

Beyond taxation: Discourse around energy policy in Japan[☆]



Takahiro Endo^{a,*}, Yuki Tsuboyama^b, Yoritoshi Hara^c

^a Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration, Kobe University, 2-1 Rokkodai, Nada-ku, Kobe, Japan

^b Graduate School of Commerce and Management, Hitotsubashi University, Naka 2-1, Kunitachi, Tokyo, Japan

^c School of Commerce, Meiji University, 1-1 Kanda-Surugadai, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan

HIGHLIGHTS

- Taxation cannot explain extremely low acceptance of diesel fuelled cars in Japan.
- Explore meaning attachment process.
- Complementarity between *cost-benefit evaluation* and *meaning attachment*.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11 February 2016

Received in revised form

31 July 2016

Accepted 15 August 2016

Keywords:

Energy policy

Taxation

Discourse

Diesel

Interpretive policy analysis

ABSTRACT

Energy policy literature tends to emphasise the impact of taxation on energy preference. However, the present case concerning extremely low acceptance of diesel cars in Japan could not be explained by taxation. As a possible factor, the paper sheds light upon discourse around the energy policy. The policy aimed to characterise diesel technology as emitting particulate matter and nitrogen oxide (NO_x). The paper contributes to extending the existing understanding of the role of public policy by embracing the linguistic interactions complemented by visualisation.

© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

1. Introduction

How does public policy condition people's selection of energy source? Public policy in relation to people's preference of energy source tends to be understood in terms of taxation. Depending on the target of the policy such as the reduction in carbon emission, weighted taxation is applied to different sources of fuel that condition people's reliance on different energy sources (Mayeres and Proost, 2013; Minjares et al., 2013; Nakata and Lamont, 2001; Plotkin, 2001; Sterner, 2007, 2012). In brief, higher taxation tends to result in avoidance of that energy source and vice versa. It is, however, often overlooked that the public policy in relation to energy source is not limited to the domain of taxation. In particular, this paper argues that it is necessary to seriously consider the implication of 'linguistic turn' in social science by unpicking linguistic elements of the public policy that accord meaning to

energy sources.

This paper argues that extending the analytical focus beyond the issue of taxation is particularly important. This is because the taxation itself cannot explain the extremely low acceptance of diesel fuel for passenger cars in Japan, which has not gathered adequate academic attention in the existing literature (Sterner, 2007, 2012). That is, while lower taxation on diesel in major European countries has contributed to the wider acceptance of diesel cars (Schipper and Fulton, 2013), Japan has also held lower taxation on diesel fuel. However, the existing research has not addressed this issue and instead focused upon the impact of taxation on gas fuels in Japan, but not diesel fuels (Sterner, 2007, 2012). This paper, therefore, as a possible factor, explores the discursive process. For this purpose this study focuses on a discourse, defined as a structured set of linguistic practice that gives meaning to entities including the production and dissemination of documents (Philips and Hardy, 2002). Importantly, discourse may be complemented by visualizing artefacts that simplify key messages (Coopmans et al., 2014; Jasanoff, 2004; Latour, 1986). In fact, discourses complemented by visualisation have provided insights into previously overlooked processes concerning linguistic interactions that shape energy policy (Ocelík and Osička, 2014; Scrase

[☆]We thank Peng Zhou and three anonymous reviewers for constructive comments on earlier versions of this article.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: endo.takahiro@gmail.com (T. Endo), ytsuboyama@gmail.com (Y. Tsuboyama), hara@meiji.ac.jp (Y. Hara).

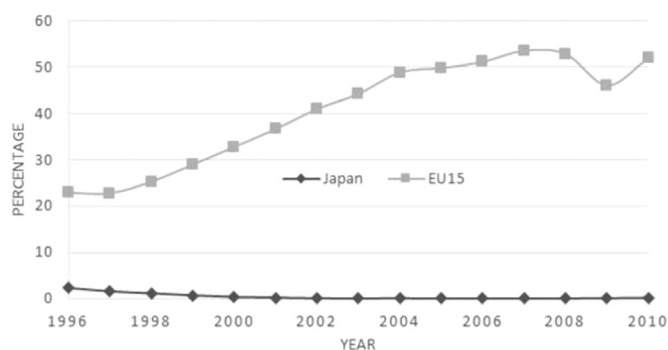


Fig. 1. Diesel new passenger car registrations in EU 15 countries and Japan. Source: Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, European Automobile Manufacturers Association.

and Ockwell, 2010).

In the present case, a central figure is the former governor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) who held power between April 1999 and October 2012. During his incumbency, the governor put primary emphasis on the relatively high particulate matter emissions of diesel vehicles, which was enhanced by a PET bottle filled with particulate matter, and deflected attention away from their relatively low carbon emissions (see Fig. 1). This discourse was directly reflected in the legislation that severely constrained the use of diesel vehicles (Hara et al., 2015). Importantly, the present case empirically extends Hara et al. (2015), which shed light upon network orchestration concerning diesel vehicles in Japan. That is, the present case embraces the role of visualizing artefacts (i.e. a PET bottle filled with particulate matter as seen in Fig. 1) that contributed to complementarily disseminating the key discourse. Furthermore, while Hara et al. (2015) dealt with the period between August 1999 and April 2001, the case of this paper extends the period by covering Ishihara's entire incumbency, which was between August 1999 and October 2012. Therefore, the present case provides a more comprehensive analysis.

The structure of this paper is as follows. The next section clarifies the angle of our research, which leverages the existing study mainly developed in sociological analysis since the discipline has developed useful analytical perspectives for discursive elements. Then, the section explains the significance of concentrating on the Japanese case that witnessed extremely low acceptance of diesel fuel. Moreover, we describe the approach to data collection, including data sources, and analysis adopted for this paper. The following section presents the outcome of the data analysis. Finally, we briefly summarise the argument and discuss the contributions of this paper and provide our concluding remarks.

2. Angle: stigmatisation, rhetoric and artefacts

The angle of the analysis is to regard the development of public policy as the discrediting process, which involves the rejection of a certain category such as a specific type of energy source or technology (e.g., diesel). We treat the discrediting process as stigmatisation, which refers to a process used to create new arrangements of legal, cultural and normative elements, whereby a particular discrediting characteristic of actors or objects is emphasised as its core trait (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Paetzold et al., 2008). In other words, stigmatisation focuses upon a particular discrediting characteristic of a certain technology, suggesting that the characteristic adequately represents it.

As the term "stigma" was originally presented in association with physical, moral, and racial characteristics of individuals and

groups (Goffman, 1963), the concept of stigmatisation has been applied mainly at the individual and group levels. Examples include HIV status (Fife and Wright, 2000; Parker and Aggleton, 2003), mental illness (Angermeyer and Matschinger, 2003), race, and occupation (Ashforth and Kreiner, 2014). Although the concept has been applied primarily at these levels, it is reasonable to extend it to the analysis of social and cultural objects (Lopes, 2006) as well as technology and its related objects (Slovic et al., 2013). In relation to the focus of this paper, diesel fuel has various characteristics, but stigmatisation makes a certain negative characteristic of it as its core trait.

Stigmatisation proceeds through the intentional production and dissemination of a certain type of discourse, known as rhetoric, complemented by artefacts. Rhetoric, or the language of persuasion, is a specific type of discourse used to exert influence on the status of acceptance of entities or objects (Erkama and Vaara, 2010). Therefore, by creating and disseminating rhetoric, actors can potentially manipulate a particular audience into accepting or rejecting certain activities or entities (Erkama and Vaara, 2010). Although these studies (i.e., Erkama and Vaara, 2010) have not explicitly utilised the concept of rhetoric in analysing persuasion with regard to stigmatised objects, it is reasonable to assume that rhetoric is employed in stigmatisation.

To examine the usage of rhetoric in relation to stigmatisation, we employ the classification of Vaara et al. (2006), which identifies various types of rhetoric, including rationalisation, moralisation, normalisation, authorisation, and narrativisation. Rationalisation emphasises that stigmatizing a certain object reflects a rational judgment. Moralisation underlines the appropriateness of stigmatizing a certain object in terms of moral judgment. Normalisation emphasises that stigmatizing certain objects or behaviours is normal rather than deviant. Authorisation indicates that stigmatisation can stem from an authority figure. Finally, narrativisation dramatically frames stigmatised objects, for example, in terms of a hero–enemy relationship.

Although Vaara et al. (2006) do not fully explore the link between rhetoric and artefact, it is reasonable to point out that artefacts may complement rhetoric. Indeed, the importance of artefacts, in particular visualizing ones, has been illustrated in the context of legitimation of the scientific knowledge, which importantly includes technological ones. That is, visualisation through artefacts could simplify complex relationships involving the key object(s) such as the cause and effect relationships shown in mathematical formulae (Coopmans et al., 2014; Jasanoff, 2004; Latour, 1986). Visualizing artefacts includes various images, be they digital or analogue. Importantly, simplification through visualizing artefacts contributes to the legitimation of a certain scientific claim by convincing the audience of the plausibility of the suggested relationship. Therefore, to better understand stigmatisation, it may be useful to link this visualisation effect of artefacts with rhetoric. In other words, actors draw upon both rhetoric and visualizing artefacts when they stigmatise an object, including a certain technology.

In summary, this paper aims to examine the role of public policy in the discrediting process of a certain fuel as well as technology. By adopting key terms, the primary focus of this paper can be summarised as follows: through stigmatisation, public policy produces and disseminates rhetoric and utilises artefacts in its favour. Before using this analytical framework and explaining how diesel technology/fuel was stigmatised in the Japanese automotive industry, the data collection and analysis process will be shown in the next section.

3. Data collection and analysis

We have conducted a single case study with temporal variation

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7398396>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7398396>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)