12 Implications for climate research and policy studies

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Introduction

The multi-field approach was initially developed to examine climate policy change in one country, Norway (Boasson 2015), but in this book, we have shown how it can be applied to a much broader range of countries. While many excellent books on public policy focus on one rather narrow topic and contribute to one research frontier, this volume has been planned as more of a cornucopia, providing contributions to a broad range of ongoing scientific discussions. This chapter shows how the main conclusions emanating from Chapter 11 contribute to social science discussions on Europeanization, public policy processes, climate transitions and more.

EU implementation and Europeanization research have blossomed – but still we lack analytical tools necessary to answer a crucial question: *Under which conditions does EU steering have the most profound impacts on domestic developments?* With its conceptualization of the ‘European environment’, the multi-field approach used in this book opens up a new research frontier with precisely this question at the centre. Further, by introducing temporality into Europeanization studies, the contributions to this collection enhance our ability to examine the various ways in which Europeanization may affect domestic policy developments.

The existence of many public-policy frameworks has facilitated the emergence of multiple parallel research traditions, but the perennial competition among the dominant frameworks obstructs scientific progress with respect to central questions such as: Under which conditions are corporate actors and civil service the most influential? When do political actors have independent importance, and act not only as instruments for other actors? The multi-field approach enables us to explore such questions in a nuanced way. It also opens up for a broader range of temporal change patterns than the ‘long periods of stability, short periods of rupture’ storyline so characteristic of policy studies.

Finally, many analytical approaches present climate-transition processes as dominated by neatly compartmentalized economic-technological changes, with key actors behaving in economically rational and easily predictable ways. In this book, we have shown that climate transitions tend to be complex, chaotic and partly opaque, with key actors having a hard time determining their preferences.

Rather than encouraging researchers to compromise on crude simplifications, the multi-field framework allows for assessments that consider real-world intricate conditions. It opens up for a wide diversity of behavioural patterns, pays attention to political and cultural-institutional factors and provides analytical tools for examining and capturing climate transitions in coherent and realistic ways.

Bringing temporality into Europeanization research

This book confirms some of the findings from the new wave of EU-implementation research while adding new elements to our understanding of Europeanization and EU implementation – in particular, by enabling us to consider the analytical implications of the temporal dimensions of Europeanization.

Early studies of EU policy implementation focused primarily on legal compliance with EU rules. This research tradition eventually expanded to include a broader range of domestic effects of EU steering (see Héritier 2001; Mastenbroek 2005). For instance, Eva Thomann and colleagues have shown that EU rules tend to undergo change during the process of domestic transposition: as a result, implementation of EU policies may in itself spur differentiation (Thomann 2015, 2019; Thomann and Sager 2017). Our findings support this: in all our six case-study countries, *domestic conditions have played a major role in determining the effects of European impulses*. This has been especially clear in periods where the EU has had little formal authority and vertical pressures towards Europeanization have been modest. For instance, the receptiveness of Norway and Sweden to EU-level campaigns for electricity certificates helped to ensure that these two Nordics ended up with a far more technology-neutral support mix than other countries. Differences in how specific EU rules are interpreted and transformed during the implementation process can help to explain cross-country differences, but that is far from the only reason why Europeanization creates differences across countries.

Second, *we have shown that both vertical and horizontal Europeanization play into domestic policy developments, and that both dimensions must be taken into account in order to understand why the European environment contributes to differences and similarities across countries*. These findings are in line with the conclusions reached by Israel Solorio and Helge Jörgens (2017) in their assessment of the Europeanization of renewable energy policy. The European environment has played into the developments in all countries, but at varying times, in differing ways and with surprisingly varied consequences. In most countries, the support mixes have been affected by vertical as well as horizontal Europeanization. In the early stages, vertical and horizontal change impulses tended to have opposing effects: the European Commission (the Commission) promoted technology-neutral support, while at the same time the technology-specific German scheme diffused widely. Here, lack of consistency across the two dimensions spurred differentiation. However, after 2010, both dimensions underpinned the shift to feed-in premium combined with auctioning, although the effects of this have been less pronounced in Norway and Sweden. By examining both Europeanization dimensions, we gain a fuller understanding than if we had focused on only one of them.

Third, *the effects of strong EU top-down steering (high degree of vertical Europeanization) is higher when it occurs in tandem with one policy idea gaining popularity across Europe (high degree of horizontal Europeanization)*. The importance of what we have termed the European environment increased after 2010, when the EU gained more authority as regards the design of support schemes, and one specific support-scheme mix became dominant. While others have juxtaposed the effects of horizontal and vertical Europeanization (see Börzel and Risse 2012), we explore the relationship *between* the two. Each of the two dimensions can be effective on their own terms, but the overall Europeanization effect tends to be stronger when they work in conjunction. However, it is by no means necessary for horizontal Europeanization to be strong in order for vertical Europeanization to produce consequences, or the reverse. For instance, EU rules gained greater salience after 2010 – but it had been relevant also in earlier stages when it was not combined with strong horizontal Europeanization.

Fourth, *we gain a more thorough understanding of how Europeanization processes affect domestic policy developments when the temporality of the process is taken into account*. The literature on EU implementation (see review in Thomann 2019; Saurugger 2014: 123–144) as well as the literature on Europeanization more broadly (Börzel and Risse 2012; Saurugger 2014: 123–144) has been fairly static, dominated by intense scrutiny of brief snapshots of Europeanization, without following Europeanization over longer stretches of time. Because there has been so little stability in EU renewables support steering (see Boasson 2021, this book), examination of brief snapshots would give limited understanding of how the EU affects domestic renewables support. There is no reason to assume that renewables policy is special in this respect: the EU operates with a broad policy portfolio, repeatedly revising and transforming most of these policies (Chini and Borragán 2015). A better understanding of the temporal character of Europeanization may facilitate studies of differences in the importance of the European environment across issue-areas.

The temporal character of how domestic developments have interrelated with developments in the larger European environment was found to differ across our six case studies, but we can also note some commonalities. From our comparative case studies, we can specify four Europeanization processes with different temporal dimensions, probably also with different long-term consequences for policy developments. Table 12.1 presents these four temporal patterns: layered Europeanization, frozen Europeanization, shallow Europeanization and shielded Europeanization.

Layered Europeanization has dominated in France, while also playing out to a more moderate extent in Norway. In France, the European environment has repeatedly influenced domestic-level developments; later effects added to, rather than replaced, earlier policies. Two horizontal Europeanization effects were important to France: UK inspiration led the country to adopt tendering in the mid-1990s, and Germany inspired it to adopt feed-in a few years later. After 2005, vertical Europeanization gradually became more important, first when the advent of binding targets underpinned domestic ambitions, and second when the new

Table 12.1 Four temporal Europeanization processes

<i>Europeanization process</i> <i>Factors and countries</i>	<i>Layered</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Shallow</i>	<i>Shielded</i>
Role of the European environment	Repeated high impact	High impact initially, but not later	Causes repeated change, but none become institutionalized	Small
Degree of stability and change determined by	Domestic and European factors	Domestic factors	European factors	Domestic factors
Countries	France, Norway	Sweden	Poland	Germany, the UK

EU state-aid guidelines influenced the shift to feed-in premiums combined with auctioning. This resembles what Wolfgang Streek and Kathleen Thelen (2005: 24) describe as layering, where ‘active sponsorship of amendments, additions, or revisions to an existing set of institutions’ and new elements ‘[set] in motion dynamics through which they, over time, actively crowd out or supplant by default the old system’. Layering involves amendments, revisions or additions to existing support measures (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 16). While Thelen and colleagues focus on domestic causes to layering, we include only layering that results from Europeanization processes here. Most countries have renewables support mixes that reflect several layers of domestic policy outputs, but in France the layering has resulted more specifically from differing Europeanization effects over time.

Differing Europeanization signals have also led to layered Europeanization in Norway. First, weak vertical Europeanization, combined with some horizontal inspiration from Sweden, caused it to adopt an electricity certificate scheme. Later, horizontal Europeanization contributed to the introduction of a very modest investment support for small-scale solar, whereas the EU decision to drop binding targets for domestic renewables underpinned the decision to not include new projects in the certificate scheme after 2021.

Frozen Europeanization occurs in Sweden and differs from layered Europeanization in that the initial impulse for change came primarily from the European environment, whereas later European processes of change hardly affected domestic-level developments. This is a well-known phenomenon in institutional theory: initial developments create feedback effects that lead to increasing stability over time. In the words of Paul Pierson (2004: 11) ‘dynamics triggered by an event or process at one point in time reproduce themselves, even in the absence of the recurrence of original event or process’. Swedish policy-makers were initially influenced by EU-level actors to adopt green certificate schemes; this approach eventually became entrenched at the national level. Because the initial impulse for change was strongly institutionalized, Sweden later became basically immune

to later shifts and changes in the European environment. Indeed, the incremental changes in its domestic support mix resulted mainly from feedback effects and dynamics in the domestic political and organizational fields, not those at the European level. In Norway, the effects of the certificate scheme idea gradually undermined the certificate scheme while in Sweden, having politicians committed to the measure ensured stability.

Shallow Europeanization occurs when a country changes policies in response to vertical and horizontal Europeanization, without institutionalizing the new rules and practices. We detect this type of Europeanization in Poland. While both frozen and layered Europeanization resemble temporal mechanisms as described by historical institutionalist scholars, shallow Europeanization is more in line with the perspectives of sociological institutionalism. Domestic policy-makers introduce new support schemes because they aim to maintain legitimacy, not because they aim to increase domestic renewable energy production (DiMaggio and Powell [1983] 1991; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Actual developments within the organizational field of electricity production are largely decoupled from the renewables policy discussion, so new support schemes rarely gain a foothold (Brunsson 1989). We have noted the lack of institutionalization and thus constant instability and change in Poland. It has been very receptive to signals of change, in terms of horizontal trends and vertical EU steering – resulting in profound instability. Also, the UK has been marked by instability, but whereas that was caused largely by domestic actors changing preferences, Polish instability has been spurred primarily by shifting signals regarding Europeanization. The renewables support changes resulting from Europeanization remain shallow in Poland and thus inherently open to new shallow changes. Because few successive support-scheme mixes have led to renewables investments and the organizational field has remained rather unchanged, they are not institutionalized.

Finally, *shielded Europeanization* played out in the UK and Germany. Despite significant differences between them, there are intriguing similarities in how they relate to Europeanization of renewables support. In both the UK and Germany, the domestic support schemes for renewables have inspired other countries and EU legislators, whereas the development of domestic policy seems generally unaffected by either vertical or horizontal Europeanization. Hence, both countries are entangled in broader processes of Europeanization, although it is difficult to specify the exact effect of these processes on domestic-level developments. However, the two countries differ as regards why they are shielded from being heavily affected by the European environment. Whereas German governments have worked hard to obstruct EU steering, engaging in repeated litigation, British governments have generally acted in line with broad EU rules. Therefore, neither the Commission nor the CJEU has actively challenged British practices, whereas German governments have repeatedly been involved in litigation, fighting hard to avoid having to change their practices because of EU steering.

Still, Germany and the UK resemble each other in the sense that change and stabilities in their support schemes result mainly from domestic factors. True,

there have been some instances of EU-level developments affecting domestic processes in both countries – with respect to the adoption of small-scale feed-in support in the UK and the post-2010 changes in Germany – but also in these cases, domestic actors have been the most important, acting in tandem with the Europeanization pressures.

On this backdrop, we can develop four expectations that can be explored within other issue-areas:

- A country entangled in layered Europeanization will repeatedly add new elements to its policy in line with changes in vertical and horizontal Europeanization processes. Stability and change in domestic-level policy developments will result from domestic as well as European factors and processes.
- A country entangled in a frozen Europeanization process will hardly be influenced by ongoing processes of change in the European environment – as long as its rules are in line with EU rules. Whether the policy area is characterized by stability or change will depend mainly on domestic factors.
- A country entangled in a shallow Europeanization process will repeatedly change its policy in line with changes in vertical and horizontal Europeanization processes. Stability and change will depend largely on European developments.
- A country entangled in shielded Europeanization will not be particularly influenced by vertical and horizontal Europeanization processes. Stability and change in domestic policy developments will result primarily from domestic-level factors and processes.

The organizational field lens shows how culture and structure shape policy

While it is common to assume that economically powerful corporations will be superior in policy development, this has rarely been so with developments regarding renewables support in our six case-study countries. True, cultural-institutional and structural features play key roles in policy development, but not in the same ways that many political science theories would have us believe.

Firstly, although we conclude that organizational fields tend to be more important when they are segmented, we also show that the importance of organizational fields should not be overestimated, not even under conditions of segmentation. We find two instances where organizational fields were *not* important when segmented (Poland before 1999, Sweden after 2010), and many examples of segmented fields that have only been moderately influential when segmented. In France during 2000–2004, France and the UK during 2005–2009, Sweden during 2005–2009 and 2010–2016, as well as Germany after 2010, political dynamics reduced the importance of segmented organizational fields, causing developments that partly or fully contrasted with the positions of dominant organizations, public as well as private, within the segmented organizational fields. This indicates that the importance of segmented organizational fields

depends partly on developments in other involved fields, especially within the domestic political field.

Moreover, we detect a 'segmentation spurring ministerial governing' tendency, which means that policy development relating to segmented organizational fields often are dealt with by one ministry, and not the political field more broadly. Under such conditions, we can expect major political decisions to be resolved through negotiations among organizational field-level actors, and not through open political deliberations. Note that this does not necessarily imply that the commercial organizations necessarily have the upper hand; public governments may also be influential in such a situation. Moreover, this is only a tendency, not a rule. It may require considerable effort, but politicizing issues under such conditions is far from impossible. Indeed, we find many examples of political dynamics gaining salience also in relation to issues pertaining to segmented organizational fields.

Secondly, changes in institutional logics over time help to explain policy change over time, and differences in institutional logics across countries help to explain differences across countries. Our study, with its long time-perspective, has clearly shown that organizational field actors do not tend to have stable positions over time. Rather than acting on the basis of calculations of economic interests, actors draw on differing institutional logics; when these logics change, actors also tend to change their interest perceptions. With the exception of Poland and Sweden, the domestic support mixes after 2010 have largely reflected the institutional logics dominating the organizational fields. For instance, shifts and changes in the technology-specific approaches of Germany and France after 2010 resulted partly from changes in the dominant institutional logics. In both countries, the technology-development logic and market logics merged to some extent, and the level of institutional conflicts decreased. Also, in the UK we can note a shift in logic, but there it caused a change away from technology-neutrality and towards technology-specificity. The clear exception is Poland, where actors in the organizational field have paid less attention to design features, focusing instead on distorting long-term stability and thus preventing the schemes from creating deep changes. In Sweden, changes in logics at the organizational field level have had less impact on the support mix.

While institutional logics have gained traction in business studies after 2005, to the extent that it has become established as a research school in its own right (Ocasio et al. 2017), we are (to our knowledge) the first scholars to apply this approach to explore policy stability and change. This has proved very fruitful, leading us to conclude that cultural-institutional features may well be more important than generally recognized in the literature on energy and climate governance.

As organizational fields of electricity production tend to be segmented, we find limited variation in the degree of segmentation across cases in this study. For more general insights into the role of organizational fields across policy areas, we need studies of other policy areas, where organizational fields have other characteristics.

Political dynamics can spur change but also ensure stability

The *political field perspective* fills a void in sociological field studies, as well as in studies of policy processes. Sociologists who study fields have generally paid scant attention to politics; and, although political scientists are understandably far more interested in politicians, there is no tradition of exploring the relative importance of political fields for policy developments. Scholars of comparative politics tend to focus on one aspect of the political field at a time (such as the election system or patterns in legislative voting), and these studies are rarely related to policy developments. Students of policy processes as well as historical institutionalists tend to assume that politicians play marginal roles within stable policy areas, whereas infrequent moments of change are associated with rare bursts of high political activity (Baumgartner et al. 2018; Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Herweg et al. 2018). These brief periods of change are described in slightly different ways and have been given various names, such as ‘punctuated equilibrium’ (Baumgartner and Jones 1993), ‘critical junctures’ (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007) or ‘window of opportunity’ (Kingdon [1984] 2011). In this book, we have documented temporal features of policy-change process other than those prescribed by such perspectives, and we find that the political field has played another role than these perspectives would lead us to believe.

First, we show that under certain conditions, political actors and political dynamics can influence domestic policy developments rather independently of what goes on in adjacent fields. The multi-field approach does not rest on *a priori* assumptions concerning the relative importance of the political field, but it predicts that political fields will play varying roles under differing circumstances. This enables us to assess and understand variance in the role of political dynamics across issue-areas, countries and time. We find that political parties, governments and legislators are *not* mere agents of voters and/or powerful economic actors, or carriers of domestic regulatory traditions. Rather, they can have independent importance and their behaviour is to a certain extent affected by the social architecture of the political fields, and both cognitive scripts and the distribution of structural powers can be relevant here.

Brief politicization leads politicians to approach a given issue in a very different way from what they had done previously, and that can be enough to ensure that political field dynamics overrule impulses from the organizational fields. If an issue becomes salient and thus politicized, this often leads to change – as we can see in the 2005–2009 phase, where the growing salience of climate change in general, and renewables more specifically, led to the adoption of a range of support schemes for small-scale renewables projects in many countries. Moreover, in Norway and France, changes along the salience dimension primarily affected the development of support schemes for large-scale renewables projects.

Second, wide distribution of structural resources tends to make the political field more important. Germany and Sweden are the only countries where the political field has played a major role for policy development over a long period.

Both countries have political fields with significant distribution of structural resources; further, several ministries share responsibility for renewables policy issues, and there are strong parliaments and often-unruly parliamentary situations where several political parties share majority power. These conditions seem to underpin more enduring engagement on the part of political actors. While political salience can give the political field importance in brief periods, it alone cannot ensure that the political field will remain important for longer stretches, unless the relevant structural resources are distributed.

The effect of the structural dimension was slightly different in the UK from the other countries: here the role of the political fields appears considerable also when formal powers are gathered in one strong party in government – whereas, in other countries, having distributed structural resources served to enhance the importance of the political fields. In several of our case-study countries, aspects of the structural dimension in the field change over time, such as how many ministers share responsibility and whether the government is in the majority – but we do not find similar variation over time in the UK. Indeed, the British election system seems to produce a political field with structural dynamics other than those in the other countries in our sample.

Third, political field dynamics can ensure both change and stability in policy development. Political actors and political dynamics play different roles in the policy-change processes presented in this book from what tends to be captured by studies guided by the dominant policy process frameworks and historical institutionalism. Historical institutionalist accounts generally show that policy stability results from social structures outside the political field, such as the governmental apparatus and interest groups that depend on a certain policy outcome (Pierson 2004; Moe 2015). In multi-field language: such studies show that policy feedback effects within the organizational field tend to sustain or create incremental changes in a policy area over time. Both historical institutionalism and policy-process framework usually see periods of dramatic change – termed ‘critical junctures’, ‘punctuated equilibriums’ (Baumgartner and Jones [1993] 2009) or ‘windows of opportunity’ (Kingdon [1984] 2011) – as times when politicians become more active. All these approaches lead us to expect that the political field can only drive change, not ensure stability; further, that when politicians become highly involved, they will aim for change.

There is nothing in our findings to indicate that the political field cannot drive change through brief, dramatic and intense periods of political involvement. Indeed, we saw some examples of this, for instance in Norway in the 2005–2009 period, when conflicts at the level of the organizational field led the issue to be politicized, and the political field finally ensured a change in policy. The introduction of feed-in for small-scale renewables projects in the UK in that same period also resulted from such brief politicization. But on the whole, few of the salient twists and turns in policy have been characterized by brief, dramatic and intense periods of political involvement. Indeed, policy changes taking place outside the political field can be very important: this goes for most of the many changes in

the UK and Poland, as well as for the initial introduction of technology-neutral support in Sweden, and the policy change in Norway after 2010.

Moreover, we have found that strong involvement of the political field in policy developments can help to create stability – sometimes even ensuring policy stability despite change-impulses within the organizational field. This was particularly clear in Sweden and in Germany, where many politicians worked hard for years, trying and succeeding to obstruct policy change. Thus we can conclude that both low political salience and high political salience may lead to change, or to stability.

Fourth, policy development may unfold in many different temporal patterns. The temporality of the policy change described in this book differs from standard accounts guided by historical institutionalism, punctuated equilibrium theory (Baumgartner and Jones [1993] 2009) and multiple streams theory (Kingdon [1984] 2011). All these approaches assume a similar temporal pattern of policy development, where long periods of stasis are interrupted by short periods of hectic change. None of our six countries developed its renewables support mix in ways that fit this description. For Sweden, we found no distinct periods of brief, dramatic and intense change: and the only period with intense political conflict, post-2010, led to stability, not change. In the five other countries there were many periods of change, often occurring five to eight years (or fewer) after the previous significant change. Overall, developments in support to renewables have been characterized by enduring change; and incremental or abrupt changes have often occurred in rapid succession, not after long stable periods.

On this backdrop, we conclude that in order to make sense of policy change and stability, we need to be open to temporal patterns other than the dominant ‘long periods of stability, short periods of rapture’ storyline. Further, we must stop equating high political involvement with change, and low involvement with stability.

Lessons for climate and energy policy and transition studies

Energy and climate policy processes may indeed be messy. Still, it is possible to understand them, especially when the political and cultural-institutional aspects are recognized. Technological and economic factors are important, but they alone cannot explain similarities and differences across countries. Actors embedded in different social fields tend to understand and respond differently to similar technological and economic factors. Yes, economics and technology clearly matter – but when push comes to shove, it’s the politics and the culture, *stupid!*

We have followed up the call from transition scholars as well as political scientists who have pressed for more attention to politics, and have recommended applying historical institutionalist approaches to capture the political dimensions of energy transitions (Andrews-Speed 2016; Geels 2014; Lockwood et al. 2017; Rosenschöld et al. 2014). They are correct in arguing that historical institutionalism offers promising analytical concepts that can help in explaining the role of

politics in climate transitions, but our findings indicate that this approach also has limitations. Neither the role that historical institutionalism prescribes for politicians nor the temporal patterns of policy stability and change over time fit with the actual empirical patterns we have identified.

Politics, both nationally and at the EU level, are of profound importance. Although politicians may not often become deeply engaged in policy development, there are many exceptions. Politicians are not always instruments in the hands of powerful corporate actors: they can voice the concerns of marginal actors, they can come up with ideas on their own – and sometimes politics takes on its own dynamics, with unexpected results. This finding is probably not surprising for practitioners with detailed knowledge of climate and energy policy, but political science has lacked theory-based approaches that can help to explain such features of political life. Moreover, politicians tend to act in line with the cognitive scripts pertaining to political fields, so their behaviour may differ from the institutional logics pertaining to organizational fields. Persons unfamiliar with the cognitive scripts of the political field will struggle to understand why politicians act as they do.

We have shown that cultural-institutional features, such as institutional logics and cognitive scripts, influence how climate policy, politics and transitions can unfold. Few scholars have paid attention to how cultural-institutional features shape policy development, although there are some exceptions. Two of the editors of this volume have shown elsewhere that cultural-institutional features have played key roles in development of other climate policy areas, at the EU level as well as in Norway (Boasson and Wettstad 2013; Boasson 2015). In addition, sociologists have shown that such features have been crucial in other processes relating to climate mitigation. For instance, Ann Hironaka (2014) has highlighted how cultural change has underpinned the emergence of environmental organizations on the global scale; Andrew Hoffmann (2015) has shed light on how culture influences climate change debates. Those studies are interesting, but they do not assess the importance of cultural-institutional features for climate policy development specifically.

Limitations: material conditions, entrepreneurship, public support

We have highlighted the many advantages of the multi-field approach, but preparing this book has made us aware that it also entails some limitations and blind spots. Most importantly, the multi-field approach does not specify how and to what extent material conditions, entrepreneurship and public support play into and shape policy development. To examine these factors, we need to combine the multi-field approach with other approaches.

First, the multi-field framework does not help to specify the actual importance of material conditions, in terms of technological developments, existing infrastructure investments, technological change, fossil-fuel resources, renewables resources and other factors. While the case studies in this book indicate

that political processes may sometimes develop quite independently of technological and economic realities, there are limits to how long policy developments can remain decoupled from broader material developments, including material-economic conditions. For instance, support schemes that undermine the functioning of the existing electricity system, threaten the economy of the largest utilities, or reward renewable energy investors with far too-high profits, will eventually change. In this book, we have not systematically explored the interrelationships between such material conditions and social multi-field dynamics. Because they are so intertwined empirically, it is hard to determine the actual effect of physical and economic realities on the one hand, and social features and processes on the other. We hope that others will take up this challenge and contribute to a deeper understanding of such relationships.

Second, this book highlights cultural-institutional and structural features and does not explore the role of policy or institutional entrepreneurship. That means we do not capture extraordinary achievements resulting from single actors or small groups of actors aiming to punch above their weight in policy development processes, nor do we examine why some have failed while others have succeeded here. Given our focus on examining so many countries over so many years, we could not trace such micro-mechanisms. This does not imply that we regard all actors as ‘cultural dopes’, unable to come up with innovative ideas, or to work in unconventional ways in order to ‘get it their way’. Indeed, as Boasson (2015) has shown, multi-field explanations may be combined with examination of policy entrepreneurship.

Finally, we have not given deep consideration to shifts and changes in public support to renewable energy, or indeed to climate issues in general. This is a weakness, especially as resistance to renewables and other types of climate measures has increased after 2010. We hope that other scholars will take up the challenge and examine the relationship between political salience and popular support in greater detail.

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