# 1        Introduction

A post-carbon world of energy security, affordability and environmental sustainability has long been part of discourses about a better future (Pasqualetti, 2011; Toke, 1998). However, debates concerning renewable energy, and wind energy in particular, are characterised by a 'social gap' between general support and local opposition (Bell, et al., 2013). For advocates of wind energy development, this provokes an unnecessary obstacle course of planning processes that must be negotiated in proposing new windfarms (Hadwin, 2009). For those opposed to such developments, planning is seen at best as an uncomfortable ally in helping them articulate objections (Cowell, 2007), and more commonly as an arena where unfair accusations of NIMBYism proliferate (Devine-Wright, 2009; van der Horst, 2007; Wolsink, 2012).

These conflicts attest to the multidimensional nature of the 'planning problem' concerning wind power (Ellis, et al., 2009), ranging from perceptions of planning as a bureaucratic barrier to the renewables sector, to the inability of planning policy to effectively balance environmental trade-offs, such as promoting renewables that may negatively impact on ecological resources (habitats and wildlife). However, for Ellis et al. (2009) a more important dimension of the 'planning problem' relates to issues surrounding social acceptance and how this is (mis)understood in the policy domain. Tackling the array of contentious issues associated with windfarm developments has often rested on the assumption that 'better information' will generate consensus and thereby resolve dispute (Barry, et al., 2008). Despite criticism of this view (Owens, et al., 2004), the generation of such information in planning practice remains inured to linear-rational models of knowledge production that are assumed to provide the 'facts' of a situation by virtue of their internal

merits (Adelle, et al., 2012). This disregards the variety of ways in which the world is interpreted and knowledge claims about reality are produced (Devine-Wright, 2009; 2011; Rydin, 2007). Consequently, efforts to identify, understand and solve the 'planning problem' of wind power may be handicapped by a blinkered epistemological commitment to an inherited bias in modes of knowledge generation.

This poses the question as to how wind power's planning problem can be better understood. We endeavour to explore one possible response to this by investigating the ways different knowledges and knowledge holders seek to accumulate authority over the 'facts' of a situation, and indeed over 'reality' itself. This is achieved by examining how agents to contentious wind energy debates may strive to mobilise interpretations of reality wherein they are advantageously positioned as credible sources of knowledge. Specifically, we examine how attention to the discursive constitution of reality can provide greater insight into how facts are established, and as a corollary, how agents are authoritatively positioned to legitimately pronounce upon the ways a situation ought to be perceived. As such, our approach resonates with research into how the discursive hegemony of apparently 'scientific' assertions may be exploited by supporters of contentious developments to portray as irrational or NIMBYist, and thereby marginalise, arguments presented using non-technical language or claims that do not reference supposedly objective assessments (Moran and Rau, 2014; Pellizzoni, 2011; Rydin, 2003). Similarly, our approach acknowledges research into how local opponents to wind power and other infrastructural projects seek to counter such accusations through the strategic deployment of discourses that seek to dispel perceptions of parochialism while advancing respect for

place-based sensitivity (Futák-Campbell and Haggett, 2011; McClymont and O'Hare, 2008). It is in this sense that we position our approach as complementing but not repeating recent work on how the 'public engagement rationalities' of the energy industry are shaped by the conceptualisation of 'the public' that frame such rationalities (Burningham, et al., 2007; Cotton and Devine-Wright, 2012). Such research has significantly contributed to our understanding of these matters by usefully elucidating the institutionalised modes of thought that structure conceptions of 'the public' and 'the public interest' regarding issues of energy infrastructure planning. Based on a series of interviews with electricity industry representatives, Cotton and Devine-Wright (2012) suggest that energy industry actors frame non-industry actors in terms of a 'deficit model', whereby 'public' opposition may be explained by public misunderstanding based on deficits in scientific and technical literacy and NIMBY style assumptions about the public's role, values and actions. For Cotton and Devine-Wright, from this perspective the working assumption within the energy industry is that 'technical experts' are represented as knowledgeable experts, leading to industry engagement practices characterised as 'downstream' i.e. close to the point of implementation in a 'decide-announce-defend' engagement strategy. In this paper, we seek to further this understanding of how knowledge-holders seek to accumulate authority through a nuanced examination of 'discourse-in-action' (rather than an interview based approach) as different actors endeavour to construct discourses that favourably respond to the dynamic challenges posed by real-time public deliberations between supporters and objectors. Our approach thus allocates attention to how different parties to a debate selectively prioritising issues for discussion depending on the perceived contextual constraints and affordances of the debating arena (Garavan, 2007). Consequently, our analysis addresses a gap in knowledge concerning the rationalities underlying the strategies

deployed in the opposing politics of persona during contentious wind farm planning debates.  In doing so, we specifically identify the important role played by the use of explicit and implicit scalar referents as a discursive tactic in seeking to legitimise perspectives (Batel and Castro, 2014; Porta and Piazza, 2007; Usher, 2013), and how 'imagined publics' (Barnett, et al., 2012) influence the ways different agents seek to constitute themselves as knowledgeable regarding an issue of dispute.  Hence, we provide an original contribution to understanding, and latterly reconceiving, wind power's planning problem by advancing a novel approach that draws on rhetorical theory to reveal and explain the complex nuances embedded within the discursive strategies deployed in constituting authoritative identities in energy infrastructure debates.

The next section outlines the theoretical perspective adopted in this paper.  It first describes how situating rhetorical analysis within a broader examination of discourse can be used to expose how 'facts' are constructed simultaneous to the positioning of fact constructors as authoritative knowledge holders.  The subsequent section demonstrates the utility of this theoretical perspective through application to contentious debates concerning large scale windfarm proposals in the Irish midlands.  In the ensuing section, we identify and discuss the deployment of rhetorical forms, rationalities, issues and scales in the construction of expertise in the foregoing debates.  We return to wind power's 'planning problem' in the final section of the paper.  Here, we show how our preceding interpretive analysis indicates that this 'problem' should be reconceived.  The paper closes by suggesting ways in which this avenue of research can be extended.

## 2       Discursive Positioning and Rhetoric

Discourse analysis refers to the process of studying discourse construction and the influence of discursively mediated interpretations. From this investigative standpoint, discourse analysis commences inquiry from the epistemological assumption that it is not reality in an observable or testable sense that shapes social consciousness and action, but rather it is the ideas, beliefs and values that discourses evoke about the causes of satisfactions and discontents that mould comprehension and intent (Fischer, 2003). Theories of discourse analysis maintain that agents occupied with discursive activity are positioned relative to the subject of that activity. Emphasis is thereby placed on the need to investigate the ways in which different agents are bestowed the mandate to speak authoritatively on issues consequent of their subject positions. Such authoritative subject positions may thereby assume epistemologically privileged positions within the discourses deployed by an agent and consequently acquire the ability to define and legitimise the focus of deliberation. In this sense, 'the question of who should have the authority to make definitional decisions amounts literally to who has the power to delineate what counts as Real' (Schiappa, 2003, 178).

Authoritative subject positioning is particularly important in contentious planning debates, such as those frequently characterising wind energy development, where the emphasis given to the consideration of different issues is often contested and the 'facts' regularly disputed (Barry, et al., 2008; Cowell, 2010; Woods, 2003). How agents negotiate the constraints of contextual expectations in forging these authoritative positions involves convincing others that one's knowledge claims are 'true'. In this sense, establishing an

authoritative position within a discourse necessitates acts of persuasion relative to the standards of authentication sanctioned by the cohort of interpreters aligned to the discourse one enters and deploys. Such different standards of authentication constitute different 'rationalities' and differences in the forms of persuasion that operate and gain currency within them are consequent on different forms of rhetoric. Accordingly, scrutinising the deployment of different rhetorical forms sheds light on how agents seek to advantageously position themselves in different discursive contexts. In this way, rhetorical analysis is a type of discourse analysis that can be employed to investigate the creation and consolidation of epistemic privilege in the mobilisation of 'truths' relative to different rationalities (Throgmorton, 1993).

The deployment of different rhetorical forms has long been recognised as a potent means to persuade others about the veracity of one's knowledge claims. In particular, Aristotle's theories concerning the art of persuasive communication remain prominent in rhetorical analysis consequent on their elucidatory value. According to Aristotle,

> *Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three*
>
> *kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the*
>
> *second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on*
>
> *the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself*
>
> (Aristotle, 2012, 7).

These three forms of persuasion are respectively termed *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* in rhetorical theory (Gottweis, 2007). Here, '*ethos* (in Greek, character) designates the image of self built by the orator in his speech in order to exert an influence on his audience'

(Amossy, 2001, 1). *Pathos* entails an appeal to sentiment. It involves an attempt to elicit an emotional response through empathy with the speaker's state. In contrast, *logos* concerns the impartial demonstration of logical reasoning by inductive or deductive argument grounded in empirical evidence, such as statistics, reports or examples (Martin, 2013, 58). Of these, Aristotle emphasises the role of *ethos* in noting that, 'Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible...his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses' (Aristotle, 2012, 7).

More contemporarily, rhetorical analysis has been developed by those of the 'New Rhetoric' school of literary and political studies who have sought to emphasis the con-substantive nature of a speaker's *ethos* with the discourse in which they are positioned and how they negotiate this con-substantiation in deploying different rhetorical forms (Amossy, 2001; Gross and Dearin, 2003). In this sense, 'the notion of *ethos* must be understood as something discursive and material' (Gottwies, 2012, 217) in which the attributes of a person's character is produced by the speaker as they enter into, extend and/or construct a discourse. Thus, whereas Aristotle identified *ethos* as a separate mode of persuasion in a triad of rhetorical elements, many contemporary analysts conceive *ethos* as moulded through the agile deployment of different rhetorical forms[i]. In this way, the degree of authority invested in a speaker is related to how they cultivate an *ethos* of expertise. However, fashioning perceptions of expertise need not be explicitly undertaken; it can be achieved by allusion in the forms of rhetoric employed. As conjectured by Maingueneau (1999, 194),

> *By 'ethos' Aristotle means the representation of the speaker that the addressee constructs across the production of discourse: therefore it is a representation produced by discourse, it is not what the speaker says explicitly about himself, nor the representation of the speaker that the addressee may have independent of discourse. Using pragmatic terms, it could be said that ethos is 'implied' in discourse.*

Accordingly, through inference rather than assertion, agents may strategically deploy the forms of rhetoric they perceive as most advantageous in seeking to implicitly position themselves as experts within debates over the contested 'facts' about 'reality'.


## 3      Discontent in the Irish Midlands

### 3.1     Overview

In January 2013 the Irish and UK governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for renewable energy trading set within the context of EU Renewable Energy Sources Directive 2009/28/EC (RES Directive) whereby a member state can import renewable energy from another country to meet its binding renewable energy targets. Two privately financed companies sought to capitalise on the MoU by exclusively exporting to the UK all the energy generated by a number of sizable windfarms proposed for the Irish midlands.  It was proposed that the energy produced by such windfarms would bypass the national Irish grid and connect directly into the UK grid via a submarine transmission cable.  The location of the windfarms was consequent on proximity to the landfall of this electricity transmission infrastructure.

These proposals generated considerable discussion in Ireland, including media coverage, parliamentary debate and protests. There was also media coverage and debate on this issue in the UK. The final number of turbines proposed for erection was debatable: nonetheless, Element Power indicated its intention to seek planning permission for approximately 750 turbines producing about 3000 megawatts of electricity, while Mainstream Renewable Power signalled an aspiration for the construction of approximately 400 turbines producing about 1200 megawatts of electricity (Shortt, 12 February 2013). The actual turbines proposed by both companies significantly exceeded the size of those found in existing Irish windfarms with proposed turbines ranging from 156m to 190m from base to blade (Anon., 2013). This was resultant from a desire to achieve ambitious energy generation targets in an area where wind speeds are low relative to Ireland's west coast. In aggregate, these two proposals sought to export over twice the average output of all electricity currently generated in Ireland through renewable sources by almost doubling the number of turbines already installed in the country (Shortt, 17 February 2013).

Two live television debates produced and aired in February and September 2013 by the Irish national broadcaster (RTÉ) captured the variety of discourses deployed by those with differing perspectives on these proposals. Importantly, these debates included key representatives from national government, the developers and local community groups, as well as a broad spectrum of stakeholders including, the windfarm industry, the national farmers' representative body, environmental lobbyists and concerned sectors of industry. Such debates were the only occasion where all these groups and key individuals were assembled together. Thus, these debates present unique opportunities to examine in real time the subject positioning of agents within contending and evolving discourses.

Accordingly, the debates facilitate scrutiny of how participants to this contentious dispute employ rhetorical forms to position themselves as voices of authority concerning the 'facts' about wind energy broadly, and these windfarm proposals in particular.

While media discourses have been explored in relation to energy debates (see for example, Sengers et al., 2010), in this paper we focus instead on the media as a key national arena for argumentation and mobilising competing stakeholder discourses.  In this approach, we recognise that the media is not a neutral arbitrator, but pursues its own interests and agendas and also has its own 'style' and 'routines' of examining and (de)constructing discourses.  For example, Mercille (2014) charts the intertwining of media and development interests in supporting the 'housing bubble' in Ireland through links between the media and the political and corporate establishment with shared similar (generally neoliberal) viewpoints.  In this sense, Mercille contends that the media often privilege certain discourses and knowledge, relying heavily on 'experts' from elite institutions and established development actors in reporting events.  However, within these limitations, the media, and in particular the national broadcaster *RTÉ*, provide a key conduit through which the wind energy debate is refracted and framed.

A key rationale for drawing on these two national televised debates is the absence of both local and national democratic arenas that have enabled inclusive dialogue on the deployment of wind energy, indicative of recently introduced 'fast track' planning legislation that has increasingly rescaled decision-making from local government to a national planning body and a redefinition of the 'public interest' in planning towards the 'national interest'. Throughout the last decade, there have been notable examples of policy shifts towards

development interests, including fast track planning decision-making and reducing the opportunities for public involvement in the planning process (Fox-Rodgers et al., (2011). Of key relevance to the deployment of wind energy, the Government introduced the *Strategic Infrastructure Act* (Oireachtas, 2006) in an attempt to secure speedier delivery of key infrastructure through providing a one step consent procedure, rather than the conventional development control process, indicative of a rescaling and centralisation of planning decision-making. Specifically, in relation to wind energy, this 2006 Act sets out the provision for windfarms that have a total output greater than 100 megawatts to be categorised as strategic infrastructure in the national interest, enabling planning permission to be sought directly from *An Bord Pleanála*, the independent planning appeals board. This rescales the planning process to the national level, thus by-passing the normal involvement of local authorities and the conventional procedures that facilitate statutory opportunities for public involvement and third party appeals. This legislation and the threshold for wind turbine deployment was further amended under subsequent planning legislation in 2010, outlining that windfarms with output greater than 50 megawatts or which contain more than 50 turbines are to be considered 'national infrastructure' (Oireachtas, 2010). These reduced opportunities for public involvement and local decision-making have resulted in policy actors and stakeholders positioning competing discourses within the media arena in the absence of traditional formal opportunities for engagement with the planning system.

### 3.2    Televised Debate No. 1: 12 February 2013

This twenty seven minute televised debate was modulated into four sections. The first section consisted of a six minute journalistic report which sought to provide a summary of the central issues for viewers. Following this summation, the second section of ten minutes

commenced with the introduction of a panel of three guests.  This comprised: Pat Rabbitte, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources who signed the MoU; Yvonne Cronin of the opposition group Communities for Responsible Engagement with Wind Energy; and Kenneth Matthews, Chief Executive of the Irish Wind Energy Association, a windfarm supporting industrial lobby group.  Each guest was invited to outline and justify their position with regard to the proposals through a series of introductory and follow-up questions.  The interviewer then circulated among an invited audience of stakeholders for the third section of the debate.  Here, members of the audience from differing sides of the debate were offered an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.  This section was approximately seven minutes long.  The debate closed with the interviewer returning to the Minister and inviting him to briefly respond to issues raised by the audience.

The journalistic report identified concern surrounding the adequacy of contemporary planning guidelines on wind energy development.  It included an interview with a married couple from the south east of Ireland who live in a house situated 380 meters from a windfarm.  This couple outlined how they were suffering from noise disturbance generated by turbines located near their home.  In opening the debate, the interviewer referenced this case when proposing to Minister Rabbitte that, 'It's all very well for us living in the urban environment but you wouldn't swap with them would you?'  In response, Minister Rabbitte stated,

> *Well I suppose you can find a hard case in any aspect of planning, rural or*
>
> *urban.  What I'm concerned about here is that under an EU Directive there*
>
> *is now the capacity to trade energy between two or more countries.  In*
>
> *Ireland's case, we have the capacity to generate in excess of our need and*

> *the neighbouring island has a need to meet challenging, obligatory targets.*
>
> *So we have the capacity to create a new export sector, create jobs in the*
>
> *process, export that renewable energy to Britain, create jobs here and at*
>
> *the same time meet a deficit on the British side.*

Here, Minister Rabbitte rapidly dismisses the case presented in the preceding report and re-orientates the focus of discussion towards macroeconomic concerns through referencing an EU Directive. Having thus quickly shifted the scalar focus onto the supranational horizon (EU), he then transitions his response through an international plane (UK-Ireland relations) and down to the national scale. In this way, the Minister swiftly alters the direction of the debate by inverting the entry point to the discussion presented to him by the interviewer. This enables him to frame his support for Irish wind energy development within an international rather than local context by employing a deductively reasoned discourse (*logos*) of concern for the national interest. Such subject positioning allows the Minister to con-substantiate his character (*ethos*) as a rational guardian of the national interest simultaneous to the discourse that gives this *ethos* significance. Nevertheless, while the inflection is weighted towards an *ethos* grounded in *logos*, the minister subtly modulates this *ethos* by stressing the potential of renewable energy export to 'create jobs'.

Set against the backdrop of a struggling Irish economy with high unemployment and significant emigration, this suggests sensitivity to the affective experiences of local communities suffering job losses and elevated youth emigration, as well as a dispirited popular sentiment regarding the plight of Ireland's fiscal solvency[ii]. In this sense, the Minister dexterously employs a discursive strategy that enables him to con-substantiate a

*logos*-centred *ethos* concurrent with the inferential deployment of *pathos.* This allows him to advance an argument ostensibly appealing to detached logic but simultaneously buttressed by a tacit appeal to sentiment.

At first appearing similar in scalar direction of the Minister's response, Yvonne Cronin's response transitions from the international to a national horizon as she seeks to convey the inadequacy of contemporary planning guidelines for protecting homeowners from the adverse affects of windfarm development.  However, following a brief prompt from the interviewer, Ms Cronin relates a narrative of her direct experience with windfarm development,

> *I'm just an ordinary person who lives in a rural area.  I started reading, educating myself about what it [windfarm developments] would mean for us.  So we thought, 'this is not something we want to stay here for', [we] got our home, our small farm, valued.  [When they] came back with the valuation [we] said, 'well actually here are the three windfarm developments that have been granted permission in our area', and she [property auctioneer] said, 'oh, hang-on, I'll have to have a look at that.' And they actually dropped our valuation by eighty per cent!*

Here, Ms Cronin shifts the focus from macro-economic issues to matters of potential local property price diminution.  Several studies have identified fear of possible reductions in private property value to be a key concern for local residents in windfarm debates (Jones and Eiser, 2009; Jones and Eiser, 2010).  Thus, by refocusing the debate both in terms of scale and topic, Ms Cronin repositions the discussion to a plane that allocates greater weight

to her local experience-based knowledge while at the same time enabling her to construct an *ethos* as 'ordinary person' concerned about the value of her 'home'.   Displaying equal deftness to the Minister, Ms Cronin deploys an inverse discursive strategy to that he employed by first foregrounding an emotive discourse of place attachment (*pathos*) through reference to herself as 'just an ordinary person' concerned about 'our home, our small farm'.  She then weaves through this a more *logos*-centred discourse that cites the results of a valuation exercise which she had commissioned for her property.  In this way, Ms Cronin adroitly forges an authoritative *ethos* that is con-substantiated with the discourse that gives it force.  The discursive strategy she deploys to achieve this allows her to engage with the *logos* accented assertions of the Minister while concurrently enabling her to elicit empathy (*pathos*) from a presumed viewership of similar 'ordinary' citizens through a micro-scalar focus on the 'home'.

The interviewer next turns to Kenneth Matthews.  In following from Ms Cronin's comments, the interviewer references a document issued by the Irish Wind Energy Association which disputes the contention that residential property is devalued by windfarms.  This provides the platform from which the interviewer seeks a response from Mr Matthews regarding the story just told by Ms Cronin.  In his initial response, Mr Matthews states,

> *The current guidelines, which are under discussion here, are very similar to guidelines that we have all over Europe.  The reality is that this sector in Ireland can deliver 4.5 billion of investment, just for domestic targets of 40 percent of electricity needs for the next eight years.  That's 600 million. That's 11.5 million every year for the next number of years.*

Here, Mr Matthews immediately refocuses the scalar horizon of the discussion to macro level issues through comparison with the planning guidelines of other European countries and national economic development. He also shifts the focus of debate from economic loss on local residential property value to 'the reality' of national economic gain. Aware of this scalar re-orientation, the interviewer follows Mr Matthews's response by noting,

> That's a macro promise...The micro promise to individual householder though is what? Because if you've got flicker, if you're sensitive to the low resonance noise that comes at you, what then?

Mr Matthew calmly replies by asserting that,

> The World Health Organisation in 2004 have stated quite categorically that there is no credible peer review research that shows that there is any relationship between ill health and distance to wind turbines. Along with that, and over the last number of years, Canada, America, the UK have published, and their governments have published, research which shows that there is no linkage between ill health and proximity.

Thus, Mr Matthews's response to a direct question regarding the micro level of human experience is to shift the focus of debate to an international plane by reference to a United Nations institution. This focus is subsequently extended through reference to various international reports. Such rescaling enables him to frame support for Irish wind energy development within an inductively reasoned discourse (*logos*) legitimised by citation of independently produced 'evidence'. In this way, Mr Matthews is able forge an authoritative *ethos* within a discourse of scientific objectivity. Accordingly, Mr Matthews's *ethos* is

constituted and given authority within a technical discourse instantaneous with the constitution of that discourse. Thus, as with Minister Rabbitte and Ms Cronin before him, Mr Matthews's authoritative *ethos* is con-substantiated with, and relevant to the discourse employed. As each *ethos* is given authoritative voice by the discourse in which it is embedded, so each discourse is given weight by the *ethos* that deploys it.

What the examination of these three responses suggests is an association between *ethos*, discourse, rhetorical forms, rationalities and scale. Specifically, how one's *ethos* is constituted and confers influence appears related to the correct alignment and skilful interlacing of varying discursive attributes, namely: the scalar focus of the discourse; the implicit rationality which underpins it; the rhetorical forms deployed; and the issues addressed. The relative configuration of these attributes was reflected in the short audience discussion that followed the panellist debate. Here, supporters of the proposed windfarms, including Eddie O'Connor, the CEO of Mainstream Renewable Power and Tim Cowhig, the CEO of Element Power Ireland, deployed discourses stressing national and regional economic benefit. Illustrative of this is how Mr O'Connor responds to a direct question regarding the adverse impact of shadow flicker[iii]:

> *[Factual tone and rapidly delivered] Shadow flicker happens at a certain*
> *time during the day when the sun is very low, and there's a certain*
> *guideline per year. And it may happen like was shown in the video there.*
> *[Altering to an enthusiastic tone and slowing pace] But in overall terms,*
> *look at the wealth that we can create in this country from stuff that has no*
> *value at the moment. Look at that wealth coming to the midlands...and*

*what's going to happen to Bord na Móna after all the power stations shut*

*down? Where are all the people going to work? That wind above our*

*heads can actually supply jobs for a huge number of people in the*

*midlands.*

Observable in this response is an inversion of issue and scale similar to that employed by the

Minister during the preceding panel debate. In this instance, Mr O'Connor swiftly transits

his response from a locally experienced impact issue to a focus on economic benefit at the

national scale. Having thus rapidly reversed the scalar direction and issue under discussion,

he then slows pace to elliptically construct a storyline of future regional economic decline

before implicitly presenting his proposed windfarm development as rescuing the midlands

from the expectation of decay his elliptical narrative has just insinuated. In this way, Mr

O'Connor fashions an *ethos* of concern similar to that forged by the Minister where he is

framed by ostensibly using logical reasoning (*logos*) to offer a solution to a predicted

problem. However, of note is how he reinforces this explicit objectivity by inferential

resonance with a *pathos*-directed rationale that draws upon fear of future regional decline

and the affective force given to the issue of job creation in a context of high unemployment

and significant emigration. Thus, Mr O'Connor's con-substantiation of an *ethos* concurrent

with the discourse that gives it weight displays similar tactical complexity and rhetorical

layering as that of other participants to the debate.

### 3.3    Televised Debate No. 2: 23 September 2013

Dispute concerning the windfarm proposals intensified over the ensuing months. As noted

in the national press, 'The proposals to build 2,300 wind turbines in the midlands to serve

the UK market is already proving to be contentious even before a single one is erected' (McGreevy, 9 April 2013). Opposition had gained significant momentum by mid-summer with approximately one thousand protesters reported to have gathered on 21st June outside Dublin Castle where an EU inter-parliamentary meeting on renewable energy and energy efficiency was occurring (Crawly, 27 June 2013). Larger, more locally focused protests followed in August.

It is against this backdrop that the second televised debate occurred. This was organised and aired seven months after the debate examined above and reveals the extent to which the issue had become polarised in the intervening period. The debate was thirty five minutes long, and was modulated into three sections. As previously, the first section consisted of a six and a half minute journalistic report which sought to provide a summary of the central issues for viewers. The second section of ten minutes commenced with the introduction of a panel of four guests. This comprised: Eamonn Ryan, leader of the Green Party, who as Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in the preceding government had established the policy framework supporting wind energy development; Eddie O'Connor, the CEO of Mainstream Renewable Power which is one of the companies seeking to develop the midlands windfarms; Henry Fingelton, chairperson of People Over Wind, which is an opposition group endorsed by several community groups opposing the proposed midlands windfarms; and David Horgan, managing director of Petrel Resources, a fossils fuel exploration company that opposes the midlands windfarm proposals. Each guest was invited to outline and justify their position with regard to the proposals through a series of introductory questions. Unlike the previous debate, discord was more pronounced during this section of the debate with some jeering from the audience audible. In the

remaining section, the interviewer identified and requested particular individuals among an invited audience of stakeholders to voice their contribution. Debate during this final section became especially animated with heckling and impromptu applause as the discussion alternated between the panel and audience.

The journalistic report centred on fundamental disputes between health and economic arguments for and against the proposed windfarms. It included an emotional interview with Mike and Dorothy Keane who related a personal narrative of how the operation of a windfarm in proximity to their house had adversely affected their health to the point where they felt they had to move elsewhere. This narrative exemplified the rhetorical form of *pathos* as the Keanes emotionally expressed their sense of loss at having to leave their home. Opposing this, the report also included an interview with Kenneth Matthews, Chief Executive of the Irish Wind Energy Association. As with his appearance on the first televised debate, Mr Matthews deployed a technical discourse (*logos*) focused on the potential national economic benefit from wind energy development and challenged assertions regarding adverse health impacts by reference to international scientific studies. Thus, this report illustrated the role of scalar horizon, implicit rationality, rhetorical form and issues addressed in the con-substantiation of an authoritative *ethos* within a particular discourse.

Following the journalistic report, the interviewer first addressed Mr O'Connor of Mainstream Renewable Power and asked if he would like to have a turbine beside his home. Mr O'Connor responded by declaring,

*I would if I could afford to have one in Dublin, but you can't have one in Dublin just because of the density of population. Oh ya [emphatically], I'd love to have a wind turbine. I'd like to be doing my bit for the environment. I'd love to be creating wealth in this country, genuine wealth, which is employment, profits, a chance for people to invest, a chance for people to stay in Ireland.*

Here, Mr O'Connor briskly justifies why he doesn't have a turbine beside his home, and then relates this to a personal commitment towards the environment before up-scaling his discourse to a national horizon and refocusing the discussion towards economic issues that resonate with popular anxiety regarding high unemployment, economic development and youth emigration. Thus, through linking scale and issue in a discourse of concern, Mr O'Connor cultivates an *ethos* as the conscientious citizen attentive to the environment and national interest by deft inference to sentiment (*pathos*). Following this response the interviewer then asks Mr O'Connor, 'What if you had a turbine beside your home in the countryside in Ireland and you wanted to sell it and you couldn't sell it?' Mr O'Connor's replies,

*Well I'd have to wonder where you got that notion from; that you can't sell your house. Like I mean there has been a definitive study done recently by the Lawrence Berkeley Library in the United States which showed that there was no correlation between the value of your house [and proximity to turbines].*

In this instance, Mr O'Connor's immediately dismissive assertion that 'I'd have to wonder where you got that notion from', implicitly professes the argument that such a view is an

irrationally conceived conjecture, and thereby seeks to inferentially invalidate as misguided sentiment the contention that windfarms result in the diminution of private property prices. In contrast to this tacitly referenced irrationality, he then shifts scalar horizon as he simultaneously alters the timbre of his response by deploying a *logos* imbued rhetoric that cites an international 'definitive study' to justify his opinion as rationally informed by scientific analysis.   Probing this response, the interviewer then references the journalistic report preceding the panel debate, noting that several of those interviewed stated that they could not sell their houses due to the proximity of turbines.  Mr O'Connor counters,

> *Well if you don't believe you can sell your house, you probably can't.  And if*
> *your auctioneer is telling you that you can't sell your house, you probably*
> *can't, or you don't want to because you're afraid of it.  But the facts do not*
> *bear out.  I mean Schleswig-Holstein in Germany has got a vast array of*
> *turbines.  I think it's got seven or eight thousand turbines in a place not*
> *even as big as Munster[iv] and yet the value of property there is at its peak.*

Mr O'Connor's rejoin implicitly frames as irrational those who claim they cannot sell their property due to windfarm proximity.  He does this by deploying a *logos*-centred rhetorical form focused on an international reference.   These 'facts' are contrasted with the sentiment-centred (*pathos*) of those who claim they cannot sell their house.  In this way, he constitutes an *ethos* of reason within a discourse of detached objectivity simultaneous with the implication that those who may challenge him hold illogical perspectives informed by confused subjectivity.  This brief interlocution illustrates the skilful interweaving of multiple layers of *pathos* and *logos* as Mr O'Connor first deploys *pathos* to forge an *ethos* of affective concern before deftly employing an inverse discursive framing that uses *logos* to contrast

and consolidate his rational *ethos* with the implied irrationality of those whose views he contends.   In this way, Mr O'Connor seeks to con-substantiate a personable yet authoritative *ethos* concurrent with the discourse he deploys by tactfully forging a discursive strategy that insinuates the reasonableness of his position simultaneous to suggesting the appropriateness of marginalising those whose views he challenges.

Following some contestation over the accuracy of the statistics presented by opposing sides to the debate, the interviewer addresses Eamonn Ryan, leader of the Green Party, and requests his contribution.   Mr Ryan refocuses the debate away from the specifics of statistical dispute and onto more strategic issues when declaring,

> *[With enthusiasm] We have a huge opportunity in this country.   There is a clean energy revolution happening across the world.   People are moving towards renewables; wind power, solar power.   And we have the benefit of having some of the best resources.   And if we can turn them on, it gives us clean, competitive, secure power forever.*

Here, Mr Ryan further up-scales the focus of the debate in seeking to position Irish wind energy debates within a global 'clean energy revolution'.   This up-scaling is then used as a platform from which to deploy a *logos*-centred rhetoric that reasons Ireland's comparative advantage for wind energy development.   However, these seemingly objective assertions are interlaced with a series of affective insinuations emphasising national pride that weave *pathos* rhetorical forms into the claims being made.   This strategy of discursively entwining ostensible objectivity with sentimental allusions represents an effort by Mr Ryan to address both parties to the debate through deflecting attention away from contested statistics and

onto a projected vision resonant with both commercial interests and patriotic sentiment.  In this way, Mr Ryan seeks to con-substantiate an *ethos* as a reasonable voice within an internationally informed assessment of Ireland's 'huge opportunity'.

Already struggling to control an increasingly animated debate, the interviewer strives to ensure a semblance of balanced representation by inviting Mr Fingelton of People Over Wind to make a contribution.  Seeking to counter the economic contentions and ostensible *logos*-centred arguments of Mr Ryan and Mr O'Connor, he deploys a discourse with challenging international references.  In doing this, Mr Fingelton asserts,

> *The reality on the ground is that the Danish with one of the highest wind*
> *energy penetrations in Europe pay thirty cent per unit of electricity.  We*
> *pay twenty.  So they pay half again...[Mr O'Connor vociferously interrupts*
> *pointing and saying 'No, that's all wrong', but Mr Fingelton*
> *continues]...Last week in Germany, the BDI, which is an organisation that*
> *represents a hundred thousand businesses in Germany...said to Angela*
> *Merkel 'in your first one hundred days in office you need to stop subsidising*
> *wind because it is making us uncompetitive.  We are losing industry.'  Wind*
> *energy makes electricity expensive and that is unfortunately the way it is.*

In citing examples from both Denmark and Germany, Mr Fingelton strategically deploys an explicitly *logos*-centred rhetoric that undermines the monopolisation of technical legitimacy by those discourses drawn on by supporters of the midland's windfarm proposals.  Mr Fingelton thereby con-substantiates a countervailing authoritative *ethos* within a discourse of seemingly commensurate impartiality.  This is achieved by up-scaling opposition from

local references rooted in personal narratives of discontent (*pathos*) to an international plane that references 'the reality' of electricity costs in jurisdictions where wind energy development is more advanced.

In the third section of this televised debate, the interviewer identifies a number of pre-selected individuals in the audience to make a contribution to the discussion. Following some questions concerning the economic viability of wind energy, the interviewer locates Avril Twiss and asks that she convey her 'personal story' on windfarm development. Ms Twiss then relates the following narrative,

> *My family and I live in the middle of [County] Laois. We spent more than ten years looking for the home where we now live. We sit on the side of a hill looking out over an absolute spectacular view of seven counties, uninterrupted. And on the first of August planning permission went in for eight wind turbines...So I'm going to be looking into 103 metres, tip-to-tip turbines going round, and that covers approximately four and a quarter acres. [Increasingly ardent] And that's not going to devalue my home? That's not going to endanger my family's health, their future and their inheritance? The ordinary person in Ireland is struggling to pay their bills, to pay their mortgages and everything else. And I agree, windfarm is great, it's a free energy, fantastic [now vehement], but don't do it at the detriment of the ordinary person. The ordinary person is the person that's keeping this country going.*

In relating the 'personal story' requested by the interviewer, Ms Twiss deploys an explicitly emotive rhetoric (*pathos*) that authoritatively positions her both epistemologically and morally as the injured party within a discourse of victimisation. Moreover, through constituting an *ethos* as the 'ordinary person' whose 'home' and family's 'health', 'future' and 'inheritance' are imperilled by business interests, she seeks to elicit empathy from a presumed viewership of 'ordinary' citizens. This use of *pathos* to fashion an *ethos* representative of the 'ordinary person' then allows her to up-scale her narrative in a reconfiguration from the personal to the national. This is achieved by emotionally verbalising an implicitly moralising scene where the 'ordinary person' (her) who is 'keeping this country going' has their family and home threatened by wind energy development.

The interviewer subsequently invites Mr O'Connor (CEO of Mainstream Renewable Power) to respond to Ms Twiss. As before, Mr O'Connor defends his position by moving scales to an international horizon and shifting the discussion to a *logos*-centred rhetoric resonant with the epistemic register he sees as more advantageous. He replies,

> *There is no evidence at all that health is damaged by wind turbines. This is one of the biggest studied topics around the world right now...so what you're looking at here is a global phenomenon of intense study. [Forcefully and slowing pace] Nobody gets sick from wind, except that you tell people they're going to get sick and then they get sick.*

As previously with his counter against claims that windfarms adversely affect property prices, Mr O'Connor swiftly and categorically dismisses the assertion that wind turbines pose a health risk. He does this by deploying a discourse in which he seeks to con-

substantiate an *ethos* as the mouthpiece of global expertise simultaneous to portraying that international scientific accord exists on the matter.  He then immediately contrasts this with the implied irrationality of a subjective psychosomatic condition where people feel sick simply because they think they should feel sick.  In doing so, he insinuates that it would be appropriate to marginalise such unreasonable views in rationally debating the planning merits of windfarms with a consequent allusion to the valid discounting of those views expressed by opponents to his company's developments.

## 4        The Discursive Construction of Expertise

As demonstrated in both televised debates, participants to wind energy disputes may draw on different discourses in seeking to position themselves as an authoritative *ethos*.  The effort expended on this is founded on the basic assumption that 'an expert in a particular domain of knowledge is in a special position to know about propositions in that domain, and therefore the expert's opinion...has a weight of presumption in its favor' (Walton, 1995, 64).  However, the televised debates discussed above suggest that expertise is a contended and emergent construct rather than an undisputed state of being.  A contextually sensitive interpretation of the discursive production of expertise therefore begs the question as to 'Whose knowledge and expertise...is worth the most?  Whose is credible?' (Hartelius, 2010, 2).  The above analysis helps answer these questions by showing how the attribution of expertise to an *ethos* is relative to the discourse in which it is positioned.  This in turn is consequent on the ways in which different speakers deploy discursive strategies that lay claim to 'reality' by seeking to resonate with, and at times tactfully interlace, different standards of authentication.

Drawing on the work of Plough and Krimsky (1987), Barry et al. (2008) elucidate this issue by demonstrating how in windfarm debates, such standards of authentication may be relative to differing technical and cultural rationalities. Here, 'technical rationality' credits verisimilitude to knowledge produced in accordance with what are perceived as objective scientific methods. A *logos*-centred rhetoric focused on inductive and deductive reasoning that stresses the centrality of empirical evidence is therefore resonant with this rationality. Hence, constituting a knowledgeable *ethos* relative to this form of rationality is best achieved through constructing an empiricist discourse that appears to externalise the facts under dispute. In contrast, 'cultural rationality' centres on subjective and inter-subjective experience, belief and emotional response. Consequently, cultural rationality may be conceived as, 'a form of rationality inherent to the social-life world. It is concerned with the impacts, instruments, or implications of a particular event or phenomenon on the social relations that constitute that world' (Fischer, 2000, 133). As an epistemic register allocating weight to personal and shared experiences of the social world, a *pathos*-centred rhetoric focused on emotional expression is thereby resonant with this form of rationality. Accordingly, constituting an authoritative *ethos* relative to a cultural rationality may be achieved through personal narratives that convey direct experience of the matter under discussion.

However, as the above analysis demonstrates, parties to contentious windfarm debates may not solely align with either technical or cultural rationalities, but rather may craft discursive strategies that subtly resonate with both rationalities to varying degrees through the skilful deployment of different rhetorical forms. In the case of those supporting the proposed windfarms, this involved a trend towards the ostensible deployment of *logos*-centred

rhetoric appealing to a technical rationality. Nonetheless, such agents deftly interlaced their rational assertions with varying degrees and forms of rhetorical *pathos* that resonated with issues of sentiment where this was perceived as advantageous to cultivating an *ethos* characterised by scientific expertise, but not emotional sterility. For example, both Minister Rabbitte and Mr O'Connor qualify their assertions with an ultimate desire to 'create jobs'. Set against a backdrop of high unemployment and significant emigration, such affirmations sought tacit communion with a pervasive anxiety regarding people's personal finances and Ireland's economic sovereignty. In the case of those opposing the proposed windfarms, agents likewise weaved together rhetorical forms of *logos* and *pathos* in constituting positions of expertise that resonated with both technical and cultural rationalities. This is illustrated by the example of Ms Cronin's skilful intertwining of *logos* and *pathos* into a narrative of how her concerns about her 'home' as 'just an ordinary' were substantiated by a professional property valuation exercise she commissioned.

Key to understanding the rhetorical complexity exercised by different parties to these debates is the role of the media in structuring the discussions. The influence of this structuring process is evinced by the stacking of the debating panel against the opponents of the windfarm proposals. This structuring of proceedings was also exemplified by the phenomenon of interviewers inviting specific members of a pre-selected studio audience to give their views at certain junctures in the debates so as to shape the form and content of deliberations by eliciting a particular narrative that directed the course of the discussion. Such context structuring processes reflects the national broadcaster's agenda to produce captivating television by accentuating *pathos*-centred rhetoric that conveys a story of emotional drama while concurrently fulfilling its public service commitments. This is

illustrated by the example of the interviewer in the second debate steering the tenor of the discussion through identifying Ms Twiss in the studio audience and inviting her to convey her purposely chosen 'personal story' of indignant victimhood.  Moreover, by imploring Ms Twiss to convey her 'personal' story, the interviewer consolidated control over the tone and subject of discussion by restricting the narrative Ms Twiss was permitted to tell, and as such, the con-substantiation of her *ethos* concurrent with the discourse of human drama she was directed to deliver.

In this sense, the varied and blended rhetoric employed by the different panellists may be appreciated as discursive strategies deployed in attempting to forge an authoritative *ethos* when negotiating the contextual constraints placed on them by the structures and implicit character framings produced by the media in the administration of the debates.  Indeed, the supporters of these windfarm proposals tactfully negotiated the limitations of these debating fora by deploying discursive strategies that subtly endeavoured to constitute a rational but benevolent authoritative *ethos* that sought to moderate the media's implicit framing of them as indifferent to the concerns of the ordinary citizen.  This was illustrated by Mr Ryan in his carefully constructed dual appeal to economic logic and national sentiment, and on various occasions by Mr O'Connor in his *logos*-centred referencing of scientific studies and *pathos*-directed rhetoric of job creation.  Similarly, the above analysis indicates how opponents of these developments sought to temper the frequent representation of them as emotionally charged irrational objectors through ostensibly challenging the self-constituted monopoly on technical expertise advanced by windfarm promoters, as in the case of Mr Fingelton, or presenting their expertise as grounded in the

cultural rationality of personal experience but also substantiated by the logic of technical rationality, as in the case of Ms Cronin.

Closely associated with the judicious entwining of rhetorical forms in the discursive strategies deployed, were competing efforts to define the relevant issues of discussion. Such efforts suggest further attempts to negotiate the contextual constraints placed on authoritative *ethos* construction by the nature of broader media agendas, representing endeavours to frame the reality under debate. Here, issues of pertinence to a speaker were delineated as the primary issues of concern and then used to produce a reality concordant with both the objectives of the speaker and the rationality of the discourse in which they are conveyed. In the case of those seeking to con-substantiate an authoritative *ethos* within an ostensible technical rational discourse, the issues used to produce a picture of reality were thereby identified and conveyed by foregrounding a *logos*-centred rhetoric that operated by 'divesting agency from the fact constructors and investing it in the facts' (Potter, 1996, 158). This strategy can be witnessed in the assertions of Mr Matthews during the first debate when he seeks to direct attention towards the economic gains that will accrue from investment in wind energy development by reference to numerical projections of national financial benefit. In contrast, those who sought to con-substantiate an authoritative *ethos* through a strategy drawing on a cultural rational discourse identified issues and constructed a picture of reality using forms of *pathos* that 'personalizes the statements so that the audience hears a "voice" and not just a series of disembodied claims' (Tindale, 2011, 344). This was illustrated by Ms Cronin's deft weaving together of *pathos* and *logos* in a manner that stressed the wisdom of focusing attention on the experiences of the 'ordinary person'.

Related to the process of framing was the strategy deployed by those supporting the proposed developments that sought to upscale the horizon of reference and cite large scale aggregate studies.  This practice was initiated as it was believed that such studies are forcefully resonant with the scientific principles of an (objective) technical rationality and thereby help to underscore the reasoned expertise of the enunciator.  Such an approach also constituted a tactical move executed to imply the questionable veracity of smaller scale assessments and thereby connote the appropriateness of marginalising such questionable micro-scalar perspectives (for example the valuation presented by Ms Cronin).  Mr Matthews illustrates this approach in the first debate when he references the World Health Organisation and research undertaken by various governments regarding health and proximity to wind turbines.  Mr O'Connor likewise deploys this strategy in the second debate when referencing a 'definitive study' produced by the Lawrence Berkeley Library on the lack of correlation between house prices and proximity to wind turbines.  In this way, the authoritative *ethos* of an agent is constituted and reinforced by the discursive strategy they deploy in negotiating the constraints of context.  Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between this con-substantiation of a discursive reality simultaneously to the *ethos* that both defines it and is credited authority by it.

**<Figure 1 here>**

**Con-substantiation of a Discursive Reality and Authoritative Ethos**

## 5       Conclusions

This analysis of how different discursive strategies are used in reality construction and mobilisation holds relevance for broader debates in balancing democratic legitimacy, social acceptability and environmental justice with calls for the planned transition to a post-carbon economy.  In this sense, it touches on thorny questions fundamental to the justification of planning as an activity; namely how is the 'public interest' identified and given representation.  The concept of planning in the public interest is set against the backdrop of an historical legacy wherein justifiable action is seen to follow sequentially from knowledge acquisition (Fry and Raadschelders, 2008).  Thus, the possession of 'valid' knowledge is a key determinant in the ability to authoritatively pronounce on an issue of governance.  This 'knowledge dependence' (Gottweis, 2003, 256) of governing activity is therefore reliant on discerning the 'facts' about 'reality'.  In complex planning cases, such as renewable energy development, where there are a multiplicity of issues ranging from landscape impact to the engineering details of grid connection, such facts are supplied by those deemed to posses legitimate expertise.  However, what the above analysis demonstrates is that such instances may raise fundamental questions on how 'expertise' is constituted, who is an 'expert', and consequently whose opinion counts in defining the 'public interest' (Mason and Milbourne, 2014).  Moreover, as demonstrated by Cotton and Devine-Wright (2012), how 'public' and the public interest is conceived has fundamental implications for how the energy industry engages with non-industry actors, which has often placed greatest emphasis on 'downstream' engagement based on 'decide-announce-defend' complemented by a public relations approach.

As noted by Caas and Walker (2009), planning has struggled to accommodate the intangibility of issues elevated by cultural rationalities, such as affective concern and opinions derived from qualitatively communicated subjective belief. While industry actors may relegate public voices within a 'deficit model' approach (Cotton and Devine-Wright, 2012), the planning system also struggles with conceiving diverse experiential knowledge. This is largely attributable to the continued reliance on an indifferent utilitarian calculus to justify action in the public interest and protect planning activity from accusations of unjust partiality (Campbell and Marshall, 2002). Such an approach intrinsically favours weighting mechanisms that seek to resolve complex problems by reduction to a comparable metric, as is evidenced by such environmental planning tools as ecological footprinting, ecosystems services assessment and cost-benefit analysis (Cowell and Lennon, 2014). This perspective privileges quantifiably measurable criteria as 'valid' forms of knowledge in impact assessment while concurrently negating alternative forms of knowing not easily cross-comparable, such as the subjective interpretation of experience (Aitken, 2009). As a consequence, much planning activity promotes a 'general state of reason' (Foucault, 1972) set in the ability to underpin governance in an appeal to 'facts' conceived in accordance with the methods advanced by technical rationality (Owens, et al., 2004)[v]. This commitment to seemingly post-political 'objective' modes of knowing erases the fundamental paradox that 'there is no way to fix neutrality neutrally' (Margolis, 1998, 59), and thereby conceals the bias inherent to favouring one mode of knowledge production over another when it persistently fails to resolve the 'planning problem' it seeks to address.

Such epistemological partiality is given force in Ireland through the institutionalisation of technical-rational modes of assessment in recently introduced 'fast-track' planning

legislation (Oireachtas, 2006; 2010).  Similar to the conclusions drawn by Johnstone (2014) with respect to the rescaling of certain planning powers in the UK, this legislation has shifted much decision-making from local government to the national level where forms of technical rationality dominate and freedom from political interference is defended as paramount to 'proper planning and sustainable development'.  However, the legislative up-scaling of decisions concerning 'strategic infrastructure' has also involved a reconceptualisation of the 'public interest' so that it is equated with a vaguely defined 'national interest'.  This contributes further to Cotton and Devine-Wright's 'deficit model' approach, whereby not only are non-industry actors marginalised through a perception low levels of scientific and technical literacy, but also the up-scaling of the discursive framing of the issue to the national level therefore aligns energy company interests with the so-called national economic interests of 'Ireland *Inc'*. As demonstrated in the foregoing analysis, this 'national interest' is commonly framed through political discourses referencing abstract macro-scalar issues such as 'energy security', unspecified 'job creation' and the dividend from realising electricity 'export potential'.  This intersection of scale and rationality in issue and epistemic privilege and marginalisation is illustrated on Figure 2. This up-scaling of decision-making has effectively extirpated local democratic representation in planning concerning projects of 'national interest' by extinguishing debating fora that have traditionally channelled input to local level assessment on the development of large scale renewable energy projects - representation that has frequently proved problematic for windfarm developers.

**<Figure 2 about here>**

**Epistemic and Issue Privilege and Marginalisation**

As shown in the above analysis, supporters of wind energy development seek epistemic privilege in defining the 'public ('national') interest' through resonance with these institutionalised forms of technical rationality by emphasising abstract issues (energy security, national and regional economic benefit) justified through reference to 'independent', 'objective' and 'scientific' assessments. This allows them to implicitly frame as irrational those who do not accord with the 'factual accuracy' of their arguments. As was illustrated in both televised debates, agents seeking favourable subject positioning within an ostensibly *logos*-centred 'rational' discourse thereby feel justified in casually dismissing as untrue the non-quantifiably and/or anecdotally substantiated assertions of their opponents.

What we have here then is an epistemological and ontological standoff. In this sense, wind power's 'planning problem' can be reconceived as the fitness for purpose of a governance system justified on principles that corral the legitimate interpretation of reality in a world of multiple epistemological perspectives that produce alternative 'facts'. Consequently, it seems that current means for reasoning and representing the 'public interest' in planning are inadequate to accommodate forms of argumentation that do not accord with the positive bias allocated technical discourses referencing macro-scale aggregate data. In such instances, appeals to 'more information' and/or 'better information' will unlikely resolve an issue should such information be produced in accordance with macro-scalar citation and/or aggregated modes of data generation that seek to place issues of contention beyond debate by decontextualising and suppressing the specific place-based attributes of a case. To some extent, this may help explain why opponents to the midlands windfarms have sought to

voice their objections through informal channels such as protest marches, posters and social media, and politicise their concerns through radio interviews and by lobbying politicians. In essence, such activity seeks to highlight, challenge and circumvent what is perceived as the unrepresentative calculation of the 'public interest' in planning and environmental governance.

There is now a growing body of research identifying the key issues facing renewable energy development as not so much 'objective' policy blockages but rather 'clashes of values' (Ellis et al, 2007, 521). Such work reminds us that 'planning never has been and never could be neutral...it is implicitly grounded in certain conceptions of the good' (Owens and Cowell, 2011, 168). Recent research in this area has helped address deficits in our understanding on how particular institutional configurations pattern the conceptualisation of different identities of expertise and ignorance in planning debates (Burningham, et al., 2007; Cotton and Devine-Wright, 2012). However, knowledge gaps remain as to 'if', 'why' and 'how' different arenas of planning governance privilege different conceptions of the 'truth' by favouring only certain versions of how the 'reality' of a situation can come to be known. There are also associated knowledge deficits as to the ways participants to renewable energy debates may seek to negotiate the comparative benefits and constraints engendered by such arena related rationalities. This paper goes some way to addressing these issues by showing how participants to a contentious planning debate may use discourse to mobilise a reality that justifies their views instantaneous to framing themselves as an authority regarding the 'facts' of a situation. In particular, the paper furnishes a novel method to identify and analyse the multifaceted discursive strategies deployed by different parties to a planning debate as they seek to negotiate the complex constraints of an emotionally

charged context. However, additional research is required on how parties to such debates succeed and fail in their deployment of discursive strategies that interlace *logos* and *pathos* rhetorical forms in generating a broadly recognised authoritative *ethos* that influences the decision-making process. Further research is also necessary into how attention to such discursive strategies can mitigate the marginalisation of certain perspectives by revealing the rhetorical tactics employed in the construction of apparently objective facts. In this sense, (re)conceiving wind power's planning problem as the difficulty in finding ways to 'incorporate multiple viewpoints and knowledge resources' (Aitken, 2010, 1840) is the 'true' (!) challenge posed by wind power for environmental governance.

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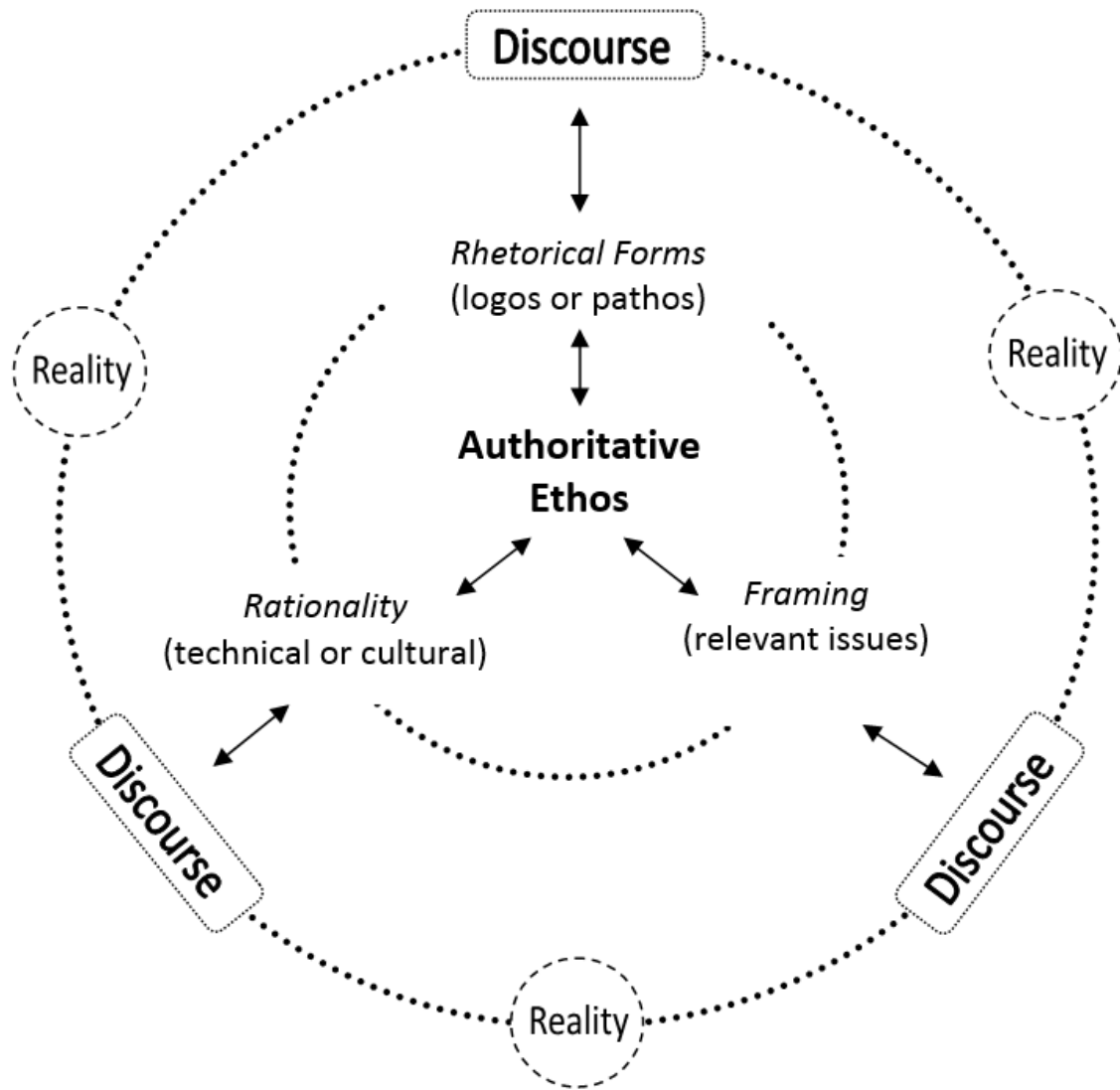
**Figure 1**

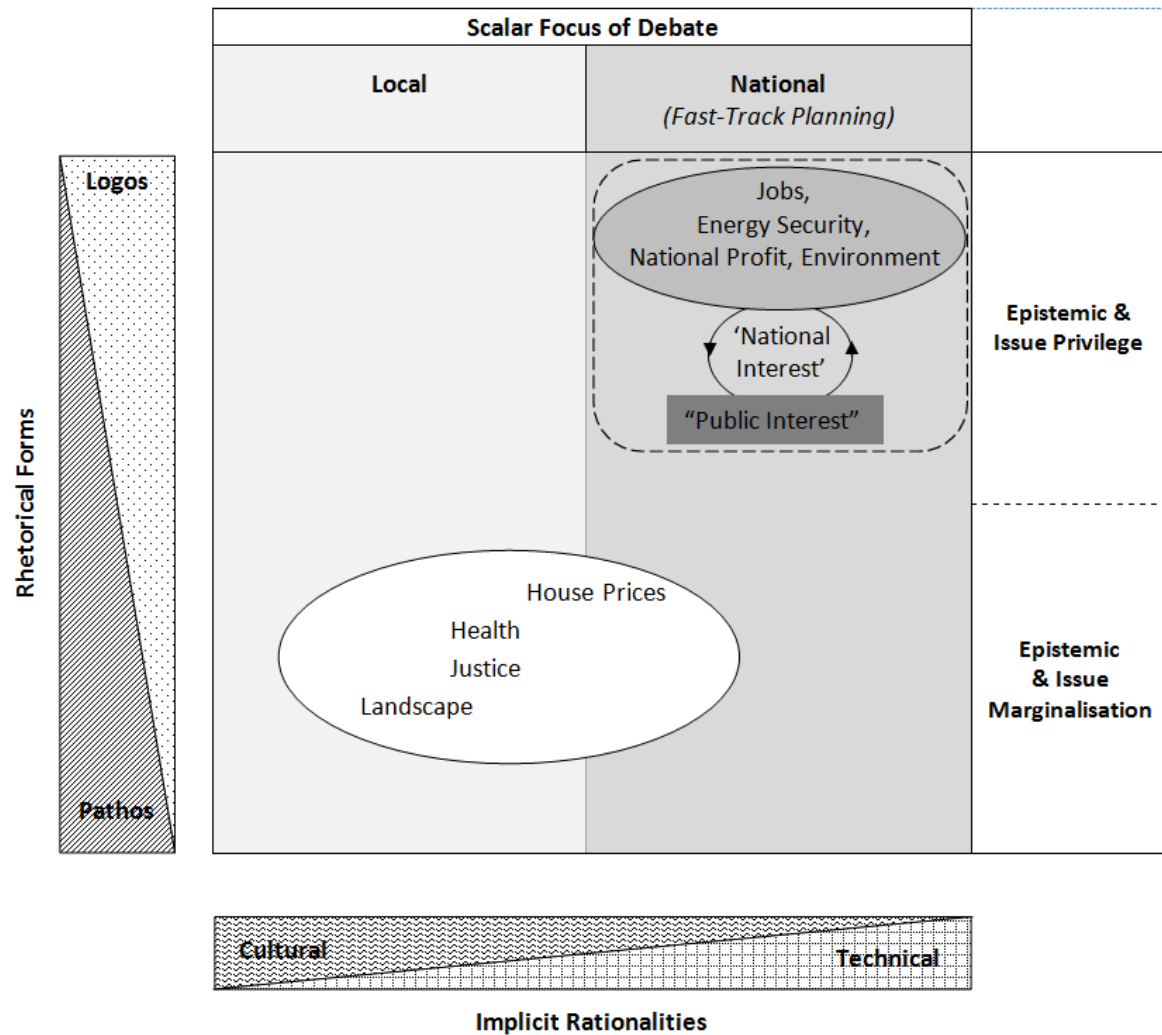**Con-substantiation of a Discursive Reality and Authoritative Ethos**

**Figure 2**

**Epistemic and Issue Privilege and Marginalisation**

[i] It is important to note here that pre-existing perceptions of somebody's character by an audience, and indeed the person themselves is not precluded. Rather, such pre-existing perceptions must be negotiated (consolidated or dissipated) through rhetoric. Thus, attention to rhetoric provides an additional dimension to an understanding of how perceptions of character may be cultivated in the audience.

[ii] Consequent on a precipitous collapse in national exchequer funding between September 2008 and November 2010, the Irish government requested international financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank in November 2010. The Irish government agreed a number of public expenditure reductions and tax increases as conditions of receipt of this financial assistance.

[iii] The 'Targeted Review' of the Irish Wind Energy Development Guidelines by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, outlines 'shadow flicker' as follows:

*Wind turbines, like other tall structures, can cast long shadows when the sun is low in the sky. The effect known as "shadow flicker" occurs where the rotating blades of a wind turbine cast a moving shadow which, if it passes over a window in a nearby house or other property results in a rapid change or flicker in the incoming sunlight. The effect will occur only for a short period during a given day and only under specific concurrent circumstances, namely when:*

- *The sun is shining and is at a low angle (after dawn and before sunset), and*
- *There is sufficient direct sunlight to cause shadows (cloud, mist, fog or air pollution could limit solar energy levels), and*
- *A turbine is directly between the sun and the affected property, and within a distance that the shadow has not diminished below perceptible levels, and*
- *There is enough wind energy to ensure that the turbine blades are moving*

Extracted from page 18 of DoECLG, 2013 *'Targeted Review' of the Irish Wind Energy Development Guidelines* (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government [DoEHLG], Dublin, Ireland)

[iv] Ireland's southern province of approximately 24,680 km$^2$, with a population recorded as 1,246,088 persons in the 2011 Irish National Census produced by the Irish Statistics Office.

[v] Flyvbjerg extends this idea by showing that it is the 'appearance' of such rationality rather than a genuine concern with its deployment that is important in governing activity - Flyvbjerg, B., 1998 *Rationality and power: democracy in practice* (The University of Chicago Press Ltd., London, UK.)