



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Department of Engineering

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The public perceptions of hydraulic fracturing in County Leitrim

The topic of Shale Gas in the rural County of Leitrim in the Republic of Ireland has created controversy among the local population. The means of extraction known as hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” surrounds the debate. This thesis investigates the public perceptions of hydraulic fracturing in Co. Leitrim. The aim of this research is to critically assess the public opinion of these residents by analysing the local resident’s perspective on the fracking debate. The data used in this analysis will measure the public perceptions by conducting a sample survey to achieve quantitative statistical data.

Substantive data from the overall sample, as well as statistically significant differences between the groups of respondents are reported. The results contained in this thesis prove beneficial to members of the general public, community leaders, industry representatives, government & regulatory agency personnel, Environmental and non-government organisations, and other interested stakeholders.

Qualitative data via email, telephone and face to face interviews ascertained the views of the key stakeholders enabling a formal methodology for measuring public perception. By classifying this data into quantitative and qualitative results by a designed series of survey questions has allowed results to be achieved. The views of 300 random residents can then be projected to reflect the population. Population / location were selected by creating a multi stage selection based on the population per area. Methodology used the local census by means of creating primary sample units and select blocks proportionate to the population. The data demonstrate the level of awareness, support/opposition and source of information, type of information that have influence the Leitrim public perceptions.

As the study reflects the first of its kind, recommendations for further research have been made throughout. The concluding note highlights some of the limitations that would be to be considered for further research.

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