Developing large-scale offshore wind power programs: A choice experiment analysis in France

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Résumé

Many offshore wind farms are expected to be installed along the European coasts in the next few years. However, developing offshore wind power may affect other maritime activities already established in the sea space (e.g., commercial fishing). We conducted a discrete choice experiment in France on a national sample, where a wide range of the effects that large-scale offshore wind power programs can have on maritime activities were considered. So far, the valuation of preferences for offshore wind power has mainly focused on the visibility of the wind farms and on their impacts on marine biodiversity. In addition to these impacts, our results show that other types of consequences matter to the public. Employment in the maritime economy, the effect on fresh seafood offer, and conditions for the practice of recreational activities are also found to be significant. Moreover, our study introduces a within-sample treatment in which an information script changes the current situation in the opt-out alternative. We find that social acceptance of offshore wind power varies depending on the information given to the public about other sources of electricity generation that could be prioritised. Policy implications of our results are discussed.