4

What a bad policy idea! Exploring views on wind farms in Italy

Alberto Asquer

This chapter aims to develop a framework for the analysis of arguments about what constitutes 'bad policies' during the policy-making stage. The framework provides a way to categorize bad policies, spanning from ideal policies to disastrous policies, based on their perceived effectiveness and desirability from the perspectives of both target groups and other stakeholder groups. This framework is applied to the analysis of the discourse about wind farms in Italy, using a Q Methodology study. Distinct perspectives emerge, ranging from endorsement of wind farms as a pathway to sustainable energy to concerns about their impact on local aesthetics, tourism, and biodiversity. A more nuanced understanding of the reasons for characterizing a policy option as a bad one is important to help policy makers and stakeholders participate in the policy discourse.

The role of bad policies in public policy decision making

The process of making public policy decisions has been extensively researched. The stages approach dissects it into components like issue framing, agenda setting, search for policy options, appraisal of policy options, and decision (Lindblom, 1959; Kingdon, 1984). The process entails that policy options are weighted against their potential benefits and drawbacks, and that inferior policy options are filtered out before the preferred one is selected. In a pluralist context, selecting policy options involves multiple stakeholders. They engage in negotiations to evaluate the merits of various policy options within institutionalized and discursive venues, ultimately influencing the selection of candidate policies.

Relatively little attention has been placed on how policy options are filtered out and selected within the public policy-making process. Policy making is based on calculative or utilitarian assumptions that individuals choose among alternative options by selecting the option with the highest net merit, while taking into account expected benefits, costs, and risks (Boadway, 2006; Brent, 2006). Alternative approaches extend the utilitarian model by highlighting that individuals may apply the calculative logic to

intangible effects, like 'credit' and 'blame' (Leong and Howlett, 2017). Yet, these approaches neglect that policy options are also appraised on the basis of their reasons, that is, the justifications that are given for the merits of a policy option. When facing decisions, individuals often seek to construct order, resolve conflict, and justify their choices to themselves and others by offering reasons (Shafir et al, 1993).

The role of reasons in the selection of policy options seems important to explain which policy option is selected as the policy choice. Reasons may build on different grounds. Reasons for a policy option may consist of an appraisal of the expected effects of the policy, that can be conducted by means of a cost-benefit analysis or other techniques (Turnpenny et al, 2009). Policy options that are expected to be ineffective or inefficient or unwelcomed by any social, economic, or environmental standards are plausibly rejected. Reasons for a policy option may also consist of an appraisal of the policy by normative criteria. This involves weighing the meaning of a policy and the policy-making process against the principles of equity, social justice, human rights, and cultural acceptance (McKay et al, 2012; Hitzig, 2020). Policy options that do not conform to the accepted principles are undesirable and likely ostracized as 'disastrous' policies, and they would be contrasted with 'ideal' policy options that deliver effective and desirable effects. Following the theme of this volume, policies that are ineffective and undesirable – that is, bad policies – are likely pushed out of consideration in the policy agenda, at least in the types of democratic and human-centered systems that are examined in the volume.

This chapter aims to investigate the role of bad policies in the making of public policies. The investigation builds on the premise that identifying the presence of bad policy options in the policy-making process is important to explain how policy decisions are eventually made. In public policy making, several policy options may contend to be elected as the preferred course of action. Understanding how some options are discarded because they are labeled as 'bad' can help polish theories of public policy making, explain the outcome of the policy-making process, and contribute to improving the quality of public policy decisions.

The role of bad policies in the making of public policies is examined here by means of a study on the reasons for and against wind farms in Italy. Wind farms, also often referred to as wind power plants, are clusters of wind turbines strategically placed in areas with consistent and strong wind patterns. Wind farms harness the kinetic energy of the wind, converting it into mechanical energy through the rotation of their blades, which subsequently drives a generator to produce electricity. The process of making, shipping, and installing the turbines does emit greenhouse gasses (GHGs), but wind farms result in the generation of renewable energy without the emission of GHGs, with the overall effect that wind farms are considered 'climate

positive' over a life cycle (Uddin and Kumar, 2014; Alsaleh and Sattler, 2019; Wang et al, 2019).

Governments worldwide are increasingly promoting the installation of wind farms for several compelling reasons. Firstly, the global imperative to combat climate change calls for a transition to cleaner energy sources. Wind farms, being a zero emission energy source, directly contribute to the reduction of carbon footprints. Secondly, wind energy diversifies the energy mix, reducing dependency on finite and often geopolitically sensitive fossil fuel reserves. This diversification enhances energy security and can stabilize energy prices. Lastly, the development and maintenance of wind farms create employment opportunities, stimulating economic growth in both urban and rural areas.

Given these multiple benefits, it is unsurprising that many governments are using various policy tools to expedite the adoption of wind energy solutions. Policy tools that are intended to stimulate the development of wind farms include financial incentives, like tax credits for investment in wind energy projects, direct support via grants and subsidies to reduce the initial capital cost, loan guarantees, and feed-in tariffs that guarantee a fixed price for electricity generated from wind farms, ensuring a stable revenue stream for producers. Additional policy tools consist of regulatory measures, such as requiring utilities to source a certain share of their electricity from renewable sources (the so-called Renewable Portfolio Standards or RPS), streamlining permission and approval processes to reduce the bureaucratic hurdles and expedite the start of wind projects, and ensuring that wind farms have priority or guaranteed access to the power grid. Further measures include funding on research and development to improve wind turbine technologies, launching campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of wind energy, offering public land at subsidized rates or facilitating the leasing process to ease the search for suitable locations for wind farms, investing in infrastructure such as roads and grid connections, adopting green certificates (or renewable energy certificates) to attest that electricity was generated from wind as a renewable energy source, offering long-term guaranteed purchase agreements by government or utilities to wind farms to ensure a market for the electricity that they produce, and implementing carbon taxes or other mechanisms that make fossil fuels more expensive relative to wind and other renewable energy sources, with the effect of making wind energy more competitive. These policies, when implemented effectively, can significantly boost the development and adoption of wind farms, helping countries transition to a more sustainable energy mix.

Yet, the discourse on wind farm policies is populated by contrasting claims about the merits of wind farms, which include arguments holding that they are a bad policy option to green energy transition. Arguments against the installation of wind turbine farms often revolve around environmental,

aesthetic, and practical concerns. They include the claim that wind turbines can pose a threat to wildlife, particularly birds and bats, as the spinning blades can lead to fatal collisions; that wind turbines produce a low frequency sound that can be disturbing to nearby residents, leading to complaints about noise pollution; that wind farms are often considered an eyesore, as they can significantly alter the natural landscape and visual aesthetics of a region; that the presence of wind farms can reduce property values in nearby areas, especially due to their visual impact and noise; that wind is an intermittent and unpredictable energy source, which can make wind energy less reliable compared to other energy sources; that the initial setup cost for wind turbines can be high and the return on investment may be disappointing, especially in areas with less wind; that suitable locations for wind farms can be far from the places where electricity is most needed, and they may trigger disputes on land use and ownership; and that investment in wind farms should be accompanied by an expansion of existing power grids. The 'badness' of wind farm policy options, therefore, needs to be carefully assessed to understand its role in the making of energy policies and green energy transition strategies.

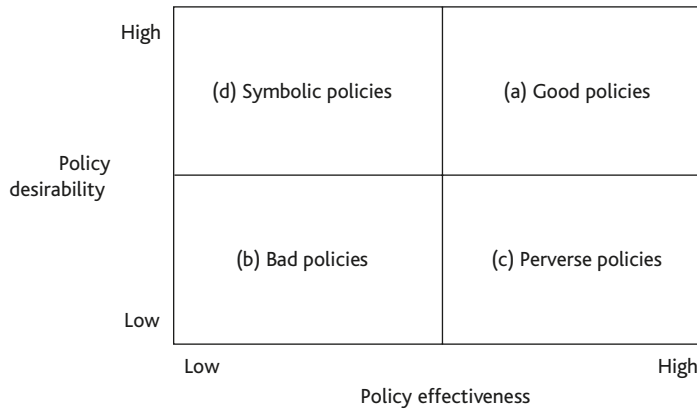
The chapter is structured as follows. The next section will discuss the concept of bad policies, especially in the context of public policy making. The section following this will present a framework to analyze bad policies within a discourse on policy options. Next, a Q Methodology study of the views on wind farms in Italy will be illustrated. The final section will provide the conclusions.

Bad policies: ineffective and undesirable

In various social, political, and economic contexts, the term 'bad policies' frequently emerges in discussions. Bad policies are often associated with issues of short-termism, neglect, misdirected interventions, and harmful effects, among other criticisms. Bad policies are those that may fail to adequately address the core policy issue, exhibit excessive or insufficient intervention, and demonstrate a lack of preparedness. Furthermore, bad policies may perpetuate discrimination, exacerbate inequalities, instill overregulation, and lack transparency. Communication failures with the public or media and misplaced priorities further compound the challenges associated with bad policies. These multifaceted criticisms underscore the complexity and multifarious nature of what constitutes a bad policy (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984).

In the context of this volume, bad policies are delineated as those that are both ineffective and undesirable. Ineffectiveness pertains to the failure in achieving a set objective, while undesirability implies that the policy is unwelcome based on normative standards. This dual criterion provides a

Figure 4.1: A typology of policies depending on effectiveness and desirability



starting point for zooming into what bad policies are. The very concept of bad policies is clarified by exploring the intersections of the effectiveness and desirability dimensions. Figure 4.1 shows a typology of policies depending on two axes. The horizontal axis represents the policy's effectiveness, while the vertical axis indicates its desirability. Figure 4.1 yields four distinct categories: (a) good policies that are both effective and desirable, (b) bad policies that are ineffective and undesirable, (c) 'perverse policies' that, while effective, are undesirable, and (d) 'symbolic policies' that are desirable but ineffective. The rest of the discussion will focus on bad policies only, although it may be relevant to perverse and symbolic policies as well.

Within the context of public policy making, it is crucial to clearly differentiate between the appraisal of policy options (*ex ante*) and the evaluation of policies after the implementation (*ex post*). The appraisal of policies that have been implemented calls for the application of theories, tools, and techniques of policy evaluation. Policy evaluations help assess, on the basis of evidence, whether policies have been bad, meaning that the implemented policy is shown to be ineffective and unwelcome. Conversely, the *ex ante* appraisal of policy options builds on expectations about whether the policy is going to be effective and desirable.

Policies that are indicated as 'bad' in the public policy-making process can play an important role. Labels of 'bad policy' serve as red flags, indicating courses of action that are anticipated to be ineffective and undesirable. By identifying and discarding these options early in the process, policy makers can potentially streamline policy making, ensuring that the final policy choice is well-informed and effective. The preemptive identification and elimination of bad policy options are instrumental in refining the policy-making process, especially in anticipatory governance approaches (Ramos, 2014; Maffei et al, 2020). Questions arise, though, concerning how it is

that a policy option is labeled as 'bad', who labels policy options as 'bad', and how the stigma of 'badness' attached to a policy eventually affects the selection of the policy choice.

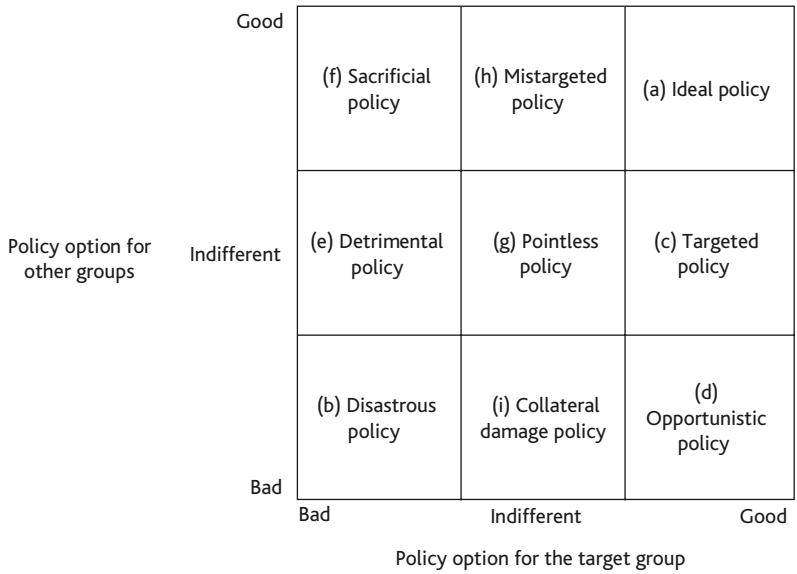
In pluralistic contexts, any stakeholder can potentially label a policy option as 'bad'. A claim that a policy option is bad enters the policy discourse, where the 'policy is bad' claim competes against other claims about the relative merits of the policy option with respect to others. Stakeholders conceivably assess the persuasiveness of the claim that a 'policy is bad' by canons of reasonableness and plausibility (Nickerson, 2020). The capacity of a claim that a 'policy is bad' to affect the outcome of a public policy-making process, however, is also dependent on the identity, role, and credibility of the stakeholders who argue about the badness of the policy (Majone, 1989; Mols, 2012; Eising et al, 2020). Influential stakeholders may be able to throw their resources against the diffusion and acceptance of policy options that they regard as bad ones. Relatively weaker or marginalized stakeholders, instead, may denigrate a policy as bad in an effort to advance their preferred options by rhetorical means.

Bad policies in arguments about public policies

Several studies highlighted the importance of arguments and discourse in the making of public policies. Majone (1989) observed that policy analysis is not merely a technical exercise but fundamentally an argumentative one. Setting empirical data and factual evidence aside, policy appraisals and decisions largely rest on the persuading power of arguments. Among institutionalist approaches, Schmidt (2010) contributed to the development of discursive institutionalism, that focuses on the role that arguments and discourse play in coordinating stakeholders and communicating with the public and the media. In a broader perspective, critical discourse analysis (Weiss and Wodak, 2007) or critical discourse studies (van Dick, 2015) address how language, power, and ideology affect the policy discourse, influencing the framing and understanding of policy issues and options. Policy analysis, therefore, should be attentive to arguments that are made about the effectiveness and desirability of policies.

In a pluralist context, arguments about policy options can be made about how good or bad policies are for the intended target and how good or bad their effects are for other groups, including those that are to bear the consequences of a policy in the distant future. Figure 4.2 shows how policy options can be appraised depending on two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how a policy is assessed from the perspective of the target group. The vertical axis indicates how a policy is assessed from the perspective of other groups. Figure 4.2 results in nine types of policies. On the one polar corner, (a) an ideal policy is one that delivers effective

Figure 4.2: A typology of policies depending on degree of goodness for the target group and for other groups



and desirable effects for both the target group and other groups. On the opposite polar corner, (b) a disastrous policy is one that results in ineffective and undesirable effects for both the target group and other groups. Policies that are considered 'good ones' for the target group may be indifferent for other groups – and these policies may be labeled as (c) targeted ones – or may deliver bad consequences for other groups – and these policies may be labeled (d) opportunistic. Policies that are regarded as 'bad ones' for the target group may be indifferent for other groups, and they may be labeled as (e) detrimental ones, or may be rather good for other groups, and they may be labeled as (f) sacrificial ones – as the target group would be worse off to the benefit of other groups. Finally, policy options that are indifferent for the target group and which are immaterial to other groups can be labeled as (g) pointless policies; those that are indifferent for the target group but deliver good effects to other groups are (h) mistargeted policies; those that are indifferent for the target group but entail bad effects on other groups can be called (i) collateral damage policies.

The taxonomy of policy options depending on their degree of 'goodness' for the target group and for other groups can be related to the structure and interplay of argument that populate policy discourses. Needless to say, an ideal policy is likely to gain support from both the target group and other stakeholders, while a disastrous policy is likely to trigger resistance from everyone. Advocates of a policy option that bears immaterial or negative

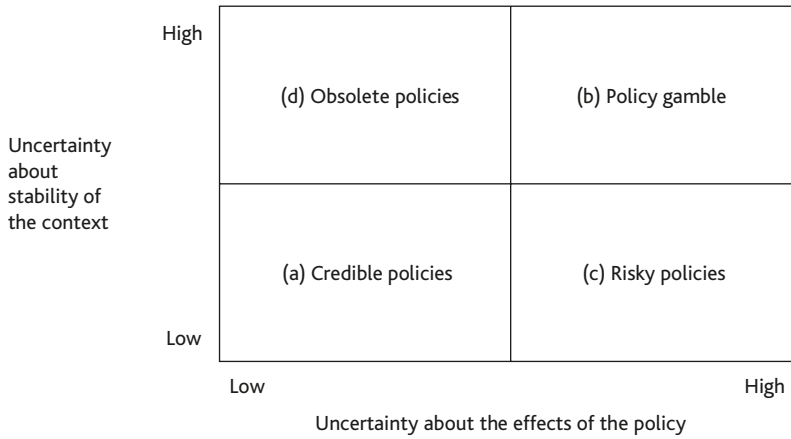
effects to other groups but the target one would need to craft rhetorical strategies to persuade about the merits of the policy. For example, arguments for an opportunistic policy need to anticipate resistance from the side of other groups, who would be negatively affected by the opportunistic policy option. In converse, target groups that resist policies that have a negative impact on them need to be attentive about whether other groups can be allies (as when facing disastrous bad policies), or neutral observers (as when facing a detrimental bad policy), or profiteers (as when facing a sacrificial bad policy). Policy discourses are also influenced by the length of time stakeholders expect it will take to see the effects of policy options. Some groups may hold a more short-termist perspective than others, with consequential effects on their appraisal of the degree of 'goodness' of policy options. For example, stakeholders who care about the long-term prospects for future generations or the environment would appraise a policy option as bad, indifferent, or good with respect to its likely implications decades into the future.

The taxonomy in Figure 4.2 can be also related to previous works on rhetoric and public deliberation. Hirshman's (1991) *Rhetoric of Reaction* offered, for example, a distinction between futility, perversity, and jeopardy arguments that populate reactionary rhetoric. The futility thesis, that aims to undermine a proposed course of action because it would be inconsequential, can be related to pointless and mistargeted policies. The perversity thesis, that flags the worsening effects of a proposed course of action, can be related to disaster, detrimental, and collateral damage policies. The jeopardy thesis, which warns that the proposed course of action would undermine other arrangements in the political regime, can be related to opportunistic and sacrificial policies, where attaining good for one part of stakeholders entails bad consequences for another one, with the resulting effect of compromising political stability.

The analysis of bad policies in arguments about policy options can be enriched further in at least two ways. First, in the policy-making context where appraisals of policy options consist of arguments that build on empirical as much as normative ground, stakeholders may strategically argue about policy options for advancing their own agendas. A stakeholder, for example, may rhetorically craft arguments that a given policy option results in worsening effects for them, for the sake of obtaining an improved bargaining position, possibly on other policy issues. In this respect, claims that a given policy option is bad may be pretentious and instrumental to attain some other gains.

Second, the argument about the merits of a policy option may be enriched by considering sources of uncertainties. Figure 4.3 shows further nuances to policy arguments when two dimensions are added. The horizontal axis shows the degree of uncertainty that the intended effects of the policy

Figure 4.3: A typology of arguments about policies depending on uncertainty about their effects and about the stability of the context



on the target group materialize. The vertical axis indicates the degree of uncertainty regarding the stability of the context conditions. Figure 4.3 results in four possible scenarios. If uncertainty about the policy effects and about the stability of the context are low, then an argument can be made that (a) the policy is credible. If, on the other hand, there is high uncertainty that the intended effects of the policy materialize and that the context remains stable, then (b) the policy is a gamble. If the effects of the policy are uncertain while the context is stable, then (c) the policy is risky. Finally, if the effects of the policy are relatively certain but the context may change, an argument can be made that (d) the policy is obsolete because of its inadequacy to address the policy issues under changed context conditions. Adding uncertainty, therefore, opens up additional rhetorical strategies around the pitfalls of bad policies.

The framework that has been illustrated in this section provides a way to map out the variety of arguments about what constitutes bad policy options. Building on this volume's argument that bad policies are characterized as being ineffective and undesirable, the attractiveness of policy options depends on their effects on the target group and on other groups in society. Further nuances arise, moreover, depending on uncertainties about the effects of a policy and about the stability of the context. The rest of this chapter shows an application of the framework to the reasons for and against wind farms in Italy. By analyzing a variety of claims on the merits and drawbacks of wind farms, the study will shed some light onto the reasons for labeling wind farms as a bad policy and, relatedly, it will illustrate how the framework can be used to inform argumentative strategies in public policy discourse.

Wind farms in Italy as a bad policy option: a Q methodology study

Italy has been progressively embracing wind energy as part of its commitment to renewable energy sources. The country's journey with wind energy began in earnest in the early 2000s, driven by European directives and national targets to reduce carbon emissions and increase the share of renewables in the energy mix. The Italian government introduced various incentives and support mechanisms, such as feed-in tariffs and green certificates, to promote the development of wind farms. By the 2010s, Italy had made significant strides in increasing its wind energy capacity, with numerous onshore wind farms spread across regions like Sicily, Puglia, and Calabria. The total installed capacity in the country exceeds 11 GW. In recent years, there has also been interest in exploring offshore wind potential, given Italy's extensive coastline. The Italian government and energy stakeholders continue to invest in research, infrastructure, and policy frameworks to further harness the potential of wind energy and contribute to a sustainable energy future.

As part of Italy, the island of Sardinia has a rich history of wind energy utilization. The island's topography and geographical location make it an ideal spot for harnessing wind energy. The first wind farms were established in Sardinia in the 1990s with a combined power capacity of around 15 MW. The 2000s marked a period of rapid expansion for wind energy, when the number of wind farms increased substantially. By the end of the decade, the total installed capacity reached approximately 90 MW. During the 2010s, advancements in technology and increased investments led to an exponential growth of the island's wind energy capacity. Eventually, the total capacity of wind farms in Sardinia came to exceed 1 GW. Notably, the wind farm in Buddusò, located in the northern part of the island, is one of the largest in the country with a capacity of about 138 MW.

Total wind energy capacity in Sardinia is relatively high by international standards (for instance, in the United Kingdom, the offshore Walney Extension wind farm has a capacity of 659 MW; in the United States, the Alta Wind Energy Centre has a capacity of about 1.5 GW; and in China the onshore Gansu wind farm operates at about 8 GW). However, and despite the promising potential for enlargement, the wind energy sector in Sardinia has faced challenges. The island's unique landscape and the presence of protected areas have posed constraints on the development of new wind farms. Additionally, concerns related to visual impact and noise pollution have been raised by local communities. The Sardinian government also opposed offshore wind farm development, in contrast with European Union and central government orientation to stimulate the wind energy capacity.

The contemporary public discourse in Sardinia is populated by several views that cast the policy of installing further wind farms as a bad one.

Specific arguments about the ineffective or undesirable features of wind farms include that wind farms disrupt the natural beauty of the pristine landscapes of the island; that the presence of wind farms can deter tourists, especially if they are built near popular attractions and coastal areas; that wind farms may detract the integrity and significance of the numerous archeological sites and areas of historical importance; and that wind farms would result in the enrichment of investors while bringing negligible effects to the regional economy and employment. These arguments are counteracted, however, by other views that support wind energy in Sardinia as a sustainable way to meet the energy needs of the island and reduce dependency on fossil fuels. The debate over wind farms in Sardinia reflects, in this sense, a broader global conversation about the balance between renewable energy development and preserving the natural environment, as well as the cultural heritage.

As a way to empirically ground the investigation of arguments about wind farms as bad policy, a Q Methodology study was carried out. Q Methodology is a statistical approach designed to discern patterns of individual subjective viewpoints within a group (Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1980). Unlike other quantitative research methods, Q Methodology does not aim to test hypothesized causal links but rather to pinpoint clusters of shared ideas, represented as statements, among participants. Furthermore, while Q Methodology incorporates statistical correlations to deduce connections between ideas (expressed as statements), it distinguishes itself from other qualitative research methods that predominantly depend on the researcher's interpretation. Nevertheless, interpreting the results remains crucial, particularly as the ideas must be contextualized within the specific political discourses of the policy domain.

The Q study began by identifying a set of statements, termed the Q sample, which encapsulated the diverse opinions concerning the matter in question, known as the 'concourse' (Dryzek and Berejikian, 1993; Steelman and Maguire, 1999; Dryzek and Holmes, 2002). This study's Q sample was derived from the review of local media and social outlets (Facebook, which features as the second main source of information in Italy after TV news; Censis, 2022), which resulted in a collection of 85 statements. Statements conveyed a variety of views on wind farms held by a diverse range of individuals, from representatives of the energy industry to local businesses to residents. The statements were then consolidated into a more manageable number of 27. It is acknowledged that the Q sample may not capture the full spectrum of perspectives on wind farms. However, the size of the Q sample is influenced by the practical task required from respondents during data gathering.

In the Q study next phase, respondents, referred to as the P sample, were asked to indicate their level of concurrence with the statements from the Q sample. The Q study collected 40 respondents, who were recruited via

a Facebook social media discussion group on wind farms in Sardinia of about 800 members. Respondents were asked to organize the Q sample's statements on a 'grid' designed as a normal distribution. This grid, resembling a pyramid, consisted of 'slots' set on a scale from the statement a respondent least agrees with (scored –4) to the one they most concur with (scored +4). The sorting process was facilitated using the FlashQ software (Braehler and Hackert, 2013). The grid's purpose was to have respondents prioritize the statements based on their relative agreement level, rather than just indicating their level of agreement, which is a common approach in questionnaire surveys. Subsequently, the collected responses, termed Q sorts, underwent a by-person factor analysis (Stephenson, 1953) to identify clusters of similar statement preferences. The factors derived from the analysis can be interpreted as sets of assertions linked to specific perspectives on wind farms.

The factor analysis resulted in the extraction of four factors that explain 69 percent of cumulative variance. Table 4.1 shows the correlation scores between the factors. Table 4.2 displays the factor characteristics. Figures 4.4 to 4.7 visualize the factors by positioning the sentences of the Q sort grids. The results of the Q Methodology analysis shed some light onto the variety of arguments that populate the discourse on wind farms in Sardinia. Factor 1 shows that several arguments are made that broadly support the installation of wind farms. Statements that respondents agree with include that wind farms are a sustainable alternative to fossil fuel energy sources and that wind farms are a necessary solution to address climate change, indicating a connection between wind farms and the contemporary climate change and energy

Table 4.1: Correlation scores between factors

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.0	–0.17	–0.12	0.52
Factor 2	–0.17	1.0	–0.02	0.06
Factor 3	0.12	–0.02	1.0	–0.15
Factor 4	0.52	0.06	–0.15	1.0

Table 4.2: Factor characteristics

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
No. of defining variables	20	4	2	7
Avg. rel. coef.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Composite reliability	0.99	0.94	0.89	0.97
SE of factor Z-scores	0.11	0.24	0.33	0.18

Figure 4.4: Factor 1 of the Q Methodology study on wind farms in Sardinia

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
I am against the installation of wind farms.	Wind farms cause noise pollution.	I am concerned about the noise produced by wind farms.	Offshore wind farms have a negative impact on fishing.	Wind farms can cause electromagnetic interference problems.	Wind farms are a preferable option compared to thermal power plants.	Wind farms can be effectively integrated into the surrounding environment.	Wind farms are a sustainable alternative to fossil energy sources.	I am in favor of the installation of wind farms.
	Wind farms are inefficient compared to other renewable energy sources.	Wind farms are a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis.	Wind farms have a negative impact on human health.	Wind farms scan interfere with radio and television signals.	Wind farms can creaate jobs in the commuiity.	Wind farms can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Wind farms are a necessary solution to address climate change.	
		Wind farms are a threat to biodiversity.	I am concerned about the environmental effects of wind farms.	Wind farms have a negative impact on tourism.	I am concerned about the future disposal of wind turbine blades.	Wind farms are a clean and renewable energy source.		
		Wind farms can be a danger to air navigation.	Wind farms have a negative impact on wildlife.	Wind farms have a negative impact on the aesthetics of the landscape.	Wind farms are too expensive to build and maintain.	Wind farms can bring economic benefits to the community.		
				Wind farms can cause soil erosion problems.				

Figure 4.5: Factor 2 of the Q Methodology study on wind farms in Sardinia

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Wind farms can be effectively integrated into the surrounding environment.	Wind farms are inefficient compared to other renewable energy sources.	Wind farms can cause electromagnetic interference problems.	Wind farms cause noise pollution.	Wind farms can bring economic benefits to the community.	Wind farms can cause soil erosion problems.	Wind farms can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Offshore wind farms have a negative impact on fishing.	Wind farms have a negative impact on tourism.
	Wind farms can be a danger to air navigation.	I am in favor of the installation of wind farms.	Wind farms are too expensive to build and maintain.	Wind farms have a negative impact on wildlife.	Wind farms are a sustainable alternative to fossil energy sources.	I am concerned about the future disposal of wind turbine blades.	Wind farms have a negative impact on the aesthetics of the landscape.	
		I am concerned about the noise produced by wind farms.	Wind farms scan interfere with radio and television signals.	I am concerned about the environmental effects of wind farms.	Wind farms are a clean and renewable energy source.	I am against the installation of wind farms.		
		Wind farms are a necessary solution to address climate change.	Wind farms can creaate jobs in the commuiity.	Wind farms have a negative impact on human health.	Wind farms are a threat to biodiversity.	Wind farms are a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis.		
				Wind farms are a preferable option compared to thermal power plants.				

Figure 4.6: Factor 3 of the Q Methodology study on wind farms in Sardinia

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Offshore wind farms have a negative impact on fishing.	I am in favor of the installation of wind farms.	Wind farms can be a danger to air navigation.	Wind farms are a sustainable alternative to fossil energy sources.	Wind farms have a negative impact on the aesthetics of the landscape.	Wind farms have a negative impact on wildlife.	I am concerned about the environmental effects of wind farms.	Wind farms can creaate jobs in the commuiity.	Wind farms cause noise pollution.
	Wind farms can be effectively integrated into the surrounding environment.	Wind farms can cause electromagnetic interference problems.	Wind farms are a clean and renewable energy source.	Wind farms have a negative impact on tourism.	I am concerned about the future disposal of wind turbine blades.	Wind farms are inefficient compared to other renewable energy sources.	Wind farms can bring economic benefits to the community.	
		Wind farms are a preferable option compared to thermal power plants.	Wind farms are a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis.	Wind farms scan interfere with radio and television signals.	Wind farms can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Wind farms have a negative impact on human health.		
		I am against the installation of wind farms.	Wind farms can cause soil erosion problems.	Wind farms are a threat to biodiversity.	Wind farms are too expensive to build and maintain.	I am concerned about the noise produced by wind farms.		
				Wind farms are a necessary solution to address climate change.				

Figure 4.7: Factor 4 of the Q Methodology study on wind farms in Sardinia

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Wind farms have a negative impact on human health.	Wind farms are a threat to biodiversity.	Wind farms have a negative impact on tourism.	Wind farms cause noise pollution.	Wind farms can creaate jobs in the commuiity.	Wind farms can be effectively integrated into the surrounding environment.	Wind farms can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Wind farms are a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis.	I am in favor of the installation of wind farms.
	Wind farms can be a danger to air navigation.	Wind farms are inefficient compared to other renewable energy sources.	Wind farms can cause electromagnetic interference problems.	Wind farms are too expensive to build and maintain.	Wind farms are a preferable option compared to thermal power plants.	Wind farms are a clean and renewable energy source.	Wind farms have a negative impact on the aesthetics of the landscape.	
		I am concerned about the environmental effects of wind farms.	Wind farms are a sustainable alternative to fossil energy sources.	I am concerned about the noise produced by wind farms.	Wind farms can bring economic benefits to the community.	Wind farms are a necessary solution to address climate change.		
		I am against the installation of wind farms.	Wind farms scan interfere with radio and television signals.	Offshore wind farms have a negative impact on fishing.	Wind farms can cause soil erosion problems.	Wind farms have a negative impact on wildlife.		
				I am concerned about the future disposal of wind turbine blades.				

transition discourses. Also other statements broadly support wind farms, which can be effectively integrated into the surrounding environment, can help reduce greenhouse emissions, provide a clear and renewable energy source, and can bring economic benefits to the community. Arguments that flag potential issues with wind farms highlight practical concerns, like the future disposal of wind turbine blades and the cost of their construction and maintenance.

Factor 2 highlights that wind farms raise concerns about their negative impact on tourism, on fishing, and on the aesthetics of the landscape. Other sentences that respondents especially agree with include those about the future disposal of wind turbine blades, soil erosion problems, and biodiversity, but the respondents associated with this view also acknowledge that wind farms can reduce greenhouse emissions and that they are a sustainable alternative to fossil energy sources. Part of the views of Factor 2 also address the futility of wind farms, which are considered a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis. Factor 2 flags some reasons why wind farms may be regarded as a bad policy. Negative views towards wind farms relate to multiple reasons from the negative impact that wind farms have on other groups (for instance, on operators of tourism and fishing industries), to the ineffectiveness of wind farms to tackle energy crisis, to the undesirable consequences of wind farms on biodiversity and natural environment preservation.

Factor 3 indicates that some respondents hold ambivalent views towards wind farms. Sentences that respondents agree on include positive claims that wind farms can create jobs in the community and that they can bring economic benefits to the community. On the other hand, they also agree that wind farms cause noise pollution that is a source of concern to them, that wind farms have negative effects on the environment and on human health, and that they may be inefficient compared to other renewable energy sources. With respect to Factors 1 and 2, Factor 3 seems to hold rather vague beliefs towards wind farms, and probably to lack any strong policy standing towards them; in fact, Factor 3 indicates that they disagree with both being in favor and being against the installation of wind farms.

Factor 4, lastly, expresses a supportive view of wind farms, albeit in a pragmatic understanding of wind farms as a 'necessary evil'. Respondents are in favor of the installation of wind farms, which are a necessary solution to address climate change, are a clean and renewable energy source, and can help reduce greenhouse emissions. On the other hand, they believe that wind farms are a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis, particularly as it has a negative impact on the aesthetics of the landscape, and has a negative impact on wildlife. Factor 4 is similar to Factor 1 in acknowledging the advantages of wind farms, but it also admits some of their negative sides.

The Q Methodology study helps identify the views that characterize wind farms as a bad policy option. The views that are associated with Factors 2 and 3 flag that the policy to install wind farms is both ineffective (that is, wind farms are inefficient with respect to other energy sources, and they provide a temporary and unsustainable solution to the energy crisis) and undesirable (that is, wind farms have a negative impact on tourism, on fishing, and on the aesthetics of the environment). In this respect, the views associated with Factors 2 and 3 would arguably oppose wind farms because of inefficiency and undesirability reasons.

Views associated with Factors 2 and 3 also regard wind farms as an opportunistic policy, where the energy industry gains from wind farm investment while other stakeholders – like the tourism and the fishing industry – would be worse off. These views would also resist casting wind farms as beneficial to local communities because of their effects on the local economy and employment; rather, they regard wind farms as a sacrificial policy, where local residents would suffer the loss of aesthetics, biodiversity, and wildlife while the renewable industry would thrive. In this respect, the framework proposed in this chapter (Figure 4.2) helps elucidate that some views frame wind farms as highly contentious policy options. Different stakeholder interests are pitted one against the other, in a rhetorical posture that papers over room for agreement on a middle ground course of action.

Views associated with Factors 2 and 3 also indicate that wind farms face uncertainties concerning both their effects and the context. On the one hand, some views hold that there are risks arising from the disposal of wind turbine blades, the erosion of the soil, and human health. On the other hand, they also hold that wind farms are inefficient with respect to other renewable energy sources and a temporary and unsustainable solution only to the energy crisis. These views indicate that wind farms can be also characterized as a policy gamble, as defined in this chapter (Figure 4.3), which would act as a rhetorical strategy to discredit wind farms policy options because of the uncertainties arising from their use and from changing alternatives to handle the energy transition.

This Q Methodology study reveals a multifaceted landscape of the discourse on wind farms in Italy, particularly in Sardinia. By mapping out four different views ranging from the most supportive to the most critical towards wind farms (associated to four factors resulting from the by-person factor analysis), the study underscores the variety of public sentiment towards wind farms. Some views, in particular, characterize wind farms as a bad policy option, which can be framed as an opportunistic or a sacrificial policy that is detrimental to some stakeholders (namely, the tourism and the fishing industry and the local residents) while being beneficial to others (namely, the renewable industry and investors). The option to install wind farms is also framed as a policy gamble because of facing uncertainties concerning

both their effects and the context. In sum, the framework proposed in this chapter helps appreciate the nuances of the view of wind farms as a bad policy. This results in a more detailed understanding of the challenges to advance wind farms because of the intersection of environmental, economic, and social concerns, which may be relevant more generally to appreciate the challenges faced in transitioning to renewable energy sources globally.

Conclusion

The process of making public policy involves considering various policy options, each of which is evaluated based on its merits, especially in terms of effectiveness and desirability. A policy option that is characterized as a bad policy may be ostracized in the policy discourse and discarded. It is important, therefore, to analyze what the features of bad policy options are. This chapter presented an analytical framework for the analysis of arguments about what constitutes bad policies during the policy-making stage. The framework provides a way to map out views about a policy option along the dimensions of the degree of goodness (or badness) of the effects of the policy on target and other groups, and depending on the degree of uncertainty about the effects of the policy and the stability of the context. The application of the framework results in a more nuanced understanding of the arguments that are put forward about why a policy is characterized as a bad one.

The chapter illustrated the application of the framework to the study of the reasons for and against wind farms in Italy. The analysis resulted in the identification of four views (factors), namely one that expresses support to wind farms, one that highlights the negative effects of wind farms, one that holds ambivalent views towards wind farms, and one that accepts wind farms as a 'necessary evil' to the energy transition issue. The framework helps appreciate nuances of the views that regard wind farms as a bad policy option, including those that consider wind farms as an opportunistic or a sacrificial policy, or one that may be considered as a policy gamble because of the uncertainties concerning both their effects and the context. Understanding these nuances is important with respect to the development of wind farms in the country, which – at the time of writing – still exhibits contradictory tendencies between continuous growth of installed wind energy capacity and persistent issues arising from resistance of local communities and regulatory hurdles.

In conclusion, a more nuanced understanding of the reasons for characterizing a policy as a bad one is important to help policy makers and stakeholders participate in the policy discourse. Reasons for the 'badness' of a policy option may take different forms. Stakeholders who want to label a policy as a bad one may deploy rhetorical strategies that cast the policy option as bearing negative or indifferent effects to the target or other groups, or as

facing uncertainties concerning either their effects or the context or both. Stakeholders who want to counteract the argument about the 'badness' of a policy, instead, may need to develop alternative policy proposals that offset the concerns of those who resist the adoption of bad policies. Policy makers must be attentive to the variety of voices, concerns, and arguments presented, ensuring that decisions are not just technically sound but are also resonant with the values, needs, and aspirations of the communities they impact. The framework that has been presented in this chapter, possibly coupled with Q Methodology or other techniques to map out the variety of views on a contentious policy option, may help achieve this goal.

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