FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING POLICY INTEGRATION

Policy Integration for Sustainability:
institutional perspectives and case studies
on the agricultural and energy sectors
in Sweden and the EU

PIntS

a four-year research programme by
Stockholm Environment Institute
Royal Institute of Technology
Umeå University, Dept of Political Science

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Pa294

Objectives of PIntS project

- Problem analysis: What is the status of policy integration? To what extent is there a problem? How is the principle expressed (or not) in practice in policy processes in Sweden, with a European outlook.
- Causal analysis: What are the key factors and conditions that facilitate or impede policy integration? A causal analysis.
- Prescriptions: What measures can be taken to facilitate more effective policy integration? Design recommendations for institutions and processes

Policy integration as learning

- Environmental Policy integration aims to change the outlook and hence the normative basis of decision-making towards sustainability
- Policy learning is enduring changes of thought leading to changes in policy objectives, instruments, or simply agendas and ideas
- In a functioning system, learning will take place daily, through increased understanding of parameters and causal relationships
- But – policy learning normally takes place *within* a particular policy frame (single-loop learning) and actors will resist information that imply core ideas are invalid / unattainable
- Under certain conditions, learning about core ideas *across* policy frames will take place (double-loop learning)
- EPI is an ideal state of learning where actors reframe their understanding of the sector's goals, strategies and activities in sustainability-related terms

Layers of belief systems

- Deep core; (metacultural frame)
  - basic criteria of eg distributive justice, beliefs about human relationship to nature, freedom, democracy
  - commonly shared views
  - *only changing over historical time periods*
- Policy core; (institutional action frame)
  - positions about basic strategies
  - overall seriousness of issues, priority groups of concerns
  - preferences on policy instruments, state-market, role of science
  - delimiting actor coalitions as basic political positions
  - *not easily given up - a non-incremental change*
- Secondary aspects (policy positions)
  - importance of various causal linkages
  - instrumental decisions on policy measures and levels
  - actors within coalition show less consensus
  - *routinely given up and adjusted in a policy process*

EPI – Cross-frame learning

Environmental Policy Integration:

'an ideal state of learning where a sector reframes its goals, strategies and activities in terms of sustainability"

--within frame or across-frame learning

in arguments: conceptual

in outputs: instrumental

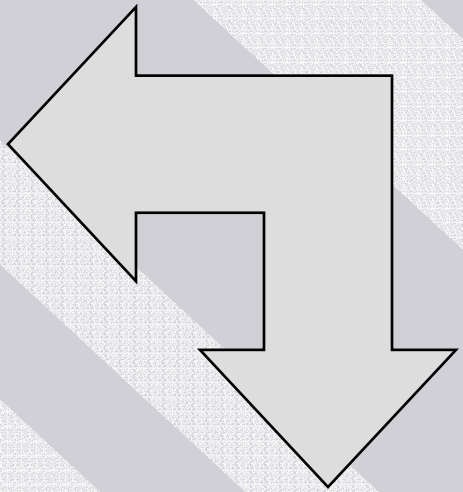
What factors influence policy integration?

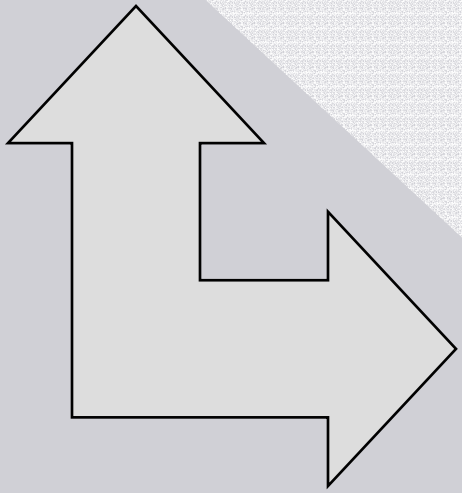
Policy-making rules

informal and formal rules

boundary rules

decision rules





Assessment processes

effectiveness and use

aspects of content

aspects of process

Background factors

National political context

- public opinion and political will
- electoral situation (coalitions and majorities)

International policy streams

- EU restrictions eg deregulation directives
- EU policy agenda
- UN Framework Climate Convention

Type of problem dealt with

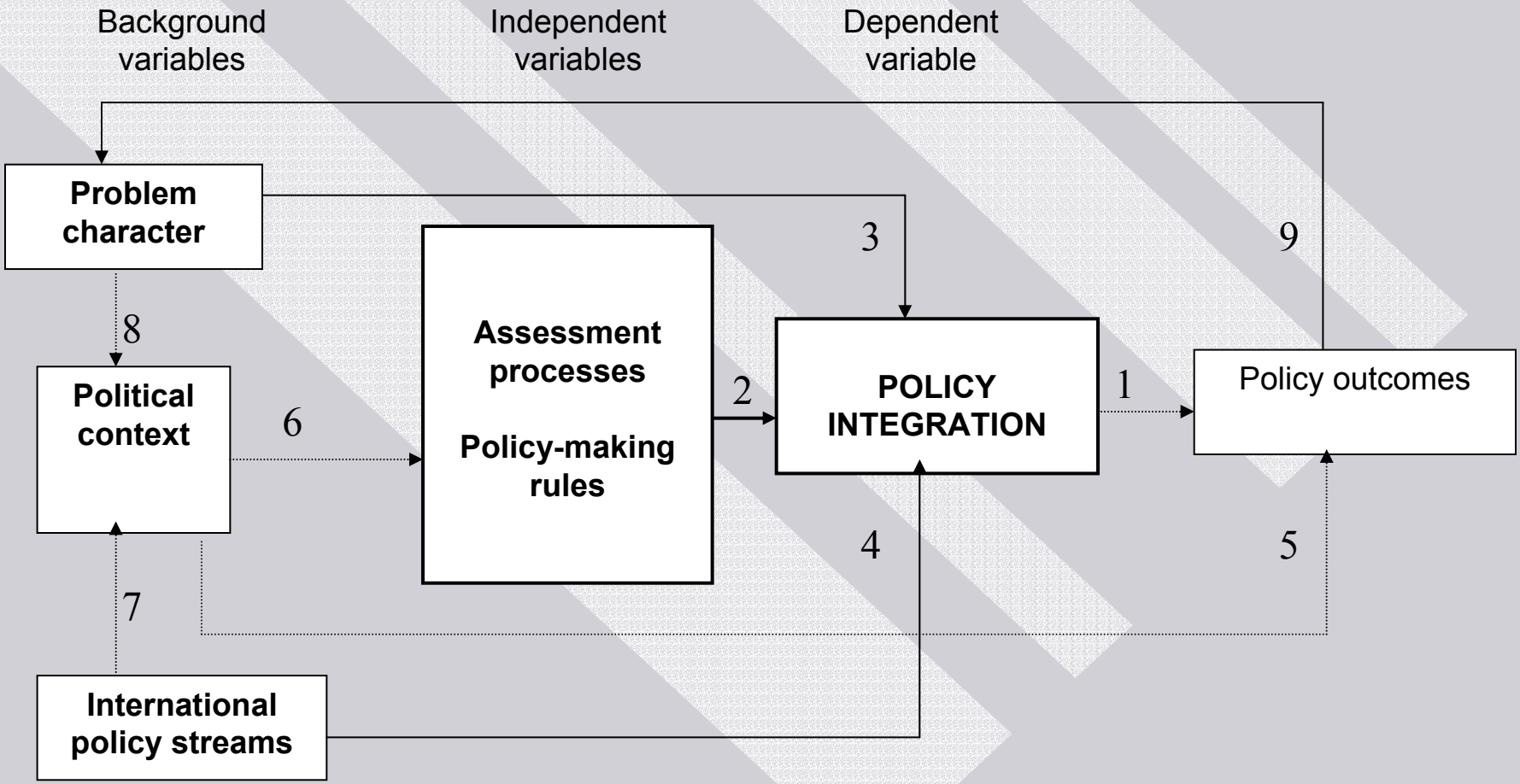
- analytical tractability: consensus on status vs uncertainty

(Problems for which accepted data and theory exist are more conducive to policy-oriented learning, Sabatier)

- conflict potential: low vs conflict potential high

(Problems of high conflict are malignant and bad for learning - Underdal)

Summary of analytical framework



Summary of approach

- A learning-based view
  - clearly delimiting some causal factors
  - based on concepts of policy networks, frames and ideas
  - combining process and outcome view on EPI
- Assessments and decision-making context interact
  - interacting organisational and procedural dimensions
  - paying attention to background factors
- Causal analysis leading to prescriptions
  - assessment designs
  - institutional recommendations

Assessments and policy-making through two lenses in energy policy

1. **How do actors in the policy system learn in the face of environmental knowledge?**

2. **Are there differences in learning across issues and across institutional contexts and how can this variability be explained?**

3. **What role do assessments have in contributing to policy learning and promoting EPI in different contexts?**

4. **What types of assessment designs seem effective in contributing to policy learning under different conditions?**

Empirical research

- Semi-formal analysis and process tracing
- Evolution ca 1988 to 2004 in Swedish policy
- Sectoral focus in energy and agriculture
- Analysis of contents of bills, proposals and strategies
- Qualitative text analysis
- Interviews

Interesting contrast

ENERGY

- Deregulations far gone
- Main networks dissolved
- Few major actors
- Centralised processes
- Price mechanisms
- National sets policy
- Air pollution and climate
- Concentrated environmental pressures

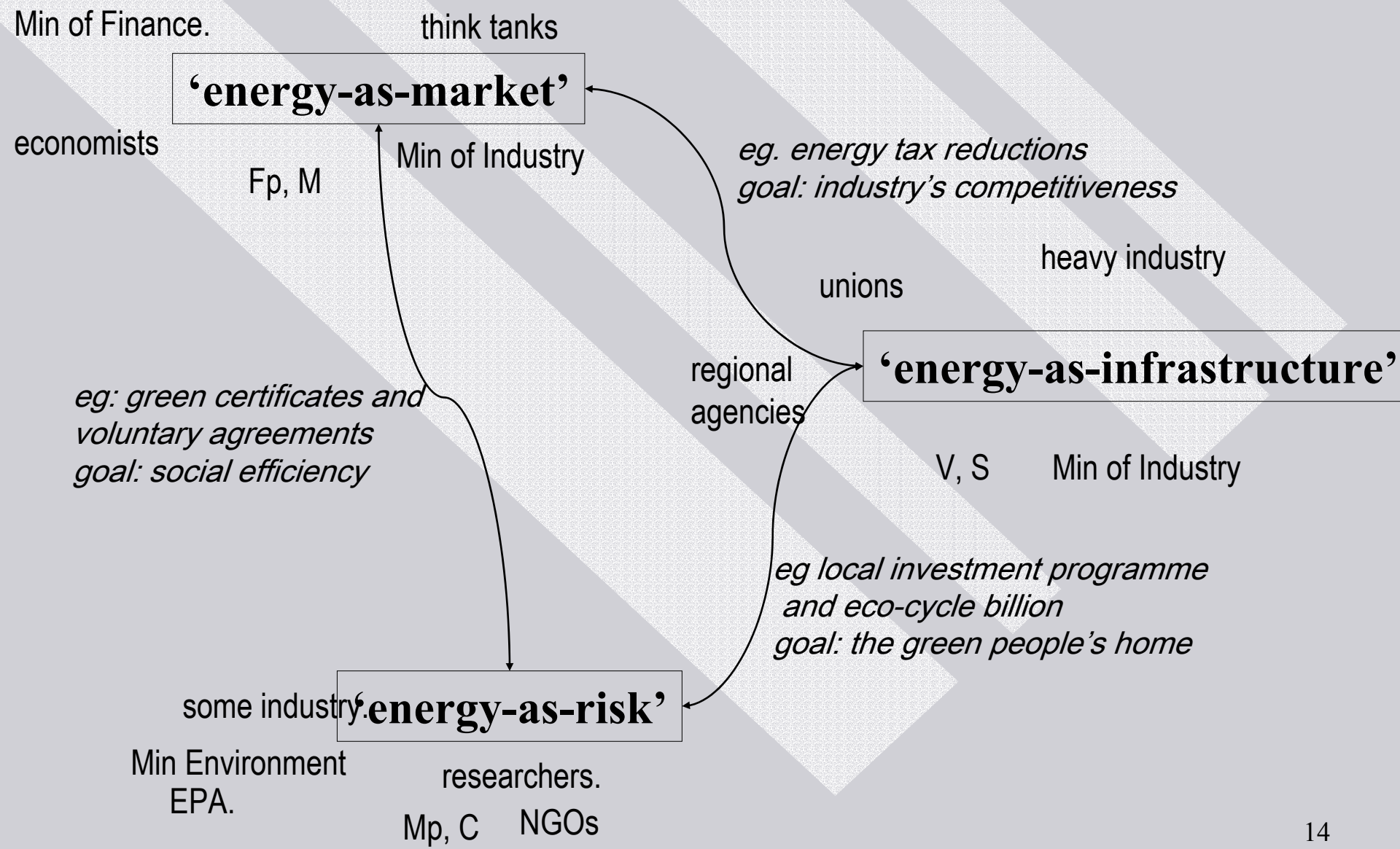
AGRICULTURE

- Still strongly regulated
- Corporatist features
- Many small actors
- Decentralised processes
- Subsidies / measures
- EU sets policy
- Landscapes and seas
- Diffuse environmental pressures

1. How do we learn?

- Three ways of framing the sector in the policy debate today
- Long term ideational change
- A new dominant frame but less stable today
- Learning across frames increasing – and is leading to policy integration
- Political tactics still restrict in the short run

Frames in energy policy



Learning in larger streams of change

- International policy streams
  - Deregulation and market integration has opened up networks to learning and innovation
  - EU coordination of instruments constrain policy in new ways and lead to new ways of framing issues
- Domestic context
  - Strong political will to control outcomes constrain learning processes
  - Ad hoc environmental priority without learning – ineffective solutions

2. Patterns of differences in learning?

- Differential learning is appearing at different levels of government
- Big gap between policy preparations and actual decision-making, due to negotiations for majority
- Institutional constraints
  - modes of policy-making – government is a war organisation
  - capacity and resource constraints and actors changing: incapsulations
  - turf mentality and logic of appropriateness
  - Integration increasingly difficult at higher political levels
- High conflictual issues and low conflictual issue are more difficult – optimal level of conflict for learning?
- High uncertainty not a barrier

3. Role of assessments for learning

- Strategic uses of knowledge not in conflict with learning but a basic premise
- Often, only one type of knowledge can be accommodated in any particular process
- Environmental-scientific system unable to provide useful integrative knowledge – irrelevant information is abundant
- Swedish model of committee system a powerful interface between knowledge and politics
- But success stories depend on committed and skilled individuals and are ad hoc – requirements are poorly enforced
- Constraints at political level: no matter how prominent assessment, it will not be read – the personal interaction is critical

4. Assessment designs for learning

- Argument coherence, rather than facts, are instrumental - get agreement on the story
- Monetary and quantitative studies are crucial, also in multi-actor deliberative settings
- A need for institutionalising rules that rejoin knowledge and policy-making
- Integrate the assessment with strategic interests so as to get a 'carrier': employment, regional development
- Careful allocation of responsibility and selection of participants

Conclusions: assessments for policy integration

1. Analyse the institutional context

- actor / network configurations
- decision process characteristics at the appropriate level
- key rationalities, frames and interests

2. Identify the role of the assessment in the process

- Scientific rationality model: help finding best solution;
  KNOWLEDGE ORIENTATION
- Argumentative model: towards new viewpoints, compromises, and learning
  NORMS ORIENTATION
- Negotiation model: support a particular perspective in a strategic battle;
  INTERESTS ORIENTATION

3. Adapt assessment process and content

- scope what is relevant and valid information in this context: 'the right science' and select analytical methods accordingly
- respect cognitive and capacity constraints
- integrate factors relating to strategic interests of decision-makers
- build a coherent argument – 'the science right'