1 Introduction

The political economy of coal¹

Michael Jakob and Jan C. Steckel

Why political economy matters

The goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions has been recognized on the international level, for instance within the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2015). The large majority of countries have stated their intention to contribute to this target in the form of voluntary “Nationally Determined Contributions” (NDCs) as well as national climate change strategies and plans.

Nevertheless, in many countries, we still observe substantial new investments in fossil fuel-based energy infrastructure, in particular coal-fired power plants. This development not only contradicts climate change mitigation targets but also carries substantial social costs, for example, related to public health issues arising from local air pollution. Taking these costs appropriately into account would make a transition to clean energy sources worthwhile for most countries even from a purely national short-term perspective (Rauner et al., 2020).

Policy makers frequently fail to adopt such “no-regret” options because political decisions on energy and climate policy are not exclusively driven by considerations to improve overall well-being but are also heavily influenced by special interests. These include, inter alia, public demand for low energy prices, lobbying from powerful interest groups, or the desire to create jobs and accelerate structural change. The extent to which such political issues hinder the transition toward a clean energy system crucially depends on the specific context, for example, a country’s endowment with fossil fuels, its potential for alternative energy sources, its industrial structure and public attitudes toward climate change.

Continued investments in coal-fired power plants would lock in emissions and impede the implementation of climate measures in the future, as this infrastructure has a lifetime of several decades. For instance, if all coal-fired power plants that are currently announced, planned or under construction were actually built, the 2°C-target would likely be out of reach (Edenhofer et al., 2018; Tong et al., 2019). In order to devise strategies that prevent such developments and instead highlight possible entry points for ambitious climate policies, it is useful to gain a better understanding of why individual countries currently

Figure 1.1 Emissions that can be expected from coal capacity (existing, under construction and planned) as of January 2021 for top 15 countries.

Note: Calculations of committed emissions are based on average historical values.

Source: Global Energy Monitor (2021).

build up carbon-intensive energy systems. Despite obvious benefits of climate change mitigation policies for the public good, particular interest groups might lose from more ambitious climate policy. They might even have the power to veto any reform that would change the status quo. In order to identify politically viable entry points into ambitious climate policy, one needs to understand the underlying political economy, that is, how the economic structure, the political institutions and the political environment shape policy outcomes.

Yet, the literature (see the “Different approaches to understanding political economy” section) usually looks into country-specific details of the political economy. In this book, we aim to disentangle the underlying factors of the political economy of coal. We present 15 different country studies that all follow the “Actors, Objectives, Context” (AOC) framework (Jakob et al., 2020, see the “The AOC framework” section), allowing to compare countries and draw some cross-country conclusions. The countries under consideration show broad variation in, for example, their levels of economic development, political systems, technological capacities and endowments with fossil as well as renewable energy sources. The countries included in these studies together cover more than 80% of the current global coal-fired capacity and coal-fired power plants that are under construction or planned, and about 85% of global coal production (cf. Figure 1.1).

We group countries into four characteristic country clusters as shown in Figure 1.2: (i) countries where coal use is already declining or that have adopted plans to phase out coal, (ii) established coal users with a long-standing history of coal-fired power generation, (iii) countries that are on the verge of adding substantial new coal capacities and (iv) countries that are important coal exporters. These groups are neither exclusive nor homogenous. For instance, some coal-exporting countries also consume substantial amount of coal (such as Australia), whereas others mostly target the export market (such as Colombia). Moreover, countries may aim to phase out mainly because of either climate concerns (such as Germany, or the United Kingdom) or as a result of market forces (such as Chile or the United States). Nevertheless, they exhibit important similarities that help to structure our analysis.

All studies were undertaken by authors who are experts in their fields and possess substantial knowledge on country-specific circumstances. Evidence was derived by semi-structured interviews as well as thorough analysis of publicly available documents (such as laws, regulations and government reports). To ensure that all case studies meet scientific standards, they have undergone a strict peer-review process. Intermediate project results have been discussed on multiple workshops in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

For each country, the respective authors systematically address the following questions: Which objectives are behind specific actors’ decisions to invest in coal? What have been reasons to phase it out or phase it in, respectively? Which narratives are used by coal incumbents? What is the role of vested interests versus economic factors?

Figure 1.2 Countries covered in this book sorted by country groups.

Note: Phase-out countries (Chile, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Bulgaria) and established users (China, India and Turkey); phase-in countries (Kenya, the Philippines and Vietnam) and export-oriented countries (Australia, Indonesia, South Africa and Colombia).

Comparing the single case studies – interesting in their own right – allows for identifying specific patterns and stylized facts that are valid across various jurisdictions. Understanding those patterns will help to identify entry points for policies that can effectively phase out coal. By systematically analyzing the political economy of coal across countries, this volume contributes to a better understanding of political influence and the mechanics of vested interests that go beyond coal and climate policy. The final chapter of this volume draws together insights from the individual case studies and discusses which roles specific actors, objectives and context factors play for the political economy of coal for each country group. These insights help to identify crucial entry points for coal phase-out policies that take into account country-specific circumstances.

Different approaches to understanding political economy

The study of the political economy of policy formulation, implementation and enforcement is firmly established in a range of policy fields, including, for example, trade (Grossman & Helpman, 2001) and environmental policy (Aklın & Urpeläinen, 2013; Keohane et al., 1998; Oates & Portney, 2003). Public policy scholars have advanced and empirically tested a range of theories of the policy process (Majone, 1975; P.A. Sabatier & Weible, 2014). These emphasize different factors, including the role of the construction of interests and policy learning of key actor groups (P. Sabatier & Weible, 2007), policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 1995) and institutional contexts (Ostrom, 2005). Gilens and Page (2014) point out the differing power of voter and interest groups in affecting policy

outcomes, with economic elites and organized business interest groups having higher influence than median income voters in the US context.

Research on the political economy of climate and energy policy often builds on insights from literature on the political economy of environmental policy developed in earlier decades. Oye and Maxwell (1994), for example, distinguished between “Stiglerian” settings, in which the beneficiaries of an environmental policy are well-organized and costs widely dispersed (thus making policy adoption more likely), and “Olsonian” settings, in which costs of regulation are concentrated but benefits are dispersed (making policy adoption more difficult due to free-riding problems in interest group formation). These considerations have also sparked a substantial amount of work examining how special interests lobby to achieve favorable regulation, for example, by providing contributions for electoral campaigns (Kim et al., 2016).

Previous studies on the political economy of climate and energy policy focused on explaining fossil energy system lock-in (Helm, 2010; Moe, 2010; Unruh, 2000) and on the challenge of transitioning toward a low-carbon energy system (Geels, 2014; Hochstetler, 2020). These studies identified a combination of powerful rent-seeking incumbent interest groups, technological infrastructures favoring fossil fuel use (such as grids built around large-scale coal and gas power production) and regulatory regimes stabilizing this configuration. Various studies have examined potential mechanisms by which transition toward more sustainable energy systems might be politically feasible, including notions of niche development of renewable technologies (Geels et al., 2017), polycentric governance approaches emphasizing decentralized efforts at sustainability transition (Ostrom, 2010; Urpelainen, 2013) and the role of building “green” constituencies that would counteract the interest of incumbent veto players (Aklin & Urpelainen, 2018). Concerning the latter, Meckling et al. (2015) argue that it is essential to build up renewable energy technology interest groups first, to enable more ambitious climate policy formation in later stages. Pahle et al. (2017) advance this line of research on climate policy sequencing by suggesting a typology of barriers to climate policy stringency and options to relax these over time. Hughes and Urpelainen (2015) develop a political economy model that emphasizes public opinion and special interests as drivers of economy-wide and sectoral policies.

In addition to research examining the strategic interplay of actors with diverse objectives in specific institutional and technological settings, a more recent line of research is systematically investigating a broader range of structural political economy factors by applying econometric techniques on large cross-country samples (Sam Fankhauser et al., 2015; Samuel Fankhauser et al., 2016; Lachapelle & Paterson, 2013; Tjernström & Tietenberg, 2008). Other studies explore support for different kinds of climate policy instruments (Rhodes et al., 2017), including the factors determining the adoption and level of domestic carbon pricing in-depth (Dolphin et al., 2016; Levi et al., 2020; Rafaty, 2018) or focus on carbon market design (Ervine, 2017; Jenkins, 2014) and revenue recycling (Carl & Fedor, 2016; Klenert et al., 2018).

Another recent line of research, which is closely related, synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights on the political economy of climate and energy policy. Biber et al. (2016) review the literature and discuss a long list of political economy factors influencing energy and climate policy. In a similar vein, Karapın (2016) identifies a range of structural and process factors in the literature and applies these in a comprehensive comparative case study on California, New York and the US federal level. However, neither proposes a generalized framework suited for organizing political economy analysis of climate and energy policy, which is the aim of this chapter. Finally, a meta-theoretical framework to analyze the interplay between techno-economic, socio-technical and political factors in energy system transitions is provided by Cherp et al. (2018).

The AOC framework

The AOC framework provides a flexible, generally applicable framework for comparative case analysis that simultaneously considers actors, objectives and context as potential drivers of policy outcomes. It follows the approach for building analytical frameworks outlined by Ostrom (2007) to allow for a flexible combination of different theories that consider individual subsystems and more specific causal effects that are relevant for the understanding of political processes. This framework could in principle be applied to describe a broad range of political economy issues and incorporate a range of disciplinary approaches, including political science, social choice and neoclassical welfare economics. Due to its focus on structural variables and the interplay between different actors, it is particularly well suited for the analysis of energy and climate policy. It adopts the perspective that energy and climate policies emerge from a complex interplay of a diverse set of actors, such as influential individuals, key ministries, industry groups, unions or voters, that all have different objectives as well as different means for influencing policy-making. It builds on the central assumption that policies reflect the objectives of those actors that have the greatest influence in the decision-making process. This general structure is especially valuable to conduct comparative case study work.

The framework to analyze the political economy of energy and climate policy builds on three central elements, (i) the relevant *actors*, (ii) their *objectives* and (iii) the *context* determining how a certain objective matters for each actor and how these actors can influence policy formulation.

Actors, objectives and context

First, the AOC framework aims at identifying the most important *actors* that influence the formulation of climate and energy policies. We divide this category into *societal actors* and *political actors*. Societal actors include unions, industry associations, civil society organizations and voters as well as international organizations and bi- and multilateral development banks. Political actors include, among others, political parties, the parliament, key ministries,

regulatory agencies and the president. While the behavior of political and societal actors is embedded within a set of formal and informal institutions constituting a society's polity, we suggest a strong focus on actors as a core unit of analysis because these are the driving forces of policy change or continuity. Choosing actors as a key unit of analysis is also helpful to facilitate empirical access to the field (e.g. via interviews, stakeholder analysis), and to consider strategies available to different actor groups in policy advice.

Second, the AOC framework entails establishing a list of *objectives* which matter for these actors. This perspective acknowledges that energy and climate policies are usually implemented with multiple policy objectives in mind (Edenhofer & Kowarsch, 2015; Jakob & Steckel, 2016), and that objectives and their prioritization differ across groups (Joas et al., 2016). The scientific literature has identified numerous trade-offs and synergies of energy and climate policies with other policy objectives, including economic costs and their distribution, industrial development, job creation, energy security considerations and ambient air quality. Hence, we assume that in general, each actor's stance toward energy and climate policy may depend on their relative weighting of several (but not necessarily all) of these policy objectives. For instance, environmental civil society organizations may be most concerned about environmental issues, unions about employment and wages and the private sector about profits. Yet, each of these groups may also care about other aspects more directly concerning other groups, such as distributional implications. We assume that for societal actors, these objectives matter directly (societal objectives) and that political actors are concerned about the interests of the societal actors they represent but may also have additional idiosyncratic objectives, such as being reelected or increasing their standing or power (political objectives). As an example, the ministry of the economy might be most responsive to the demands of key industries, while the ministry of the environment might be more amenable to lobbying by environmental NGOs. Which policies eventually are implemented will be determined by the complex interplay of the interests of these political actors mediated by political process dynamics. For the analysis, it is helpful to distinguish between objectives that are directly affected by energy and climate policy, such as low energy prices or security of supply, and those that relate in a more indirect fashion, such as employment and structural economic change.

Third, the AOC framework examines the general *context* in which policy-making takes place. In our formulation, context is a broad category, including economic, environmental, institutional and discursive aspects. Economic factors include, for example, the level of development, the economic structure (e.g. share of energy-intensive industries) or the energy resource endowments (e.g. fossil or renewable energy resource-base) of a country. Formal and informal domestic institutions structure both how societal groups interact with policy actors, and how formal policy decisions are being taken (e.g. electoral system, constraints on lobbying) and implemented. Beyond domestic institutions, the international embeddedness of a country may also matter for domestic climate and energy policy formation in varying forms and degrees (e.g. Paris

Agreement, access to international financial markets). Discursive factors include public opinion (e.g. the share of the population believing in global anthropogenic climate change, political polarization, or the level of government support) or the governance and behavior of media actors. Environmental factors include affectedness of a country or more specific regions by local (e.g. air pollution) and global (e.g. climate change) environmental problems.

Context matters in four ways. First, it specifies how specific policy objectives matter for individual societal actors (Oye & Maxwell, 1994). For example, the way in which profits matter for utilities likely depends on whether electricity generation is mainly carried out by private or state-owned companies (i.e. organization of the power sector). Second, context determines the form and degree in which societal actors have an influence on political actors (Gilens & Page, 2014). For example, the extent to which organized lobby groups can influence policy decisions can be expected to depend on the formal and informal forms of interest group representation, the prevailing level of corruption, political ideologies and trust in government. Third, context matters for how political objectives matter for individual political actors (Alesina, 2013). For instance, decision makers might be able to place higher importance on their personal influence in authoritarian regimes compared to more democratic settings. Fourth, context structures the form and degree of how these political actors can influence policy-making, implementation and enforcement (Cremer et al., 2008). For example, parliament chambers and ministries likely have different powers in presidential and parliamentary systems, and the power of political parties can be expected to differ between proportional and majoritarian electoral systems.

In applying the AOC framework, carefully characterizing the dynamic relationships and power structures determining political actors' objectives is important. These are shaped, first, by the objectives of societal actors that can influence political actors inhabiting formal positions of power in various ways (e.g. campaign financing, voting behavior). Second, distinct objectives of political actors such as ministries aiming at increasing their political power need to be accounted for as well. These also interact with the objective functions of other political actors (such as the president) via bargaining and power struggles in the policy process.

The AOC framework is based on the idea that decision makers can choose from a given set of policy packages. We presume that those policies will be implemented that best meet the objectives of those actors that have the most pronounced influence on policy formulation, implementation and enforcement, either directly in their role as political actors or indirectly, in the role of societal actors that can influence political actors. National as well as international context variables shape both the formation of objectives of actor groups, as well as the broader economic, institutional and discursive context in which they aim to advance them. In this sense, the AOC framework is based on the view that policies are supplied by decision makers to fulfill a demand by certain interest groups.

It does not presuppose a particular mechanism of how actors' interests are aggregated into policy outcomes in the policy process, as these will vary by context and are to be determined in empirical-descriptive studies. Due to its general structure, the AOC framework can accommodate a large variety of empirical settings and theoretical perspectives. These range from developing to developed countries, and from well-governed cases that achieve outcomes which in the welfare economic perspective can be considered to be close to the social optimum, to clientilistic regimes and interest group-based explanations of public policy in which policies are adopted to serve a narrow political and economic elite. The AOC framework does not assume rational policy design in the sense of an optimization procedure. It is applicable both in contexts where policies are implemented to predominantly serve the interests of those actors that have disproportional influence on policy-making, or in settings where the interests of majority (and minority) voter groups are shaping policy adoption.

Table 1.1 provides some examples of potential societal and political actors, as well as potential environmental, socioeconomic and strategic objectives relevant for climate and energy policy formulation. It also displays a number of factors that might matter for the techno-economic, institutional, discursive and environmental context. This list is far from being comprehensive. Instead, each individual country and policy package will require carefully examining which actors, objectives and context factors are relevant in a particular case.

Table 1.1 Examples of actors, objectives and context factors relevant for the political economy of climate and energy policy

<i>Societal objectives</i>	<i>Societal actors</i>
Environmental	Voter groups
Climate change mitigation	Unions
Local air quality	Energy-intensive industries
	Utilities
Socioeconomic	Resource owners
Economic costs and efficiency	Financial institutions
Employment and wages	Industry associations
Diversifying the economy,	Researchers, academia
structural change	Multi-national corporations, investors
Poverty alleviation	Civil society (e.g. NGOs, religious groups,
Social inclusion	local citizens)
Health	International NGOs
Distribution	
Public revenues and investments	
Profits	
Strategic	
Technology transfer	
Energy security, energy sovereignty	

(continued)

Table 1.1 Cont.

Political objectives	Political actors
Reelection	Influential individuals (e.g. president)
Increasing influence and political power	Key ministries and agencies (across different governance levels)
International standing	Political parties (e.g. via parliament)
	Regulators, implementing agencies
Context	
Techno-economic	
Economic situation (GDP, business cycle, fiscal deficit, population density, inequality,...)	
Fossil fuel endowments, dependence on fossil imports/exports	
(Global) market developments for fossil fuels and renewable technologies	
RE potential	
Grid infrastructure and existing generation capacities	
Industrial structure (e.g. share of manufacturing and energy-intensive industries)	
Institutional	
Organization of the power sector	
Representation of interest groups	
Political and judicial system (e.g. democracy, parliamentary vs. presidential, electoral system)	
Government capacity	
International agreements (climate, trade, investment, technology)	
Discursive	
Political events (champions for green policies, media attention, framing, socio-environmental conflicts, COP or similar event in country under consideration)	
Ideational factors (climate change knowledge, right-left polarization, international diffusion of ideas)	
Trust in government	
Environmental	
Vulnerability to climate change	
Focusing events (climate-related impacts, Smog episodes, power cuts)	

Combining the elements of the AOC framework

The interactions between actors, objectives and context are depicted in Figure 1.3. Let there be a number of a relevant *policy objectives* that matter for *societal and political actors*, denoted by O_1^S to O_a^S and O_1^P to O_b^P , respectively. The *context factors* are labeled C_1 to C_c . The weights α_{ik} state the importance of policy objective k for societal actor i . In a similar vein, we regard each political actor to have two sets of objectives: first, idiosyncratic objectives, such as ensuring reelection or increasing influence, where the weight political actor i puts on objective k is given by β_{ik} . Second, we regard societal actors as influencing political actors, such that the importance societal actor k has for political actor i is

Figure 1.3 Graphical representation of the AOC framework.

Table 1.2 Key elements of the AOC framework

Framework element	Notation
Societal actors' objectives	$O_1^S \dots O_a^S$
Political actors' objectives	$O_1^P \dots O_p^P$
Context factors	$C_1 \dots C_c$
Importance of objective k for societal actors i	α_{ik}
Influence of societal actor i on political actor k	β_{ik}
Weight of political objectives for political actors	γ_{ik}
Power of political actor k	δ_k
Policy packages	$P_1 \dots P_e$

given by weight γ_{ik} (if an objective or societal actor is not relevant for a certain political actor, the respective weight is zero). Finally, let us denote the degree to which political actor k , via the policy process, influences policy outcomes, implementation and enforcement by δ_k . We assume that all weights α_{ik} , β_{ik} , γ_{ik} and δ_k are determined by the context factors C_1 to C_c .

We denote the set of f possible policies (in the sense of policy packages that combine different instruments, such as taxes, subsidies, performance standards, transfer payments) that can be implemented by P_1 to P_f . Each policy will result in a specific outcome vector, over time, for each of the objectives of societal and political actors, i.e. O^S and O^P . Then, the *policy package* that yields the maximum political support at a given point in time will be chosen, implemented and enforced because it best meets the objectives of those actors that have the most influence on policy formulation.

The key aspects of this approach are summarized in Table 1.2. This approach can be regarded as an analogy to the comparative static approach in economic theory that describes how an equilibrium between supply and demand (in our case for policies) arises and allows an assessment of how this equilibrium would dynamically change as a result of changes in certain parameters of the system.

This approach can also be conceptualized to study the dynamic aspects of policy change and inertia due to resistance of powerful interest groups to change, creating path dependence and lock-in of fossil infrastructures. This can be achieved by including future outcomes in the list of societal and political actors' objectives in conjunction with how they form expectations on future developments. For instance, certain actors might strive for short-term objectives (such as influencing public opinion or changing the institutional environment), which do not directly meet their immediate priority objectives (such as profits or political power), but facilitate their achievement in the future.

Structure and purpose of this book

This integrated volume assembles 15 country case studies analyzing the political economy of coal. It is divided into four main parts, each of which includes case studies for a particular country category.

Part I discusses the political economy of coal in countries phasing out coal. Hermwille and Kyar explain how concerns about jobs, local economic activity and discontent in vulnerable regions as well as political power of trade unions have contributed to the late date and high public costs of **Germany's** coal phase-out. Pavlov illustrates that in **Bulgaria** alignment with EU policies constitutes one of the most important policy objectives. For this reason, the government is prepared to implicitly accept a coal phase-out that can be expected to result from EU climate policies, in particular rising carbon prices in the EU Emission Trading Scheme. As shown by DeStephano et al., in **Chile** climate change mitigation is seen important to advance international climate policy and local environmental movements have mobilized against coal. Nevertheless, affordable and secure electricity supply constitutes the government's prime objectives. Due to the country's substantial potential to produce low-cost renewable electricity, these objectives are well-aligned with climate change mitigation, making a coal-phase politically feasible. Walk et al. demonstrate how past efforts to reduce the power of unions have reduced employment in coal mining, and hence political support for coal use in the **United Kingdom**. The liberal power market, in which cost-efficient power generation is prioritized and renewable energy sources are supported by a carbon price signal, has led to rapid declines in coal use in recent years. Liu and Nemet provide a description of how in a liberalized power market increasingly cost-competitive renewable energy sources as well as natural gas are driving out coal in the **United States** despite the lobbying of vested coal interests.

Part II includes case studies on established coal users that struggle to phase out coal and even continue to invest in new capacities. For **China**, Han-Springer et al. point out how the political pressure for regional governments to fulfill economic growth targets incentivizes overinvestment in coal-fired power generation. These excess capacities are not only harmful from a climate perspective, but also economically wasteful. Montrone et al. highlight that in **India**, phasing out coal would entail substantial economic as well as health benefits. However, concerns about job losses concentrated in economically disadvantaged regions, revenue losses from coal transport by the Indian Railway, as well as the prospect of bad loans granted to coal-fired power plants jeopardizing the stability of the financial system make policy makers hesitant to curb coal use. Ayaz and Wiseman demonstrate how in **Turkey** energy policy-making is first and foremost conducted under the perspective of maintaining political control and the legitimacy of current regime. Thus, in exchange for political support, the government actively promotes coal mining and uses by means of financial incentives as well as provision of crucial infrastructure.

Part III features studies dealing with countries in which coal so far has played a (relatively) minor role, but which are planning to expand coal use in the future. Ayhan and Jacobs elaborate how in **Kenya** the ruling elites' vision of modernization and industrialization promote coal use. Yet, resistance by civil society against local environmental impacts has thus far successfully prevented the implementation of the government's plans. For the **Philippines**, Manych and

Jakob emphasize the key role of oligarchs dominating all aspects of economic life. These powerful vested interests have influenced energy policy in favor of relatively expensive coal, in spite of a liberalized power market. Dorband et al. analyze how in **Vietnam** a state-controlled electricity sector allows vested coal interests to exercise substantial influence on energy policy. This creates regulatory conditions that are highly disadvantageous for alternative energy sources, allowing the incumbent coal industry to fend off competition from increasingly cost-competitive clean energy sources.

Part IV assembles analyses of countries with a strong focus on coal exports. For the case of **Australia**, Christoff shows that there is a strong support for exported coal, whereas domestic coal use is increasingly challenged by low-cost renewables and environmental concerns. Puerto-Chaves and Corral-Montoya show that even though to date **Colombia** uses little coal domestically, its well-established export industry in combination with an economic structure geared toward extractive industries provide an impetus to expand domestic coal-fired capacities. These developments stand in stark contrasts to the country's declared interest to contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts. **Indonesia** is a further coal exporting country aiming to ramp up domestic capacities considerably. The chapter by Ordonez et al. argues that these plans are to a large extent driven by vested interests, such as politically well-connected owners of coal mines and regional governments dependent on royalties from coal extraction. In addition, expansion of coal capacities plays a key role in the president's plans to boost the country's economic development by means of infrastructure provision. For **South Africa**, Hanto et al. point out emerging support for renewable energies from liberal parts of the government, international investors and the civil society. Nevertheless, employment and revenues from coal extraction, combined with a powerful state-owned utility adverse to alternative energy sources as well as coal's close relation to black economic empowerment policies, provide powerful incentives for policy makers to delay a transition to clean energies.

In the final chapter, we offer some tentative conclusions that can be derived from these studies and discuss possible policy implications. Each case study on its own can provide important country-specific insights. We hope that – in addition to spurring research in countries that are not included in this volume – this rather unique compilation of case studies can also prepare the ground for future comparative work. Such a research effort might help to distill characteristic patterns of how specific constellations of actors, objectives and context factors influence policy outcomes in a systematic manner. The results would not only provide insights that are valuable from an academic point of view but might also be highly relevant to assist the design of coal phase-out policies.

Note

- 1 Sections “Different approaches to understanding political economy” and “The AOC framework” draw on the article Jakob et al. (2020). We gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce parts of the content from Elsevier.

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