Citizens‘ value systems and the transformation of the energy system.

Project „EPCC – European Perceptions of Climate Change: Skepticism, Energy Preferences, and Societal Transformation”

Funded by JPI Climate

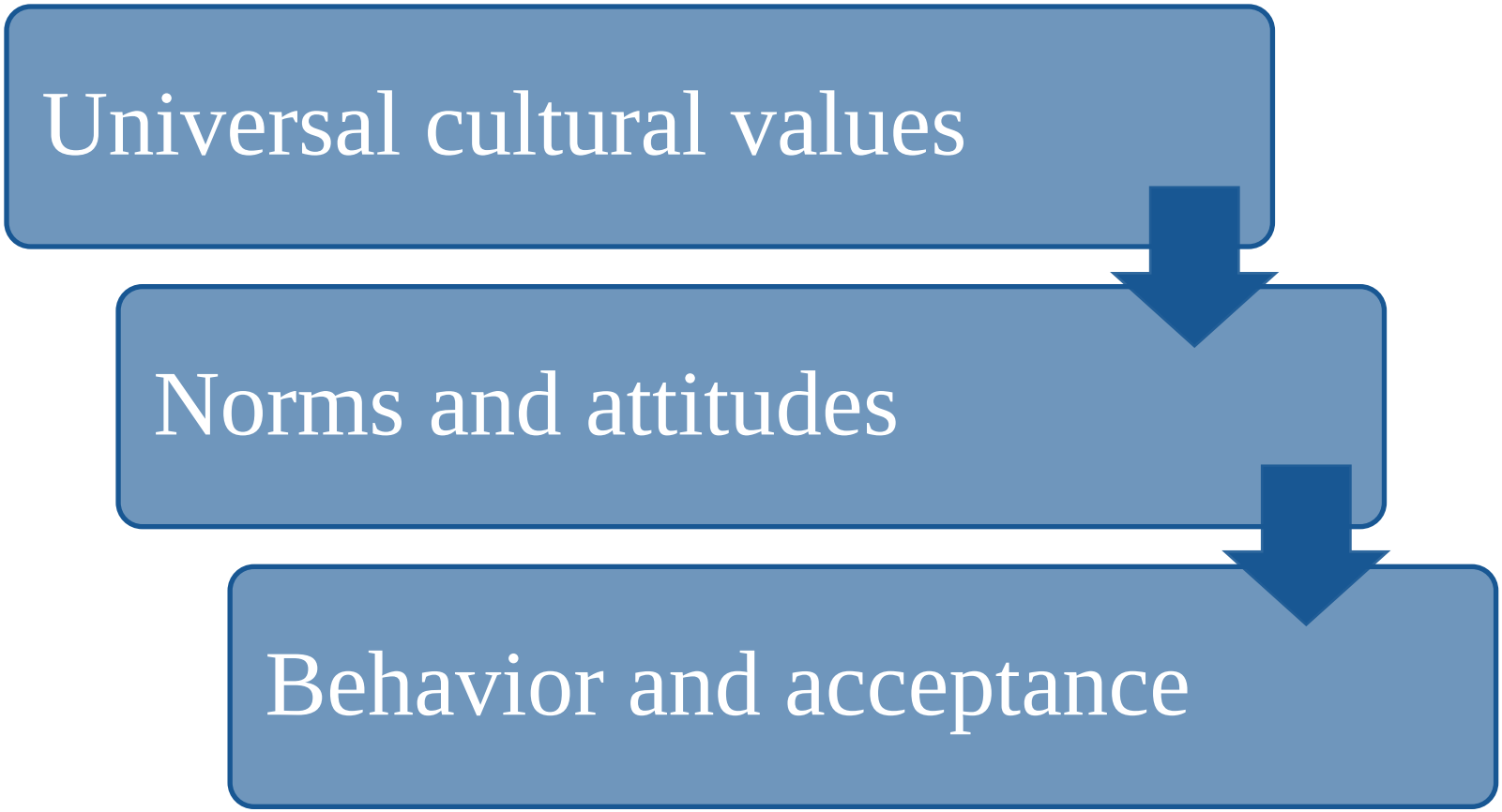
Project Outline

- Two-year research project (01/2015 – 12/2016)
- Funded by the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Climate
- Involving partners from UK, Norway, France, and Germany

Project Outline

- School of Psychology, Cardiff University, UK (Lead)
- Institute SymLog, France
- Department for Psychosocial Science, University of Bergen, Norway
- Stuttgart Research Center for Interdisciplinary Risk and Innovation Studies (ZIRIUS), Germany
- COIN – Climate Outreach and Information Network, UK (Non-academic Partner)

Object of Investigation



Object of Investigation

Social implications of the transformation of the energy system (Energiewende):

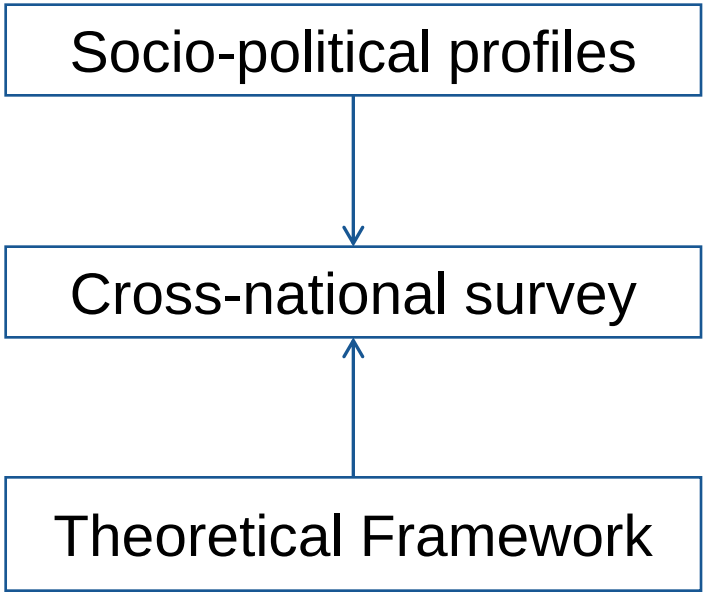
→How do human values and cultural worldviews shape public attitudes towards the climate change and transformation of the energy system and accompanying uncertainties?

Object of Investigation

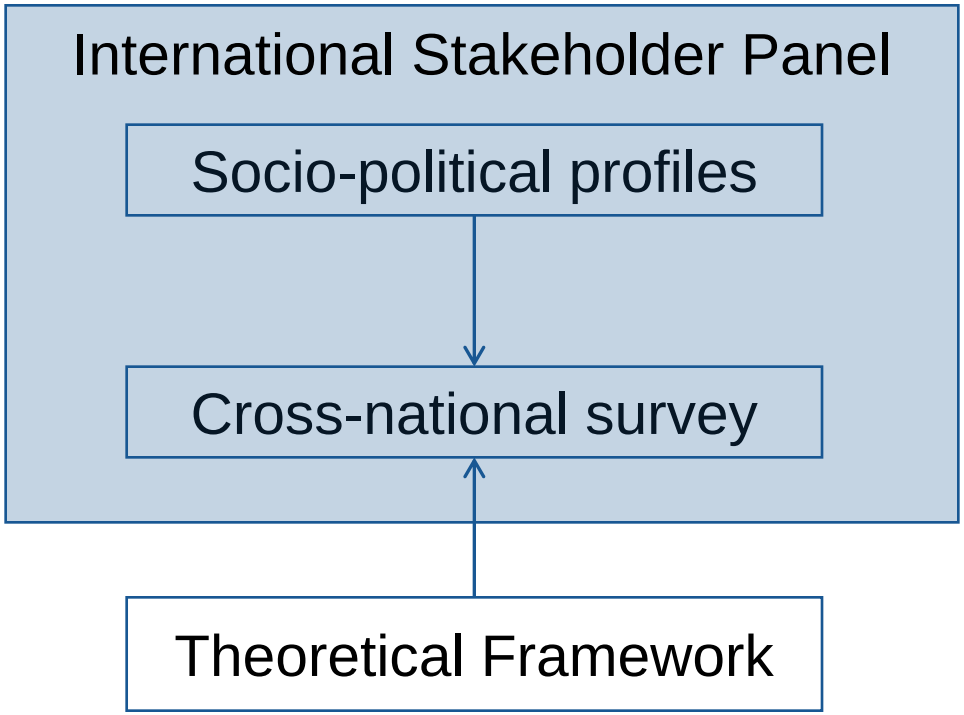
Cross-national representative Survey (face-to-face interviews) conducted in

- UK
- Norway
- France
- Germany

Research Design



Research Design



International Stakeholder Panel

- Initially integrated part of research design
- Coordinator: Not-for-profit research and outreach organisation COIN

International Stakeholder Panel

- Supporting the dissemination of results by making use of their extensive networks
- Informing the national socio-political analysis → providing insights into national specifics due to their unique position between civil society and policy makers

Socio-political Profiles

- Feed into the design of the survey
- Cover significant national aspects
- Four national profiles complemented by one pan-European profile

Socio-political Profiles

Compilation of each national socio-political profile, along the criteria of:

- Energy and climate policy
- Public‘s opinion on energy preferences
- Public‘s attitudes towards climate change

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- People perceive social challenges through a lense of cultural worldviews

→ Cross-national research: assumption of universal values

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

Drawing on:

- Schwartz‘ Theory of Universal Values
- Kahan‘s conception of Douglas/ Wildavsky‘s Cultural Theory of Risk (cultural cognition)

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Theory of Universal Values (Schwartz)

- Identifying a number of basic universal values
- Grounded in their reference to three universal requirements for human beings:
  - Basic needs as biological organisms
  - Needs for social interaction
  - Requisites for the security and welfare of social groups

Theoretical framework/ Survey Design: Schwartz‘ Universal Values

Schwartz (2012): An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values.

Object of Investigation

Social implications of the transformation of the energy system (Energiewende):

Large transformations, as the transformation of the energy system, pose challenges and uncertainty to societies (energy supply, new technologies, social aspects)

→ Energy transition as social challenge!

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

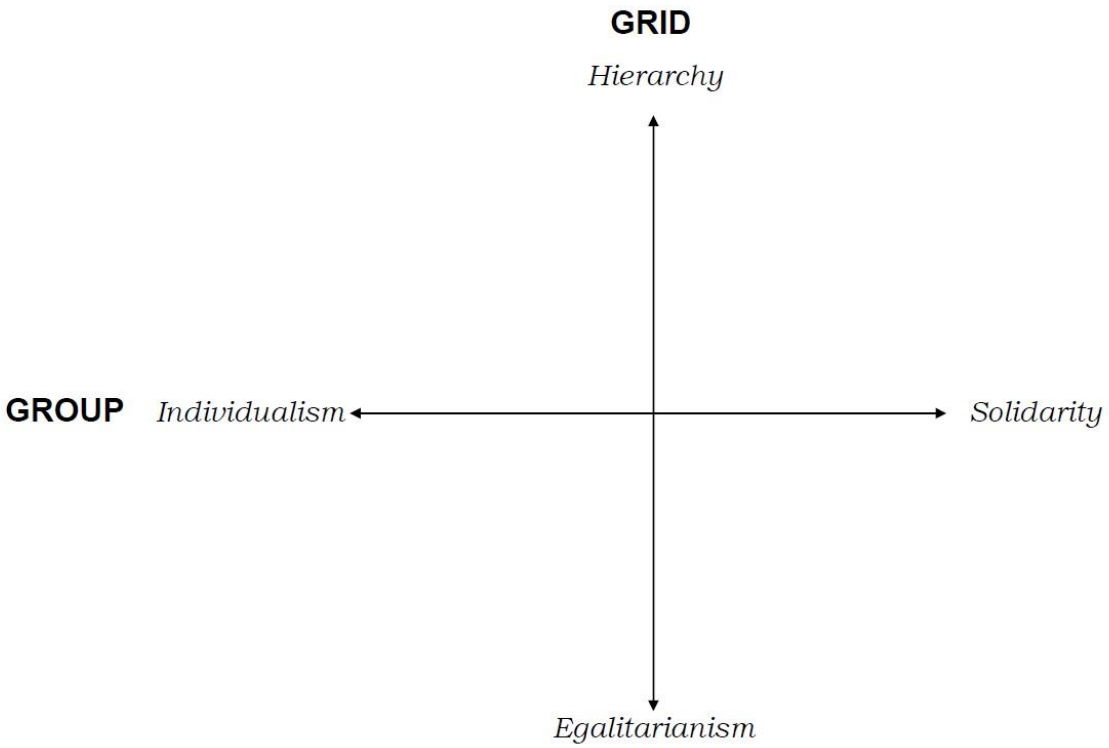
- Cultural Cognition (Kahan) as conception of the Cultural Theory of Risk (Douglas/ Wildavsky)

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Cultural Cognition (Kahan) as conception of the Cultural Theory of Risk (Douglas/ Wildavsky)

- Characterizing cultural ways of life and supporting worldviews along two dimensions:
  → „Group“ and „Grid“

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design Grid/ Group Theory



Kahan (2008): Cultural cognition as a conception of the Cultural Theory of Risk.

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Weak group way of life: individualistic; highly competitive
- Strong group way of life: people depend on each other (high interaction)
- High grid way of life: life is organized through stratification and role differentiation
- Weak grid way of life: egalitarian organization of life (e.g. no one is prevented from participation because of their sex, race, etc.)

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Kahan‘s operationalization of Cultural Theory
- Setting off from Dake‘s classic operationalization of Cultural Theory
- Makes use of two attitudinal scales:
  - Hierarchy-egalitarianism:unique scale for measuring grid orientation
  - Individualism-communitarianism: unique scale for measuring group orientation

(see e.g. Wildavsky & Dake 1990; Verweij, Douglas, et al. 2006; Jones 2011)

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Kahan‘s operationalization of Cultural Theory: Two attitudinal scales:

- *Hierarchy-egalitarianism*: items determining a person‘s relative orientation towards high or low grid way of life
- *Individualism-communitarianism*: items determining a person‘s relative orientation towards high or low group way of life

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

- Drawing on existing studies on the percpetion of climate change (as an issue of risk and uncertainty) in order to understand people‘s perception of energy policies.

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

Universal, cultural values & attitudes towards climate change:

e.g.: individualistic and hierarchical values:

→ Perceive climate change as less riskier

→ Favor policy measures that take into account the autonomy of the market

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

Universal, cultural values & attitudes towards climate change:

e.g. individualistic and hierarchical values:

→ Favor policy measures that take into account the autonomy of the market

→ Perceive climate change as less riskier

→ **inquiring after the relation between universal values and energy preferences**

Theoretical Framework/ Survey Design

Four key areas:

- Value orientations, cultural worldviews & social representations (e.g. drawing from Schwartz Value Survey – SVS).
- Socio-political context (in which public engagement with climate change takes place).
- Perceptions of climate change (perceived risks of climate change, climate scepticism, personal experiences, concerns about related/competing issues)
- Energy preferences (perceptions of renewable and nuclear technologies and unconventional policy options, e.g., CCS and shale gas)

Open Questions/ Discussion

- Challenges of cross-national surveys? (translation of items, cultural misunderstandings...)
- Manage transfer between measuring climate change perception and energy preferences?...
- Tension between the need for comparable data and the need to map out national specifics?...

Thank You!

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