planning policy, which is within its legislative remit. To aid policy development on this level, the devolved scale has become a focus of advocacy and lobbying in relation to land use and planning policy, bypassing the national and local scales, at least in the UK. The finding that contested narratives are directed at the devolved scale and not other

governance scales (local, national) further underscores the conflicting realities of multilevel governance: identity construction takes place relationally to other scales, aided by agonistic strategies of engagement (whether planned or organically developed).

2. This thesis further contributes to the literature on sustainability transitions by providing a framework for tracing and analysing fluid, non-static power flows (conceptualised through resistance as an interior quality shaping power) (Foucault 1990) and applying this to a discursive rupture in Welsh transport planning during which the policy moved towards a deeper emphasis on sustainability (Baker 2016).

3. The research conducted clearly illustrates the value in exploring participation as a longer-term, predominantly discursive process that is mobilised through relational storyline development, which corresponds to the theory of agonism (e.g. Mouffe 2013). The use of a discursive framework specifically enabled the finding of both organically and purposefully constructed delays that influenced the infrastructure planning process. It further enabled the finding that the blue route storyline, which appeared from outside the formal planning process, resulted in the destabilisation of the scheme by questioning the adequacy of provided route options. This significantly contributed to the delays experienced. Additionally, not all actors were found to be able to utilise argumentative action as effectively: the pro-environmental groups were more agile and thus more able to shift their positions according to what relationalities between storylines emerged in the public sphere. These findings highlight the value of exploring the participatory process through a discursive lens that enables the consideration of different participatory tendencies (agonistic, insurgent, collaborative) that take place during long planning pipelines.

4. Finally, the study provides a novel methodological approach designed to elicit answers to the research questions, combining policy analysis, media analysis and semi-structured interviews. The inclusion of a qualitative media analysis drawing from both local and national news publications enabled the finding of local and devolved-level media as active participants in planning struggles. The method would benefit from further testing in the planning context, for

example in relation to different cases (for instance, can power flows be detected in the case of smaller developments?).

9.4.   Limitations of the research

The focus on multi-stakeholder discourse construction has excluded potential non-human participants who are not able to participate in discursive terms. This is a consideration that occurred to me during the interview stage, particularly as some interviewees brought up the value of the Gwent Levels as one, unbroken landscape. This made me wonder about the possibilities for including the voice of the landscape. However, as this was the final stage of the fieldwork research, it was not possible to return to the framework and methodology to accommodate this concern. In the face of what Jon (2020, p. 2) has articulated as the "often unexpected and brutal feedback from nature", she argues that there is a need to consider non-human species as "social minorities" within planning scholarship to ensure the wider inclusion of voices and that this is becoming necessary should we wish to adapt to the changing climate realities. As the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis do not necessarily align with those of Jon's (posthumanism, new ecology), it is clear that novel theoretical and methodological approaches need to be developed within planning theory that enable researchers to consider discursive stakeholder participation in ways that include non-human participants in different implementation contexts.

The fieldwork stage of the research took place during and immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that interviews were conducted online, which potentially limited my ability to fully engage with the interviewees when emotional subjects came up. It may be that in a face-to-face context, the topics evoking strong reaction – sadness, in particular – could have been explored further, as the online meeting platforms (Zoom and Microsoft Teams) do not lend themselves well for emotionally complex interactions.

9.5.   Policy recommendations

While the Welsh planning policy has continued to evolve from the point at which the data collection for the thesis was ended, two policy recommendations emerge from the research:

1. It is possible that the sustainable development paradigm operationalised in Welsh planning policy produces ongoing political conflict, resulting in diluted policy outcomes and at worst, lack of implementation of sustainable transport options. As discussed in chapter 8, by bringing the three policy pillars (economic and social development and environmental protections) together in order to balance them against one another when making policy decisions, contested relationalities are produced between stakeholders representing each pillar. Continuing to develop devolved policy towards a nested approach that recognises society as dependant on the ecological boundaries of the planet, and the economy as operated by the society thus reliant on environmental realities, as proposed by Folke et al. (2016), might better mitigate stakeholder contestation than the present approach relying on the much-critiqued paradigm of sustainable development.

2. Stronger safeguards are needed to protect against weakening of environmental protections over time. The current *TAN* on nature conservation and planning (*TAN*5) can enable the overriding of statutory designations under very specific conditions and if the proposed development is imperative to public interest. The safeguards are stringent and adhere to specific conditions of each site (the process is discussed in chapter 5), however, the M4 case illustrates that what is in the public interest can be constructed discursively over long time periods. Furthermore, what is perceived to be in public interest can change, as has been proven with the shift in Welsh transport policy that has taken place since 2019. It is therefore important that *TAN 5* is updated and safeguards for protected places are made stronger to avoid future development on already conserved areas.

9.6. Future research directions

As with planning policy, devolution is perceived as a continual process that has continued and continues to evolve beyond the research period focused on by the thesis. As planning policy is within the remit of Welsh legislation, it is important that as it continues to evolve, research is conducted to identify the points at which what can be delivered is constrained by the limits of devolution. This is particularly relevant to both transport and infrastructure planning: contested interests and overlapping policy agendas can hinder transport development, as alluded to by the Welsh Government's response to the Roads Review. It is therefore crucial that research is conducted into the evolving limitations of what devolved planning policy can continue to achieve in relation to sustainable development.

The second recommendation for future research emerging from the thesis is to focus on building a holistic picture of how devolution might contribute to changes in power/resistance flows between the local and national scales, in order to avoid localised powerlessness that may negatively influence sustainability transitions. The importance of ensuring the power of the local scale in visioning sustainable futures, rather than having the visioning done solely by devolved, regional or national government, is crucial in reducing contestation and potential setbacks during processes of transition. Identifying concrete ways through which the local scale can better contribute to regional scale transport planning at an early stage could help to bridge conflicting policy realities between different scales.

Finally, other recommendations raised by the research are to utilise media analysis as a tool to detect localised flows of social capital and participation, testing the method further in the planning context and to assess whether it works in relation to small and medium-sized spatial planning projects, as well as to explore other ways through which the method can yield interesting results. Furthermore, innovative methodologies are needed to detect ways to account for non-human forms of stakeholdership in research focused on planning participation.

10. References

Adger, W.N., Brown, K., Fairbrass, J., Jordan, A., Paavola, J., Rosendo, S. and Seyfang, G. 2003. Governance for Sustainability: Towards a 'Thick' Analysis of Environmental Decisionmaking. *Environment and Planning A* 35(6), pp. 1095-1110. doi: 10.1068/a35289

Allan, J.I. 2019. Dangerous incrementalism of the paris agreement. *Global Environmental Politics* 19(1), pp. 4-11. doi: 10.1162/glep_a_00488

Allmendinger, P. 2001. The Post-Positivist Landscape of Planning Theory. In: Allmendinger, P. and Tewdwr-Jones, M. eds. *Planning futures : new directions for planning theory*. London: Routledge, pp. 3-17.

Allmendinger, P. 2017. *Planning theory*. 3rd edition. London: Palgrave.

Allmendinger, P. and Haughton, G. 2009. Soft Spaces, Fuzzy Boundaries, and Metagovernance: The New Spatial Planning in the Thames Gateway. *Environment and Planning A* 41(3), pp. 617-633. doi: 10.1068/a40208

Altheide, D.L. 2013. *Qualitative media analysis*. Second edition. ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Andrew, C. and Goldsmith, M. 1998. From Local Government to Local Governance: And beyond? *International political science review* 19(2), pp. 101-117. doi: 10.1177/019251298019002002

Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. 2016. *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Armitage, D. 2007. Governance and the Commons in a Multi-Level World. *International Journal of the Commons* 2(1), pp. 7-32. doi: 10.18352/ijc.28

Arnstein, S. 2019. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85(1), pp. 24-34. doi: 10.1080/01944363.1559388

Avelino, F. 2021. Theories of power and social change. Power contestations and their implications for research on social change and innovation. *Journal of political power* 14(3), pp. 425-448. doi: 10.1080/2158379X.2021.1875307

Avelino, F. and Wittmayer, J.M. 2015. Shifting Power Relations in Sustainability Transitions: A Multi-actor Perspective. *Journal of environmental policy & planning* 18(5), pp. 628-649. doi: 10.1080/1523908x.2015.1112259

Bache, I., Bartle, I. and Flinders, M. 2016. Multi-level governance. In: Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. eds. *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 486-498.

Bache, I. and Flinders, M. 2004. *Multi-level Governance*. 1 ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Backlund, P. and Mantysalo, R. 2010. Agonism and institutional ambiguity: Ideas on democracy and the role of participation in the development of planning theory and practice - the case of Finland. *Planning theory (London, England)* 9(4), pp. 333-350. doi: 10.1177/1473095210373684

Backstrand, K. and Kronsell, A. 2017. *Rethinking the green state: environmental governance towards climate and sustainability transitions*. Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Backstrand, K. and Lövbrand, E. 2006. Planting trees to mitigate climate change: Contested discourses of ecological modernization, green governmentality and civic environmentalism. *Global environmental politics* 6(1), pp. 50-75. doi: 10.1162/glep.2006.6.1.50

Baer, H.A. and Singer, M. 2022. Can ecological modernisation contain climate change?: An eco-socialist perspective. *Journal of Australian political economy* (90), pp. 75-91.

Baker, S. 2016. *Sustainable development*. Second edition. ed. London: Routledge.

Bakker, K. 2010. *Privatizing Water: Governance Failure and the World's Urban Water Crisis*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bakker, Y.W., de Koning, J. and van Tatenhove, J. 2019. Resilience and social capital: The engagement of fisheries communities in marine spatial planning. *Marine policy* 99, pp. 132-139. doi: 10.1016/j.marpol.2018.09.032

Balint, P.J., Stewart, R.E., Desai, A. and Walters, L. C. 2011. *Wicked Environmental Problems: Managing Uncertainty and Conflict*. Washington: Island Press.

Barrett, M. 1991. *The politics of truth: from Marx to Foucault.* Cambridge: Polity.

Barry, J. and Eckersley, R. 2005. *The state and the global ecological crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bauchinger, L., Reichenberger, A., Goodwin-Hawkins, B., Kobal, J., Hrabar, M. and Oedl-Wieser, T. 2021. Developing Sustainable and Flexible Rural–Urban Connectivity through Complementary Mobility Services. *Sustainability.* 13(3), pp. 1280-1223. doi: 10.3390/su13031280

BBC. 2013. Cardiff Airport is sold to the Welsh government for £52m. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-21952079 [Accessed: 11/05/2021].

BBC. 2016. Welsh Labour's Manifesto: What's in it? Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2016-wales-36081965 [Accessed: 11/04/2021].

BBC. 2019. M4 relief road: Newport motorway plans scrapped. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-48512697# [Accessed: 11/04/2021].

Bell, S., Morse, S. and Shah, R.A. 2012. Understanding stakeholder participation in research as part of sustainable development. *Journal of environmental management* 101, pp. 13-22. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2012.02.004

Benson, D., Fritsch, O., Cook, H. and Schmid, M. 2014. Evaluating participation in WFD river basin management in England and Wales: Processes, communities, outputs and outcomes. *Land Use Policy* 38(C), pp. 213-222. doi: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2013.11.004

Benz, A. 2007. Accountable Multilevel Governance by the Open Method of Coordination? *European Law Journal* 13(4), pp. 505-522. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0386.2007.00381.x

Berkes, F. 2010. Devolution of environment and resources governance: Trends and future. *Environmental Conservation* 37(4), pp. 489-500. doi: 10.1017/S037689291000072X

Bevir, M. and Rhodes, R.A.W. 2003. *Interpreting British governance*. London: Routledge.

Bickerstaff, K. and Walker, G. 2005. Shared Visions, Unholy Alliances: Power, Governance and Deliberative Processes in Local Transport Planning. *Urban Studies* 42(12), pp. 2123-2144. doi: 10.1080/00420980500332098

Bidwell, R.D. and Ryan, C.M. 2006. Collaborative Partnership Design: The Implications of Organizational Affiliation for Watershed Partnerships. *Society & Natural Resources* 19(9), pp. 827-843. doi: 10.1080/08941920600835585

Biermann, F. et al. 2022. Scientific evidence on the political impact of the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature sustainability* 5(9), pp. 795-800. doi: 10.1038/s41893-022-00909-5

Billig, M. 1996. *Arguing and thinking: a rhetorical approach to social psychology*. New ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Birrell, D. 2012. *Comparing devolved governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boddy, M. and Hickman, H. 2018. "Between a rock and a hard place": Planning reform, localism and the role of the planning inspectorate in England. *Planning theory & practice* 19(2), pp. 198-217. doi: 10.1080/14649357.2018.1456083

Bond, S. 2011. Negotiating a 'democratic ethos': moving beyond the agonistic – communicative divide. *Planning Theory* 10(2), pp. 161-186.

Booth, P. 2002. A desperately slow system? The origins and nature of the current discourse on development control. *Planning perspectives* 17(4), pp. 309-323. doi: 10.1080/02665430210154731

Bottrill, M.C. and Pressey, R.L. 2012. *The effectiveness and evaluation of conservation planning*. Malden, MA: Wiley.

Bovaird, T. 2005. Public governance: balancing stakeholder power in a network society. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 71(2), pp. 217-228. doi: 10.1177/0020852305053881

Bowen, G.A. 2009. Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative research journal.* 9(2), pp. 27-40. doi: 10.3316/QRJ0902027 info:doi/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Boykoff, M.T. and Boykoff, J.M. 2007. Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage. *Geoforum* 38(6), pp. 1190-1204. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2007.01.008

Brenner, N. 1999. Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies. *Theory and society* 28(1), pp. 39-78. doi: 10.1023/A:1006996806674

Brisbois, M.C. and de Loë, R.C. 2016. Power in Collaborative Approaches to Governance for Water: A Systematic Review. *Society & Natural Resources* 29(7), pp. 775-790. doi: 10.1080/08941920.2015.108033

Bristow, G. 2018. Reflections on the Welsh economy: remanence, resilience and resourcefulness. *Welsh Economic Review* 26, pp. 13-20. doi: 10.18573/wer.229

Brockhaus, M., Di Gregorio, M. and Mardiah, S. 2014. Governing the design of national REDD+: An analysis of the power of agency. *Forest Policy and Economics* 49(C), pp. 23-33. doi: 10.1016/j.forpol.2013.07.003

Brown, T. 2016. Sustainability as Empty Signifier: Its Rise, Fall, and Radical Potential: Sustainability as Empty Signifier. *Antipode* 48(1), pp. 115-133. doi: 10.1111/anti.12164

Browne, K. 2005. Snowball sampling: using social networks to research non-heterosexual women. *International journal of social research methodology* 8(1), pp. 47-60. doi: 10.1080/13645570320000081663

Brownill, S. and Carpenter, J. 2007. Participation and planning: Dichotomies, rationalities and strategies for power. *Town planning review* 78(4), pp. 401-428. doi: 10.3828/tpr.78.4.2

Buhler, T. and Stephenson, R. 2021. Is local planning really 'local'? National planning context as a determining factor for local discourse. *Planning theory & practice* 22(2), pp. 227-243. doi: 10.1080/14649357.2021.1903070

Bulkeley, H. and Betsill, M.M. 2003. *Cities and climate change: Urban sustainability and global environmental governance*. London: Routledge.

Burningham, K. 2000. Using the Language of NIMBY: A topic for research, not an activity for researchers. *Local environment* 5(1), pp. 55-67. doi: 10.1080/135498300113264

Caraher, M., Cavicchi, A. and Wells, R. 2014. UK print media coverage of the food bank phenomenon: from food welfare to food charity? *British food journal.* 116(9), pp. 1426-1445. doi: 10.1108/BFJ-03-2014-0123

info:doi/10.1108/BFJ-03-2014-0123

Carse, A. and Kneas, D. 2019. Unbuilt and Unfinished: The Temporalities of Infrastructure. *Environment and Society* 10(1), pp. 9-28. doi: 10.3167/ares.2019.100102

Carter, N. 2007. *The politics of the environment ideas, activism, policy.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carvalho, A. 2008. Media(ted) discourse and society: Rethinking the framework of critical discourse analysis. *Journalism studies (London, England)* 9(2), pp. 161-177. doi: 10.1080/14616700701848162

Castells, M. 2000. Toward a sociology of the network society. *Contemporary Sociology-A Journal Of Reviews* 29(5), pp. 693-699. doi: 10.2307/2655234

Castells, M. 2009. *Communication power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chelimsky, E. and Shadish, W.R. 1997. *Evaluation for the 21st century a handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Cheok, J., Weeks, R., Morrison, T.H. and Pressey, R.L. 2020. Scalar capital as ingredient of success in conservation governance: evidence from Melanesia. *Global environmental change.* 62, p. 102057. doi: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102057

Clements, R., Searle, G. and Alizadeh, T. 2023. Epistemic silences in settler-colonial infrastructure governance literature. *Geographical research*. doi: 10.1111/1745-5871.12601

Clifford, N.J., Cope, M., Gillespie, T.W. and French, S. 2016. *Key methods in geography*. Third edition. ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Collins, K. and Ison, R. 2009. Jumping off Arnstein's ladder: social learning as a new policy paradigm for climate change adaptation. *Environmental Policy and Governance* 19(6), p. 358. doi: 10.1002/eet.523

Couldry, N. 2010. *Why voice matters: culture and politics after neoliberalism*. London: SAGE.

Cowell, R. 2015. Localism and the Environment. In: Davoudi, S. and Madanipour, A. eds. *Reconsidering localism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 217-237.

Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. 2022. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sixth edition. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Crompton, A. 2015. Runaway train: public participation and the case of HS2. *Policy & Politics* 43(1), pp. 27-44. doi: 10.1332/030557312X655932

Cullingworth, J.B. et al. 2015. *Town and country planning in the UK*. 15th ed. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Davidson, J. 2020. *futuregen: Lessons from a Small Country*. London: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Davies, A.R. 2008. *The Geographies of Garbage Governance: Interventions, Interactions and Outcomes*. London: Routledge.

Deacon, T. 2021. The Welsh Government is giving Cardiff Airport a huge sum of money and writing off debt. *Wales Online*. Available at: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/cardiff-airport-welsh-government-debt-19955141 [Accessed: 11/05/2021].

Dempsey, N., Bramley, G., Power, S. and Brown, C. 2011. The social dimension of sustainable development: Defining urban social sustainability. *Sustainable*

development (Bradford, West Yorkshire, England) 19(5), pp. 289-300. doi:
10.1002/sd.417

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2013. *The landscape of qualitative research*. 4th ed.
Los Angeles: SAGE.

Di Gregorio, M. et al. 2019. Multi-level governance and power in climate change
policy networks. *Global environmental change* 54, pp. 64-77. doi:
10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2018.10.003

Driscoll, P.A. 2014. Breaking Carbon Lock-In: Path Dependencies in Large-Scale
Transportation Infrastructure Projects. *Planning, practice & research* 29(3), pp. 317-
330. doi: 10.1080/02697459.2014.929847

Dryzek, J.S. 1997. *The politics of the earth : environmental discourses*. Oxford :
Oxford University Press.

Duckett, D., Feliciano, D., Martin-Ortega, J. and Munoz-Rojas, J. 2016. Tackling
wicked environmental problems: The discourse and its influence on praxis in
Scotland. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 154, pp. 44-56. doi:
10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.03.015

Elgert, L. 2012. Certified discourse? The politics of developing soy certification
standards. *Geoforum* 43(2), pp. 295-304. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.08.008

Else, T., Choudhary, S. and Genovese, A. 2022. Uncovering sustainability storylines
from dairy supply chain discourse. *Journal of business research* 142, pp. 858-874.
doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.12.023

Engles, B. 2021. All good things come from below? Scalar constructions of the 'local'
in conflicts over mining. *Political Geography* 84, pp. 102295

Evans, B., Richmond, T. and Shields, J. 2005. Structuring Neoliberal Governance:
The Nonprofit Sector, Emerging New Modes of Control and the Marketisation of

Service Delivery. *Policy and Society* 24(1), pp. 73-97. doi: 10.1016/S1449-4035(05)70050-3

Fairclough, N. 2003. *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.

Feindt, P.H. and Oels, A. 2005. Does discourse matter? Discourse analysis in environmental policy making. *Journal of environmental policy & planning* 7(3), pp. 161-173. doi: 10.1080/15239080500339638

Flynn, J. 2016. Communicative Power in Habermas's Theory of Democracy. *European journal of political theory* 3(4), pp. 433-454. doi: 10.1177/1474885104045914

Flyvbjerg, B. 1998. *Rationality and power: democracy in practice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2007. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. In: Seale, C. ed. *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: SAGE, pp. 390-403.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2011. Over Budget, Over Time, Over and Over Again: Managing Major Projects. In: Flyvbjerg, B. ed. *The Oxford handbook of megaproject management.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2017. Introduction: The Iron Law of Megaproject Management. In: Flyvbjerg, B., Pinto, J., Söderlund, J. and Morris, P. eds. *The Oxford handbook of project management.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. and Richardson, T. 2001. Planning and Foucault: In Search of the Dark Side of Planning Theory. In: Allmendinger, P. and Tewdwr-Jones, M. eds. *Planning futures : new directions for planning theory*. London: Routledge, pp. 44-62.

Flyvbjerg, B., Skamris holm, M.K. and Buhl, S.L. 2003. How common and how large are cost overruns in transport infrastructure projects? *Transport reviews* 23(1), pp. 71-88. doi: 10.1080/01441640309904

Folke, C., Biggs, R., Norström, A. V., Reyers, B. and Rockström, J. 2016. Social-ecological resilience and biosphere-based sustainability science. *Ecology and society* 21(3), p. 41. doi: 10.5751/ES-08748-210341

Forester, J. 1989. *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Forester, J. 1999. *The deliberative practitioner: encouraging participatory planning processes.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Foucault, M. 1990. *The history of sexuality. Vol.1, An introduction*. Penguin reprint. ed. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. 1991. *The Foucault reader*. Penguin reprint. ed. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. 1995. *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage.

Foucault, M. 2002a. *Archaeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. 2002b. *Power*. London: Penguin.

Fougère L. and Bond, S. 2016. Legitimising activism in democracy: a place for antagonism in environmental governance. *Planning Theory* 17(2), pp. 143-169.

Friedmann, J. 2011. *Insurgencies: essays in planning theory*. London: London : Routledge.

Fullbright, [No date]. *New cost limits for planning challenges and environmental claims*. Available at: https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en-

gb/knowledge/publications/05ed6e85/new-cost-limits-for-planning-challenges-and-environmental-claims [Accessed: 06/09/2023].

Fung, A. 2015. Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future. *Public Administration Review* 75(4), pp. 513-522. doi: 10.1111/puar.12361

Funk, M.J. and McCombs, M. 2017. Strangers on a theoretical train: Inter-media agenda setting, community structure, and local news coverage. *Journalism studies (London, England)* 18(7), pp. 845-865. doi: 10.1080/1461670X.2015.1099460

Gash, A. 2016. Collaborative Governance. In: Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. eds. *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Garland, R., Tambini, D. and Couldry, N. 2018. Has government been mediatized? A UK perspective. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(4), pp. 496-513

Gill, R. 2000. Discourse Analysis. In: Gaskell, G. and Bauer, M.W. eds. *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound: a practical handbook*. California: Sage Publications.

Gillham, B. 2000. *Case study research methods*. London: Continuum.

Goertz, G. and Mahoney, J. 2012. Concepts and measurement: Ontology and epistemology. *Social Science Information* 51(2), pp. 205-216. doi: 10.1177/0539018412437108

Goodwin, M., Jones, M. and Jones, R. 2005. Devolution, constitutional change and economic development: Explaining and understanding the new institutional geographies of the British state. *Regional Studies* 39(4), pp. 421-436. doi: 10.1080/00343400500128432

Graham, J., Amos, B. and Plumptre, T. 2003. *Governance principles for protected areas in the 21st century*. Ottawa: Institute on Governance, Parks Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency.

Griffin, L. 2012. Where is Power in Governance? Why Geography Matters in the Theory of Governance. *Political Studies Review* 10(2), pp. 208-220. doi: 10.1111/j.1478-9302.2012.00260.x

Gruber, J. 2010. Key Principles of Community-Based Natural Resource Management: A Synthesis and Interpretation of Identified Effective Approaches for Managing the Commons. *Environmental Management* 45(1), pp. 52-66. doi: 10.1007/s00267-008-9235-y

Gualini, E. 2016. Contentious mobilization and the challenge of reflexivity in 'strategic' urban development projects: Reflections on planning conflict in the case of mediaspree. In: Renau, L. ed. *Conflicts in the city: reflections on urban unrest*. Berlin. pp. 43-65.

Guardian. 2018a. Government rejects plan for £1.3bn tidal lagoon in Swansea. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/jun/25/government-rejects-plan-for-tidal-lagoon-in-swansea [Accessed: 23/09/2022].

Guardian. 2018b. UK takes £5bn stake in Welsh nuclear power station in policy U-turn. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/04/uk-takes-5bn-stake-in-welsh-nuclear-power-station-in-policy-u-turn [Accessed: 23/09/2022].

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. eds. *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, SA: SAGE, pp. 105-117.

Haas, T. 2021. From Green Energy to the Green Car State? The Political Economy of Ecological Modernisation in Germany. *New political economy* 26(4), pp. 660-673. doi: 10.1080/13563467.2020.1816949

Habermas, J. 1987. *The theory of communicative action / Vol.2, Lifeworld and system: a critique of functionalist reason*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hacking, N. and Flynn, A. 2017. Networks, power and knowledge in the planning system: A case study of energy from waste. *Progress in Planning* 113(C), pp. 1-37. doi: 10.1016/j.progress.2015.12.001

Hagen, B. 2016. The role of planning in minimizing the negative impacts of global climate change. *Urban planning* 1(3), pp. 13-24. doi: 10.17645/up.v1i3.671

Hajer, M. 2003. Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void. *Policy Sciences* 36, pp. 175-195.

Hajer, M. 2003. A frame in the fields: policymaking and the reinvention of politics. In: Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. eds. *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 88-112.

Hajer, M. and Versteeg, W. 2005. A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges, perspectives. *Journal of environmental policy & planning.* 7(3), pp. 175-184. doi: 10.1080/15239080500339646

Hajer, M. 2006. Doing discourse analysis: coalitions, practices, meaning. In: van den Brink, M. and Metze, T. eds. *Words Matter in Policy and Planning*. Utrecht: Netherlands Graduate School of Urban and Regional Research, pp. 65-74.

Hajer, M. 1997. *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Hajer, M. 2002. Discourse Analysis and the study of policy making. *European political science* 2(1), pp. 61-65. doi: 10.1057/eps.2002.49

Hall, P. 1980. *Great planning disasters*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Hall, S. 2001. Foucault: power, knowledge and discourse. In: Yates, S., Taylor, S., Wetherell, M. and Open, U. eds. *Discourse theory and practice : a reader*. London: SAGE.

Harmes, A. 2006. Neoliberalism and multilevel governance. *Review of international political economy: RIPE* 13(5), pp. 725-749. doi: 10.1080/09692290600950621

Harris, N. 2001. Collaborative Planning: From Theoretical Foundations to Practice Forms. In: Allmendinger, P. and Tewdwr-Jones, M. eds. *Planning futures: new directions for planning theory*. London: Routledge, pp. 21-43.

Hartley, N. and Wood, C. 2005. Public participation in environmental impact assessment—implementing the Aarhus Convention. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 25(4), pp. 319-340. doi: 10.1016/j.eiar.2004.12.002

Hartz-Karp, J. 2005. A case study in deliberative democracy: dialogue with the city. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. 1(1). doi: 10.16997/jdd.27

Haugaard, M. 2016. Power. In: Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. eds. *Handbook on theories of governance*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 188-196.

Head, B.W. 2007. Community Engagement: Participation on Whose Terms? *Australian Journal of Political Science* 42(3), pp. 441-454. doi: 10.1080/10361140701513570

Head, B.W. and Alford, J. 2015. Wicked Problems: Implications for Public Policy and Management. *Administration & Society* 47(6), pp. 711-739. doi: 10.1177/0095399713481601

Healey, P. 1998. Collaborative Planning in a Stakeholder Society. *Town planning review* 69(1), pp. 1-21. doi: 10.3828/tpr.69.1.h651u2327m86326p

Healey, P. 1999. Deconstructing Communicative Planning Theory: A Reply to Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger. *Environment and planning. A* 31(6), pp. 1129-1135. doi: 10.1068/a311129

Healey, P. 2003. Collaborative planning in perspective. *Planning Theory*. 2(2), pp. 101-123.

Healey, P. 1997. *Collaborative planning: shaping places in fragmented societies*. 1st ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Helne, T. and Hirvilammi, T. 2015. Wellbeing and sustainability: A relational approach: Wellbeing and Sustainability. *Sustainable development (Bradford, West Yorkshire, England)* 23(3), pp. 167-175. doi: 10.1002/sd.1581

Hillier, J. 2002. *Shadows of power: an allegory of prudence in land-use planning*. New York: Routledge.

Hillier, J. 2016. Agonizing Over Consensus: Why Habermasian Ideals cannot be `Real'. *Planning theory (London, England)* 2(1), pp. 37-59. doi: 10.1177/1473095203002001005

Himley, M. 2008. Geographies of Environmental Governance: The Nexus of Nature and Neoliberalism. *Geography Compass* 2(2), pp. 433-451. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00094.x

Holahan, R. and Lubell, M. 2016. Collective action theory. In: Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. eds. *Hanbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 21-31.

Holgate, S. and Stokes-Lampard, H. 2017. Air pollution—a wicked problem. *BMJ (Online)* 357, pp. j2814-j2814. doi: 10.1136/bmj.j2814

Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. 2003. Unraveling the Central State, but How? Types of Multilevel Governance. *American Political Science Review* 97(2), pp. 233-243. doi: 10.1017/S0003055403000649

Howe, S. 2017. *Commissioner challenges plans for £1.1bn M4 relief road.* www.futuregenerations.wales/news/commissioner-challenges-1bn-m4-road/: Office of the Future Generations Commissioner. Available at: [Accessed: 11/05].

Howes, M. et al. 2017. Environmental sustainability: a case of policy implementation failure? *Sustainability* 9(2), p. 165. doi: 10.3390/su9020165

Huq, E. 2020. Seeing the insurgent in transformative planning practices. *Planning theory.* 19(4), pp. 371-391. doi: 10.1177/1473095219901290

Inch, A. 2012. Creating 'a Generation of NIMBYs'? Interpreting the role of the state in managing the politics of urban development. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30(3), pp. 520-535. doi: 10.1068/c11156

Inch, A. 2015. Ordinary citizens and the political cultures of planning: in search of the subject of a new democratic ethos. *Planning Theory* 14(4), pp. 404-424. doi: 10.1177/1473095214536172

Inch, A. and Shepherd, E. 2020. Thinking conjuncturally about ideology, housing and English planning. *Planning Theory* 10(1), pp. 59-79. doi: 10.1177/147309521988777

Innes, J. E. and Booher, D. E. 2004. Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory & Practice* 5(4), pp. 419-436. doi: 10.1080/1464935042000293170

Innes, J. E. and Booher, D. E. 2010. *Planning with complexity : an introduction to collaborative rationality for public policy*. London: LRoutledge.

Jackson, T. 2009. *Prosperity without growth : economics for a finite planet*. London: Earthscan.

Jacobs, J. 2016. *The death and life of great American cities*. London: Vintage Digital.

Jessop, B. 1998. The rise of governance and the risks of failure: the case of economic development. *International Social Science Journal* 50, pp. 29-45.

Jessop, B. 2000. The crisis of the national spatio-temporal fix and the tendential ecological dominance of globalizing capitalism. *International journal of urban and regional research* 24(2), pp. 323-360. doi: 10.1111/1468-2427.00251

Johnson, P. and Chandler, D. 2015. *The coalition and the economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 159-193.

Johnstone, B. 2008. *Discourse analysis*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Jolivet, E. and Heiskanen, E. 2010. Blowing against the wind—an exploratory application of actor network theory to the analysis of local controversies and participation processes in wind energy. *Energy Policy* 38(11), pp. 6746-6754. doi: 10.1016/j.enpol.2010.06.044

Jon, I. 2020, Deciphering posthumanism: why and how it matters to urban planning in the Anthropocene. *Planning theory (London, England)* 19(4), pp. 392-420. doi: 10.1177/1473095220912770

Jon, I. 2021. *Cities in the Anthropocene: New Ecology and Urban Politics*. 1st ed. London: Pluto Press.

Jones, C.E., Baker, M., Carter, J., Jay, S., Short, M. and Wood, C. 2005. *Strategic environmental assessment and land use planning : an international evaluation*. London: Earthscan.

Jones, M. 2014. Chantal Mouffe's agonistic project: passions and participation. *Parallax (Leeds, England)* 20(2), pp. 14-30. doi: 10.1080/13534645.2014.896546

Karlsson, M. and Gilek, M. 2020. Mind the gap: coping with delay in environmental governance. *Ambio: a journal of the human environment.* 49(5), pp. 1067-1075. doi: 10.1007/s13280-019-01265-z

Keast, R. 2016. Network Governance. In: Ansell, C. and Torfing, J. eds. *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kenber, B. 2013. £1bn plan to put Britain on the road to recovery. *The Times*. Available at: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/1bn-plan-to-put-britain-on-the-road-to-recovery-s2gvptpxxn2 [Accessed 05/12/2023]

Kim, J.H. and Jurey, N. 2013. Local and Regional Governance Structures: Fiscal, Economic, Equity, and Environmental Outcomes. *Journal of planning literature* 28(2), pp. 111-123. doi: 10.1177/0885412213477135

Kocsis, J. 2023. '¡Eso no se dice'!: Exploring the value of communication distortions in participatory planning. *Planning Theory* 22(3), pp. 270-291.

Kreuter, M.W., De Rosa, C., Howze, E.H. and Baldwin, G. T. 2004. Understanding Wicked Problems: A Key to Advancing Environmental Health Promotion. *Health education & behavior* 31(4), pp. 441-454. doi: 10.1177/1090198104265597

Kukkonen, A., Stoddart, M.C.J. and Ylä-Anttila, T. 2021. Actors and justifications in media debates on Arctic climate change in Finland and Canada: A network approach. *Acta sociologica* 64(1), pp. 103-117. doi: 10.1177/0001699319890902

Kuss, P. and Nicholas, K.A. 2022. A dozen effective interventions to reduce car use in European cities: Lessons learned from a meta-analysis and transition management. *Case studies on transport policy* 10(3), pp. 1494-1513. doi: 10.1016/j.cstp.2022.02.001

Kühn, M. 2021. Agonistic planning theory revisited: the planner's role in dealing with conflict. *Planning theory (London, England)* 20(2), pp. 143-156. doi: 10.1177/1473095220953201

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. 2001. *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. New York: Verso.

Lakoff, G. 2004. *Don't think of an elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate: the Essential Guide for Progressives*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Pub. Co.

Lamb, W.F. et al. 2020. Discourses of climate delay. *Global sustainability* 3, doi: 10.1017/sus.2020.13

Lane, M.B. 2005. Public Participation in Planning: an intellectual history. *Australian Geographer* 36(3), pp. 283-299. doi: 10.1080/00049180500325694

Leech, B. L. 2002. Asking questions: techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS, political science & politics* 35(4), pp. 665-668. doi: 10.1017/S1049096502001129

Legacy, C. 2017. Is there a crisis of participatory planning? *Planning theory (London, England)* 16(4), pp. 425-442. doi: 10.1177/1473095216667433

Legacy, C., Metzger, J., Steele, W. and Gualini, E. 2019. Beyond the post-political: exploring the relational and situated dynamics of consensus and conflict in planning. *Planning theory (London, England)* 18(3), pp. 273-281. doi: 10.1177/1473095219845628

Lee, M. 2017. Knowledge and landscape in wind energy planning. *Legal Studies* 37(1), pp. 3-25. doi: 10.1111/lest.12156

Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A. 2006. Environmental Governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 31(1), pp. 297-325. doi: 10.1146/annurev.energy.31.042605.135621

Lewis, J., Williams, A. and Franklin, B. 2008. A compromised fourth estate?: UK news journalism, public relations and news sources. *Journalism studies (London, England)* 9(1), pp. 1-20. doi: 10.1080/14616700701767974

Lilja, M. 2018. The politics of time and temporality in Foucault's theorisation of resistance: Ruptures, time-lags and decelerations. *Journal of political power* 11(3), pp. 419-432. doi: 10.1080/2158379X.2018.1523319

Lockwood, M., Davidson, J., Curtis, A., Stratford, E. and Griffith, R. 2010. Governance principles for natural resource management. *Society & Natural Resources* 23(10), pp. 986-1001. doi: 10.1080/08941920802178214

Love, P. 2003. Document Analysis. In: Stage, F.K. and Manning, K. eds. *Research in the College Context: Approaches and Methods*. New York: Routledge, pp. 83-96.

Mabry, L. 2008. Case study in social research. In: Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L. and Brannen, J. eds. *The Sage handbook of social research methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 214-227.

Maginn, P. 2007. Deliberative democracy or discursively biased? Perth's dialogue with the city initiative. *Space & Polity* 11(3), pp. 331-352. doi: 10.1080/13562570701811619

Marango, S., Bosworth, G. and Curry, N. 2021. Applying Neo-Endogenous Development Theory to Delivering Sustainable Local Nature Conservation. *Sociologia ruralis.* 61(1), pp. 116-140. doi: 10.1111/soru.12315

Markard, J., Raven, R. and Truffer, B. 2012. Sustainability transitions: An emerging field of research and its prospects. *Research policy* 41(6), pp. 955-967. doi: 10.1016/j.respol.2012.02.013

Markard, J., Rinscheid, A. and Widdel, L. 2021. Analyzing transitions through the lens of discourse networks: Coal phase-out in Germany. *Environmental innovation and societal transitions* 40, pp. 315-331. doi: 10.1016/j.eist.2021.08.001

Marks, G. 1993. Structural policy and Multilevel governance in the EC. In: Cafruny, A.W., Rosenthal, G.G., European Community Studies, A. and European Union Studies, A. eds. *The state of the European Community. Vol.2, The Maastricht debates and beyond ; edited by Alan W. Cafruny, Glenda G. Rosenthal*. Boulder, Colo : Harlow: Boulder, Colo : Lynne Rienner Harlow : Longman.

Marks, G. and Hooghe, L. 2004. Contrasting Visions of Multilevel Governance. In: Bache, I. and Flinders, M. eds. *Multi-level Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 16-30.

Marshall, T. 2013. *Planning major infrastructure: a critical analysis*. New York: Routledge.

Marshall, T. and Cowell, R. 2016. Infrastructure, planning and the command of time. *Environment and planning. C, Government & policy* 34(8), pp. 1843-1866. doi: 10.1177/0263774X16642768

Masterplan, Cardiff Airport. *Our Airport Masterplan*. Available at: https://www.cardiff-airport.com/our-airport-2040-masterplan/: [Accessed: 11/04/2023].

Mattila, H. 2020. Habermas revisited: resurrecting the contestested roots of communicative planning theory. *Progress in planning.* 141, p. 100431.

Mayerhöffer, E. 2021. How do Danish Right-wing Alternative Media Position Themselves Against the Mainstream? Advancing the Study of Alternative Media Structure and Content. *Journalism studies.* 22(2), pp. 119-136. doi: 10.1080/1461670X.2020.1814846

McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L. 1972. The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public opinion quarterly* 36(2), pp. 176-187. doi: 10.1086/267990

McCombs, M.E. 2004. *Setting the agenda : the mass media and public opinion*. Cambridge: Polity; Malden, MA: Blackwell.

McCurry, J. 2020. Hitachi to pull plug on north Wales nuclear power station. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/sep/15/hitachi-to-pull-plug-on-north-wales-nuclear-power-station [Accessed: 23/09/2023].

McKinley, E., Ballinger, R.C. and Beaumont, N.J. 2018. Saltmarshes, ecosystem services, and an evolving policy landscape: A case study of Wales, UK. *Marine policy.* 91, pp. 1-10. doi: 10.1016/j.marpol.2018.01.021

Meadowcroft, J. 2002. Politics and scale: some implications for environmental governance. *Landscape And Urban Planning* 61(2-4), pp. 169-179.

Mebratu, D. 1998. Sustainability and sustainable development: Historical and conceptual review. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 18(6), pp. 493-520. doi: 10.1016/S0195-9255(98)00019-5

Melia, S. 2021. *Roads, runways and resistance: from the Newbury bypass to extinction rebellion*. London: Pluto Press.

Metze, T. and Dodge, J. 2016. Dynamic Discourse Coalitions on hydro-fracking in Europe and the United States. *Environmental communication* 10(3), pp. 365-379. doi: 10.1080/17524032.2015.1133437

Mills, A.J., Durepos, G. and Wiebe, E. 2009. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. California: SAGE.

Minnis, A. 2021. The M4 Relief Road. *Senedd Research (Blog)*. Available at: https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/the-m4-relief-road/ [Accessed: 27/05/2021].

Miraftab, F. 2009. Insurgent planning: situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning Theory* 8(1), pp. 32-50.

Miraftab, F. 2018. Insurgent practices and decolonization of future(s). In: Gunder, M., Madanipour, A. and Watson, V. eds. *The Routledge handbook of planning theory*. New York: Routledge, pp. 276-288.

Mohus, T. and Skorstad, B. 2022. Four statements and a storyline – discourses in urban green transformation. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 9(3), pp. 326-348.

Mol, A.P.J., Sonnenfeld, D.A. and Spaargaren, G. 2009. *The ecological modernisation reader : environmental reform in theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

Monno, V. and Khakee, A. 2012. Tokenism or political activism? Some reflections on participatory planning. *International planning studies* 17(1), pp. 85-101. doi: 10.1080/13563475.2011.638181

Moore, C. 2022. What the 'dangerous precedent' set by Bristol airport u-turn means for other UK airport expansion plans. *New Civil Engineer* 08/02/2022. Available at: https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/what-the-dangerous-precedent-set-by-bristol-airport-u-turn-means-for-other-uk-airport-expansion-plans-08-02-2022/ [Accessed: 03/10/2023].

Morphet, J. 2016. *Infrastructure delivery planning: an effective practice approach*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Mosalski, R. 2019. A timeline of the M4 relief road saga: how 30-years of dithering and disagreement came to this. *Wales Online*. Available at: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/m4-relief-road-how-30-16372579 [Accessed: 11/05/2021].

Mosco, V. 2009. *The Political Economy of Communication*. 2 ed. London: SAGE.

Mouffe, C. 1993. *The return of the political*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. 2005. *On the political*. London: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. 2013. *Agonistics: thinking the world politically*. New York: Verso.

Murdoch, J. and Abram, S. 2017. *Rationalities of planning: development versus environment in planning for housing*. London; New York: Routledge.

Murphy, J. 2000. Ecological modernisation. *Geoforum* 31(1), pp. 1-8. doi: 10.1016/S0016-7185(99)00039-1

Netherwood, A. and Flynn, A. 2020. *A shift in Governance, Policy, and Delivery for Future Generations? Well-being Planning in Wales*. Discussion paper. Available at: https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52887/Item%2011%20Netherwood%20Flynn%20-%20FG%20WBP%20Research%20Paper%20FINAL.cleaned.pdf [Accessed 05/12/2023]

Neville K. and Weinthal E. 2016. Scaling up site disputes: strategies to redefine 'local' in the fight against fracking. *Environmental Politics* 25(4), pp. 569-592.

Newig, J. and Fritsch, O. 2009. Environmental governance: participatory, multi-level – and effective? *Environmental Policy and Governance* 19(3), pp. 197-214. doi: 10.1002/eet.509

Newport: *Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)*. Online: Newport City Council. Available at: https://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Transport-Streets/Pollution-and-noise-control/Air-Quality-Management-Areas.aspx [Accessed: 08/12/2022].

Niskanen, J., Anshelm, J. and Haikola, S. 2023. A new discourse coalition in the Swedish transport infrastructure debate 2016–2021. *Transportation research. Part D, Transport and environment* 116, p. 103611. doi: 10.1016/j.trd.2023.103611

North, P. 1998. 'Save our Solsbury!': The anatomy of an anti-roads protest. *Environmental politics* 7(3), pp. 1-25

Office of the Future Generations Commissioner. [No date]. *Future Generations Commissioner For Wales*. Available at: https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-commissioner/ [Accessed: 05/12/2023].

O'Keeffe, A. 2011. Media and discourse analysis. In: Gee, J. and M.H. Surname? eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge, pp. 441-454.

Olsen, W. 2004. Triangulation in social research: qualitative and quantitative methods can really be mixed. In: Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. eds. *Developments in Sociology*. Causeway Press Ltd.

O'Riordan, T., Kemp, R. and Purdue, M. 1988. *Sizewell B: An Anatomy of the inquiry*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Ostrom, E. 2015. *Governing the commons : the evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Owens, S. E. and Cowell, R. 2011. *Land and limits : interpreting sustainability in the planning process*. Second edition. ed. London: Routledge.

Paloniemi, R. et al. 2015. Public Participation and Environmental Justice in Biodiversity Governance in Finland, Greece, Poland and the UK. *Environmental Policy and Governance* 25(5), pp. 330-342. doi: 10.1002/eet.1672

Paltridge, B. and Hyland, D. K. 2012. *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. New York: New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Peters, B.G. 2017. What is so wicked about wicked problems? A conceptual analysis and a research program. *Policy and Society: Understanding policy problems: Tame*

and wicked problems reconsidered; Guest Edited by Joshua Newman, Patrik Marier, B. Guy Peters and Brian Head 36(3), pp. 385-396. doi: 10.1080/14494035.2017.1361633

Piattoni, S. 2009. Multi-level governance: a historical and conceptual analysis. *Journal of European Integration* 31(2), pp. 163-180. doi: 10.1080/07036330802642755

Pierre, J. 2000. *Governance, politics and the state*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Pløger, J. 2004. Strife: urban planning and agonism. *Planning Theory* 3(1), pp. 71-92. doi: 10.1177/1473095204042318

Pløger, J. 2018. Conflict and Agonism. In: Gunder, M., Madanipour, A. and Watson, V. eds. *The Routledge handbook of planning theory*. New York: Routledge, pp. 264-276.

Priemus, H. and van Wee, B. 2017. *Megaproject Decision Making and Management: Ethical and Political Issues*. Oxford University Press.

Pruijt, H. 2004. The impact of citizens' protest on city planning in Amsterdam. In: Deben, L., Salet, W. and Van Thoor, M. eds. *Cultural Heritage and the Future of the Historic Inner City of Amsterdam*. The University of Michigan, pp. 228-244.

Purcell, M. 2009. Resisting neoliberalization: communicative planning or counter-hegemonic movements? *Planning theory (London, England)* 8(2), pp. 140-165. doi: 10.1177/1473095209102232

Rantala, S. and Di Gregorio, M. 2014. Multistakeholder environmental governance in action: REDD+ discourse coalitions in Tanzania. *Ecology and society* 19(2), pp. 1-11. doi: 10.5751/ES-06536-190266

Rawluk, A. and Curtis, A. 2017. "A Mirror and a Lamp": the role of power in the rural landscape trajectory of the Ovens region of Australia. *Society & Natural Resources* 30(8), pp. 949-963. doi: 10.1080/08941920.2016.1264651

Reed, M.G. and Bruyneel, S. 2010. Rescaling environmental governance, rethinking the state: A three-dimensional review. *Progress in Human Geography* 34(5), pp. 646-653. doi: 10.1177/0309132509354836

Reed, M.S. and Curzon, R. 2015. Stakeholder mapping for the governance of biosecurity: a literature review. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences* 12(1), pp. 15-38.

Rhodes, R.A.W. 1997. *Understanding governance: policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Richardson, K. et al. 2023. Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. *Science advances* 9(37), pp. eadh2458-eadh2458. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.adh2458

Richardson, T. 1996. Foucauldian discourse: Power and truth in urban and regional policy making. *European planning studies* 4(3), pp. 279-292. doi: 10.1080/09654319608720346

Ripley, T. 2007. Interviews. In: Seale, C. ed. *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 15-33.

Rittel, H. and Webber, M. 1973. Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences* 4(2), pp. 155-169. doi: 10.1007/BF01405730

Roberts, N. 2000. Wicked problems and network approaches to resolution. *International Public Management Review* 1(1), pp. 1-19.

Roads Review. 2023. Welsh Government's response to the Roads Review. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/welsh-government-response-roads-review-html [Accessed: 10/11/2023]

Rockström, J. et al. 2009. Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and society* 14(2), p. 32. doi: 10.5751/ES-03180-140232

Romein, A., Jacob Trip, J. and de Vries, J. 2003. The multi-scalar complexity of infrastructure planning: evidence from the Dutch–Flemish megacorridor. *Journal of transport geography* 11(3), pp. 205-213. doi: 10.1016/S0966-6923(03)00031-0

Roseland, M. and Spiliotopoulou, M. 2017. Sustainable community planning and development. *Encyclopedia of sustainable technologies /*, pp. 53-61. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.10185-X

Rowe, G. and Frewer, LJ. 2015. A typology of public engagement mechanisms. *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 30(2), pp. 251-290

Ruijter, H., van Marrewijk, A., Veenswijk, M. and Merkus, S. 2021. 'Filling the mattress': Trust development in the governance of infrastructure megaprojects. *International journal of project management* 39(4), pp. 351-364. doi: 10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.09.003

Rydin, Y. 2003. *Conflict, consensus, and rationality in environmental planning: an institutional discourse approach*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Rydin, Y. 2010. *Governing for sustainable urban development*. London: Earthscan.

Rydin, Y. 2011. *The purpose of planning: Creating sustainable towns and cities*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Rydin, Y. 2019. Silences, categories and black-boxes: Towards an analytics of the relations of power in planning regulation. *Planning Theory* 19(2), doi: 10.1177/1473095219870559

Rydin, Y. and Pennington, M. 2000. Public participation and local environmental planning: The collective action problem and the potential of social capital. *Local Environment* 5(2), pp. 153-169. doi: 10.1080/13549830050009328

Sager, T. 2011. Neo-liberal urban planning policies: A literature survey 1990–2010. *Progress in planning* 76(4), pp. 147-199. doi: 10.1016/j.progress.2011.09.001

Sager, T. 2018. Communicative planning. In: Gunder, M., Madanipour, A. and Watson, V. eds. *The Routledge handbook of planning theory*. New York: Routledge, pp. 93-104.

Salet, W. and Thornley, A. 2007. Institutional Influences on the Integration of Multilevel Governance and Spatial Policy in European City-Regions. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 27(2), pp. 188-198. doi: 10.1177/0739456X07307207

Sandercock, L. 1998. *Towards cosmopolis: planning for multicultural cities*. Chichester: John Wiley.

Sankaran, S., Müller, R. and Drouin, N. 2020. Creating a 'sustainability sublime' to enable megaprojects to meet the United Nations sustainable development goals. *Systems research and behavioral science* 37(5), pp. 813-826. doi: 10.1002/sres.2744

Scharpf, F.W. 1997. *Games real actors play: actor-centered institutionalism in policy research*. Boulder CO: Westview Press.

Schiller, P.L. and Kenworthy, J. 2017. *An Introduction to Sustainable Transportation: Policy, Planning and Implementation*. Second edition. Milton: Taylor and Francis.

Schreier, M. 2013. Qualitative content analysis. In: Flick, U. ed. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE, pp. 170-183.

Schwandt, T.A. 1998. Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. eds. *The landscape of qualitative research*. 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 221-259.

Schweitzer, L. 2018. Planning and conflict: critical perspectives on contentious urban developments. London: SAGE.

Scott, A.D. 2009. *Eau Canada: the future of Canada's water*. Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

Scott, T.A. and Carter, D.P. 2019. Collaborative governance or private policy making? When consultants matter more than participation in collaborative environmental planning. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 21(2), pp. 153-173. doi: 10.1080/1523908X.2019.1566061

Senedd Research (blog) 2020. *History of devolution*. Senedd Cymru. Available at: https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/history-of-devolution/ [Accessed: 16/03/2023].

SEWTC. 2020. *South East Wales Transport Commission Final Recommendations*. Available at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/south-east-wales-transport-commission-final-recommendations.pdf: [Accessed: 11/05/2021].

Sharma-Wallace, L., Velarde, S. J. and Wreford, A. 2018. Adaptive governance good practice: Show me the evidence. *Journal of Environmental Management* 222, pp. 174-184. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2018.05.067

Sharp, L. and Richardson, T. 2001. Reflections on Foucauldian Discourse Analysis in Planning and Environmental Research. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 3(3), pp. 193-209.

Shepherd, E., Inch A. and Marshall, T. 2020. Narratives of power: Bringing ideology to the fore of planning analysis. *Planning Theory* 19(1), pp. 3-16.

Shipton, M. 2009. M4 relief road plan halted in transport rethink. *Wales Online*. Available at: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/m4-relief-road-plan-halted-2094774 [Accessed: 24/09/2023].

Shrestha, P. and Aranya, R. 2015. Claiming Invited and Invented Spaces†: Contingencies for Insurgent Planning Practices. *International planning studies* 20(4), pp. 424-443. doi: 10.1080/13563475.2015.1028909

Shukla, R. and Swarnakar, P. 2022. Energy justice in post-Paris India: Unpacking consensus and conflict through storylines and discourse coalitions. *Energy research & social science* 91, p. 102687. doi: 10.1016/j.erss.2022.102687

Sicotte, D. M. and Brulle, R. J. 2017. Social movements for environmental justice through the lens of social movement theory. In: Holifield, R., Chakraborty, J. and Walker, G. eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice*. London: Routledge.

Siegner, M., Hagerman, S. and Kozak, R. 2018. Going deeper with documents: A systematic review of the application of extant texts in social research on forests. *Forest policy and economics* 92, pp. 128-135. doi: 10.1016/j.forpol.2018.05.001

Sloman, L. 2006. *Car sick: solutions for our car-addicted culture*. Dartington: Green Books.

Sloman, L., Hunt, J., Lyons, G., Ogden, G., Potter, A., Bye, H. and Powell, E. 2023. *The Future of Road Investment in Wales: advice from the independent panel appointed by the Welsh Government*. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-02/the-future-road-investment-wales.pdf [Accessed: 8th June 2023].

Smajgl, A. 2020. Adaptation dynamics shaped by multiple tiers of governance: Climate change and deforestation in Indonesia. *18th World IMACS Congress and MODSIM 2009 - International Congress on Modelling and Simulation: Interfacing Modelling and Simulation with Mathematical and Computational Sciences, Proceedings*, pp. 3025-3031.

Smith, L.M. 1978. An evolving logic of participant observation, educational ethnography, and other case studies. *Review of research in education* 6, pp. 316-377. doi: 10.2307/1167249

Smyth, C. 2020. *Being reasonable: how do rationalist assumptions affect the treatment of the environment in decision-making processes?* PhD Thesis, Cardiff University.

Smyth, C. 2021. 'Tick the box and move on': compartmentalization and the treatment of the environment in decision-making processes. *Journal of law and society* 48(3), pp. 410-433. doi: 10.1111/jols.12309

Smyth, C., Webb, M., Hepworth, R. and Jones, J. 2023. A toolkit for taking part in Planning Inquiries and Hearings in Wales. Pamphlet, Cardiff University.

Stephenson, P. 2013. Twenty years of multilevel governance: 'Where Does It Come From? What Is It? Where Is It Going?'. *Journal of European public policy* 20(6), pp. 817-837. doi: 10.1080/13501763.2013.781818

Stevenson, R. 2009. Discourse, power, and energy conflicts: Understanding Welsh renewable energy planning policy. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 27(3), pp. 512-526. doi: 10.1068/c08100h

Swyngedouw, E. 1992. The mammon quest: "Glocalisation", interspatial competition and the monetary order—the construction of new scales. In: Dunford, M. and Kafkalas, G. eds. *Cities and regions in the new Europe*. New York: Belhaven, pp. 39–67.

Swyngedouw, E. 2010. Trouble with nature: ecology as the new opium for the masses. In: Hillier, J. and Healey, P. eds. *The Ashgate companion to Planning Theory*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 299-318.

Swyngedouw, E. 2018. *Promises of the Political: Insurgent Cities in a Post-Political Environment*. Massachusetts: MIT.

Tewdwr-Jones, M. and Allmendinger, P. 2016. Deconstructing communicative rationality: A critique of Habermasian collaborative planning. *Environment and planning. A* 30(11), pp. 1975-1989. doi: 10.1068/a301975

Thiri, M. A., Villamayor-Tomás, S., Scheidel, A. and Demaria, F. (2022). How social movements contribute to staying within the global carbon budget: evidence from a qualitative meta-analysis of case studies. 195, pp. 107356

Torfing, J. 2009. Power and discourse: Towards an anti-foundationalist concept of power. In: Clegg, S.R. and Haugaard, M. eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Power*. London: SAGE, pp. 108-124.

Transport for Wales. 2023. *South Wales Metro Project*. Available at: https://tfw.wales/projects/metro/south-wales-metro [Accessed: 23/09/2023].

Truscello, M. 2020. *Infrastructural brutalism: art and the necropolitics of infrastructure*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

UNESCO. [No Date]. *Sustainable Development*. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd [Accessed: 19/04/2023].

Van Assche, K., Beunen, R., Duineveld, M. and Gruezmacher, M. 2017. Power/knowledge and natural resource management: Foucaultian foundations in the analysis of adaptive governance. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning: Power/Knowledge in Natural Resource Management* 19(3), pp. 308-322. doi: 10.1080/1523908X.2017.1338560

Vaughan, A. 2017. Swansea Bay tidal lagoon backed by government review. *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/12/tidal-lagoons-could-ensure-uk-power-supplies [Accessed: 23/09/2023].

Vigar, G., Gunn, S. and Brooks, E. 2017. Governing our neighbours: Participation and conflict in neighbourhood planning. *Town planning review* 88(4), pp. 423-442. doi: 10.3828/tpr.2017.27

Vos, R. 2007. Defining sustainability: a conceptual orientation. *Journal Of Chemical Technology And Biotechnology* 82(4), pp. 334-339. doi: 10.1002/jctb.1675

Wadrup, W.S.C. 2018. *M4 Corridor Around Newport (M4CAN): Inspector's Report on the Public Local Inquiries Which Were Held at The Lysaght Institute, Newport, Between 28 February 2017 and 28 March 2018.* Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/m4-corridor-around-newport-public-inquiry-report.pdf [Accessed: 24/09/2023].

Wales Online [No Date]. Ethics Policy. Available at: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/about-us/ [Accessed 11/04/2023].

Walks, A. 2015. Stopping the 'war on the car': Neoliberalism, Fordism, and the politics of automobility in Toronto. *Mobilities* 10(3), pp. 402-422. doi: 10.1080/17450101.2014.880563

Wallace, J. 2018. *Wellbeing and Devolution: Reframing the Role of Government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.

Wang, F. 2014. Comparing the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas and Michel Foucault. *Inquiries Journal* 6(09).

Wang, L., Xue, X., Zhao, Z. and Wang, Z. 2018. The impacts of transportation infrastructure on sustainable development: emerging trends and challenges. *International journal of environmental research and public health* 15(6), p. 1172. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15061172

Ward, K. 2012. *Your Argus and the local elections.* Available at: https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/9680466.your-argus-and-the-local-elections/ [accessed 11/04/2024]

Weale, A. 1992. *The New Politics of Pollution*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Weiss, T.G. and Wilkinson, R. 2014. Rethinking Global Governance? Complexity, authority, power, change. *International Studies Quarterly* 58(1), pp. 207-215. doi: 10.1111/isqu.12082

Welsh Government. 2009. *One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government*. Available at: https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/1505/wd32.pdf [Accessed: 05/11/2023].

Welsh Government. 2013. *M4 Corridor Around Newport*. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-01/130923m4consen.pdf. [Accessed 05/12/2023].

Welsh Government. 2016. *M4 Corridor Around Newport: Wider Impact Assessment*. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2017-09/m4-corridor-around-newport-wider-economic-impact-assessment-report.pdf [Accessed: 24/09/2023].

Welsh Government. 2021. *Future Wales: The National Plan 2040*. Available at: https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040 [Accessed: 02/03/2023].

Welsh Labour. 2016. Together for Wales: Welsh Labour Manifesto 2016. Available at: https://manifesto.deryn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Welsh-Labour-Manifesto2016.pdf [Accessed: 05/12/2023]

Wesselink, A., Paavola, J., Fritsch, O. and Renn, O. 2011. Rationales for Public Participation in Environmental Policy and Governance: Practitioners' Perspectives. *Environment and Planning A* 43(11), pp. 2688-2704. doi: 10.1068/a44161

Westin, M. 2022. The framing of power in communicative planning theory: Analysing the work of John Forester, Patsy Healey and Judith Innes. *Planning theory (London, England)* 21(2), pp. 132-154. doi: 10.1177/14730952211043219

Whitehead, M. 2007. *Spaces of sustainability: geographical perspectives on the sustainable society*. London: Routledge.

Williams, G. 2021. Planning Inspectors Recommended Refusal For New Nuclear Power Plant. *Nation Cymru*. [Accessed: 08/12/2022].

Williams, L., Macnaghten, P., Davies, R. and Curtis, S. 2017. Framing 'fracking': Exploring public perceptions of hydraulic fracturing in the United Kingdom. *Public understanding of science (Bristol, England)* 26(1), pp. 89-104. doi: 10.1177/0963662515595159

Williamson, D. 2018. Swansea tidal lagoon bid rejected by the government. *Wales Online*. Available at: https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/live-updates-swansea-tidal-lagoon-14827245 [Accessed: 08/12/2022].

Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. 2009. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. 2016. *Methods of critical discourse studies*. 3rd ed. / edited by Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer. Los Angeles: SAGE.

World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yates, S., Taylor, S., Wetherell, M. and Open, U. 2001. *Discourse theory and practice: a reader*. London: SAGE.

Yin, R.K. 2014. *Case study research: design and methods*. 5 edition. ed. Los Angeles CA: Sage.

Yin, R.K. 2018. *Case study research and applications: design and methods*. Sixth edition. ed. Los Angeles CA: SAGE.

Zakhour, S. 2020. The democratic legitimacy of public participation in planning: Contrasting optimistic, critical, and agnostic understandings. *Planning theory (London, England)* 19(4), pp. 147309521989740-147309521989370. doi: 10.1177/1473095219897404

Zografos, C., Klause, K.A., Connolly, J.J.T. and Anguelovski, I. 2020. The everyday politics of urban transformational adaptation: Struggles for authority and the Barcelona superblock project. *Cities* 99, doi: 10.1016/j.cities.2020.102613

Zizek, S. 2002. Welcome to the desert of the real. *The South Atlantic quarterly* 101(2), pp. 385-389. doi: 10.1215/00382876-101-2-385

11.   List of relevant legislation and policies

Government of Wales Act 1998. c. 121. Available at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/38/contents [Accessed: 06/12/2023].

Newport City Council. 2015. Newport local development plan 2011-26. Available at:
https://www.newport.gov.uk/documents/Planning-Documents/LDP-2011-2026/LDP-Adopted-Plan-January-2015.pdf [Accessed: 06/12/2023]

Wales Act 2014. Available at: https://law.gov.wales/constitution-and-government/constitution-and-devolution/wales-act-2014#:~:text=The%20Wales%20Act%202014%20(WA,powers%20of%20the%20Welsh%20Government. [Accessed: 06/12/2023]

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Available at:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Assembly Government. 2008. *One Wales: Connection the nation, the Wales transport strategy*. Wales: Welsh Assembly Government. Available at:
https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/jvdn3e1n/one-wales-the-wales-transport-strategy.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Assembly Government. 2008. *People, places, futures: The Wales spatial plan 2008 update*. Wales: Welsh Assembly Government. Available at:
https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/people-places-future-the-wales-spatial-plan-update-2008.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Assembly Government. 2007. *Technical Advice Note 18: Transport*. Wales:
Welsh Assembly Government. Available at:
https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan18-transport.pdf
[Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Assembly Government. 2009. *Technical Advice Note 5: Nature conservation and planning.* Wales: Welsh Assembly Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan5-nature-conservation.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Assembly Government. 2014. *Technical Advice Note 23: Economic development*. Wales: Welsh Assembly Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan23-economic-development.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Government. 2021. Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021: our strategy to shape the future of transport in Wales. Wales: Welsh Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/5/3/1653487718/llwybr-newydd-wales-transport-strategy-2021.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales.* Edition 1. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 5. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 6. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 7. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 8. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 9. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 10. Wales: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government. *Planning policy Wales*. Edition 11. Wales: Welsh Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf [Accessed 06/12/2023]

Appendix A: Media coding guide

<u>Information collected for media analysis</u>

Date: Roll no: /   (from Nexis UK)

1. Newspaper scale: National (UK): *Guardian, Times, Independent, Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph;* National (Wales): *Wales Online*; Local (Newport): *South Wales Argus*

2. News article or editorial

3. Article headline

4. Main storyline attachment of the article (as per headline / first paragraph / number of actors supporting)

Black route	Blue route	Sustainable transport	Public transport	
Combination (note combination)	Unclear	Too expensive	Regional spending	Other

5. Is there an opposing/secondary storyline attachment?

6. Actors quoted and their institutional context (role, organisation, scale, political affiliation if applicable)

7. Discourse coalition of each actor

Environment	Social	Economic	Combination (note combination)	Unclear	Other

8. Storyline attachment of each actor

8. Quotes

9. Notes

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Example of question guide used for interviews:

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your experience?

2. How did you become involved with the M4 extension plans?

3. What were your thoughts about the proposed development and how it eventually played out?

4. What about your organisation? What was the approach that was taken and why? (E.g., Did you propose alternatives to black route / defended the black route; how?)

5. Can you tell me more about the work you did in relation to the M4 extension project? (E.g., focus, strategies, engagement, collaboration with others)

6. The whole project was characterised by multiple delays. How do you think these delays impacted on the strategy your organisation adapted in mobilising opinions or action?

7. Can you tell me about the approach you / your organisation took to the public inquiry? (E.g. preparation, contribution, thoughts about what value you got out of the event)

8. How do you think the Future Generations Act shaped the debate?

9. Can you tell me about working with other stakeholders, did you collaborate with other organisations to get your message across and what did this look like? Did your approach evolve over time?

10. Were there any attempts to engage with those holding opposing views? If so, can you tell me what these looked like? (E.g. lobbying the Welsh government, finding alternative solutions)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Power, resistance, and the Welsh sustainable development agenda: the case of the M4 'relief road'

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this research project?

The research project seeks to understand the impact of stakeholder collaboration on transport planning outcomes particularly in relation to the Welsh sustainable development framework. The specific focus is on participation around the plan for extending the M4 motorway over the Gwent Levels in South Wales, rejected in 2019. The objective is to better understand whether and how perceptions of sustainable development influence stakeholder engagement and both the formal and informal ways in which engagement takes place.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited because of your organisational or personal involvement in the proposed extension of the M4 motorway over the Gwent Levels in South Wales between 2013 and 2019.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

What will taking part involve?

Taking part involves attending one 1-1.5h interview where your participation in the proposed extension of the M4 motorway over the Gwent Levels in South Wales will be discussed. The interviews will be recorded, providing you are happy with this.

Will I be paid for taking part?

You will not be paid or compensated in any way for taking part in this research. You should understand that any data resulting from your interview is given as a gift and you will not benefit financially in the future should this research project lead to the development of any new policy approach or publication.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There may not be direct advantages to you from taking part. However, the research aims to make recommendations to improve policy where appropriate.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks or disadvantages for taking part.

Will my taking part in this research project be kept confidential?

All information collected from you during the research project will be kept confidential. Any interview quotes used in text will be made anonymous. Any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation. Please see 'What will happen to my Personal Data?' (below) for further information.

What will happen to my Personal Data?

Personal data, according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) means any information relating to an identifiable living person who can be directly or indirectly identified in particular by reference to an identifier. This may include information such as an individual's name, address, email address or date of birth. The personal data that is collected using consent forms is limited to your name and signature. The consent forms will be kept separately from the interview data and will not be published. The interview data is anonymized prior to its use.

Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. Further information about Data Protection, including:

your rights
the legal basis under which Cardiff University processes your personal data for research
Cardiff University's Data Protection Policy
how to contact the Cardiff University Data Protection Officer
how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office

may be found at https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection.

The data will be processed by June 2022. After this, the researcher will anonymise all the personal data it has collected from, or about, you in connection with this

research project, with the exception of your consent form.   Your consent form will be retained for five years and may be accessed by members of the research team and, where necessary, by members of the University's governance and audit teams or by regulatory authorities.   Anonymised information will be kept for a minimum of five years but may be published in support of the research project, where it is likely to have continuing value for research purposes.

It will not be possible to withdraw any anonymised data that has already been published or in some cases, where identifiers are irreversibly removed during the course of a research project, from the point at which it has been anonymised.

What happens to the data at the end of the research project?

The data will not be made publicly available or shared with Cardiff University unless specifically requested. In this case, the data is anonymised before any sharing takes place. Consent sheets are stored separately and will not be shared.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The research forms part of a PhD thesis. The results may be published in academic journals and presented at conferences. Participants will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation including where verbatim quotes from participants may be used.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the manner in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research, please contact the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee GandPEthics@cardiff.ac.uk. If your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, please contact the Director of Postgraduate Research in the School of Geography and Planning, Oleg Golubchikov golubchikovo@cardiff.ac.uk.

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, you may have grounds for legal action, but you may have to pay for it.

Who is organising this research project?

The research is organised by Mirka Virtanen, postgraduate researcher at the School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University, supervised by Dr Ruth Potts (PottsR1@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr Brian Webb (WebbB1@cardiff.ac.uk).

Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the School of Geography and Planning Research Ethics Committee, Cardiff University.

Further information and contact details

Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact the researcher during normal working hours:

Mirka Virtanen
VirtanenMj1@cardiff.ac.uk

Thank you for considering to take part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

Appendix D: Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Power, resistance, and the Welsh sustainable development agenda: the case of the M4 'relief road'

Name of Principal Investigator: Mirka Virtanen

	Please initial box
I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 27/01/2022 version 1 for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have understood the information sheet dated 27/01/2022 version 1 for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without any adverse consequences. I understand that if I withdraw, information about me that has already been obtained may be kept by Cardiff University.	
I understand that data collected during the research project may be looked at by individuals from Cardiff University or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in the research project. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information (name on consent sheet) for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be held in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation and in strict confidence, unless disclosure is required by law or professional obligation.	
I understand who will have access to personal information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.	
I understand that after the research project, anonymised data may be made publicly available via a data repository and may be used for purposes not related to this research project. I understand that it will not be possible to identify me from this data that is seen and used by other researchers, for ethically approved research projects, on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.	
I consent to being recorded for the purposes of the research project and I understand how it will be used in the research.	

I understand that anonymised excerpts and/or verbatim quotes from my interview may be used as part of the research publication.	
I understand how the findings and results of the research project will be written up and published.	
I agree to take part in this research project.	

_____

Signature
(print)   Date   Name of Participant

_____   27/01/2022   Mirka
Virtanen_____
Signature   Date   Name of Person Taking
Consent

Principal Investigator_____
Role of person taking consent
(print)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR RESEARCH
PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS

Appendix E: Ethics approval

Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff
CF10 3WA, Wales, UK
Tel +44(0)29 2087 4022
Fax +44(0)29 2087 4845
www.cardiff.ac.uk/geography-planning

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Adeilad Morgannwg
Rhodfa'r Brenin Edward VII, Caerdydd
CF10 3WA, Cymru, DU
Ffôn +44(0)29 2087 4022
Ffacs +44(0)29 2087 4845
www.cardiff.ac.uk/cy/geography-planning

School of Geography and Planning
Ysgol Daearyddiaeth a Chynllunio

26 January 2022

Dear Mirka,

Research project title: Power, resistance, and the Welsh sustainable development agenda: the case of the M4 'relief road'

The School of Geography and Planning Research Ethics Committee reviewed the above application electronically on 25th January 2022

Ethical Opinion

The Committee gave

A   a favourable ethical opinion of the above application on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation.

Additional approvals
This letter provides an ethical opinion only. You must not start your research project until all appropriate approvals are in place.

Amendments
Any substantial amendments to documents previously reviewed by the Committee must be submitted to the Committee [via Aleks Lopata GandPEthics@cardiff.ac.uk] for consideration and cannot be implemented until the Committee has confirmed it is satisfied with the proposed amendments.

You are permitted to implement non-substantial amendments to the documents previously reviewed by the Committee but you must provide a copy of any updated documents to the Committee [via Aleks Lopata GandPEthics@cardiff.ac.uk] for its records.

Monitoring requirements
The Committee must be informed of any unexpected ethical issues or unexpected adverse events that arise during the research project.

THE QUEEN'S ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2015

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Athena SWAN Bronze Award

QAA
UK Quality Assured
Sicrwydd Ansawdd y DU

Registered Charity, no. 1136855
Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855

290

The Committee must be informed when your research project has ended. This notification should be made to [Aleks Lopata GandPEthics@cardiff.ac.uk] within three months of research project completion.

Documents reviewed by Committee

The documents reviewed by the Committee were:

Document	Version	Date
Ethical Approval Form	1	08/12/2021
Consent Form	1	08/12/2021
Participant Information Sheet	1	08/12/2021
Data Collection Tools	1	08/12/2021
Research Proposal	1	08/12/2021
Research Integrity Training Certificate	1	08/12/2021
Covid Risk Assessment	1	08/12/2021
Risk Assessment	1	26/01/2022

Complaints/Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by the Committee, please contact [Dr Georgina Santos SantosG@cardiff.ac.uk] in the first instance to discuss your complaint. If this discussion does not resolve the issue, you are entitled to refer the matter to the Head of School for further consideration. The Head of School may refer the matter to the Open Research Integrity and Ethics Committee (ORIEC), where this is appropriate. Please be advised that ORIEC will not normally interfere with a decision of the Committee and is concerned only with the general principles of natural justice, reasonableness and fairness of the decision.

Please use the Committee reference number on all future correspondence.

The Committee reminds you that it is your responsibility to conduct your research project to the highest ethical standards and to keep all ethical issues arising from your research project under regular review.

You are expected to comply with Cardiff University's policies, procedures and guidance at all times, including, but not limited to, its Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research involving Human Participants, Human Material or Human Data and our Research Integrity and Governance Code of Practice.

Yours sincerely,

Aleks Lopata
Research Officer