

Advocacy Coalition Framework

Petr Ocelík

ESSn4007/ MEBn4001

14th January 2021

Outline

- Advocacy Coalition Framework
- Case study: Czech coal policy subsystem

Advocacy Coalition Framework

Policy process

- **Policy process:** a process through which the public policy (or its components) is produced, terminated, or revised
- Policy process is **shaped by:**
 1. interactions of **diverse actors** influenced by **institutional structures** (Ostrom 2014; Sabatier 1988)
 2. policy **discourses** and **frames** (Shanahan et al. 2011)
 - (number of more general structures and events)
- Different policy process theories tend to emphasize different dimensions of the policy process

Agency: bounded rationality

- Individuals are **goal-oriented** but have **limited** time, resources and cognitive ability to consider all information, solutions, etc. (Simon 1957, Cairney 2012)
 - they use **heuristics** to make “good enough” decisions
- Individuals rely on **beliefs** to decide to which information pay attention
 - Individuals (actors) tend to **act** according their **enduring beliefs** rather than according their short-term rational interests

Belief system

- Actors related to the world through **perceptual filters** (heuristics) based on **enduring beliefs**
- **Assimilation bias:** belief systems condition actors to accept and interpret policy-relevant information in way that supports their beliefs

| Type of Belief | Resistance to Change | Entrenchment | Example |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Fundamental core beliefs | Very resistant | Span multiple subsystems | Political Ideology |
| Policy core beliefs | Resistant | Subsystem wide | Effectiveness of policy instruments |
| Secondary beliefs | Most susceptible | Relate to area within a subsystem | Budgetary allocations |

Policy process and advocacy coalitions

- Policy process involves (1) **diversity of actors** and their **groups** and occurs (2) mostly at the level of a **policy subsystem** – subset of political system defined by issue area
- Actors perceive policy problems through a **system of policy beliefs** and struggle to translate their beliefs into policies
- **Advocacy coalitions** (1) share policy beliefs and (2) coordinate their efforts
- Dominant vs. minor **coalitions**
- Principal vs. auxiliary **coalition members**
- Policy **brokers**

Policy subsystem

- **Policy subsystem** is a subset of political system defined by particular issue area (Weible et al. 2016).
- # of coalitions, patterns of coalition's beliefs and coordination → **three different types of subsystems**

Table 1 – Three policy subsystem types.

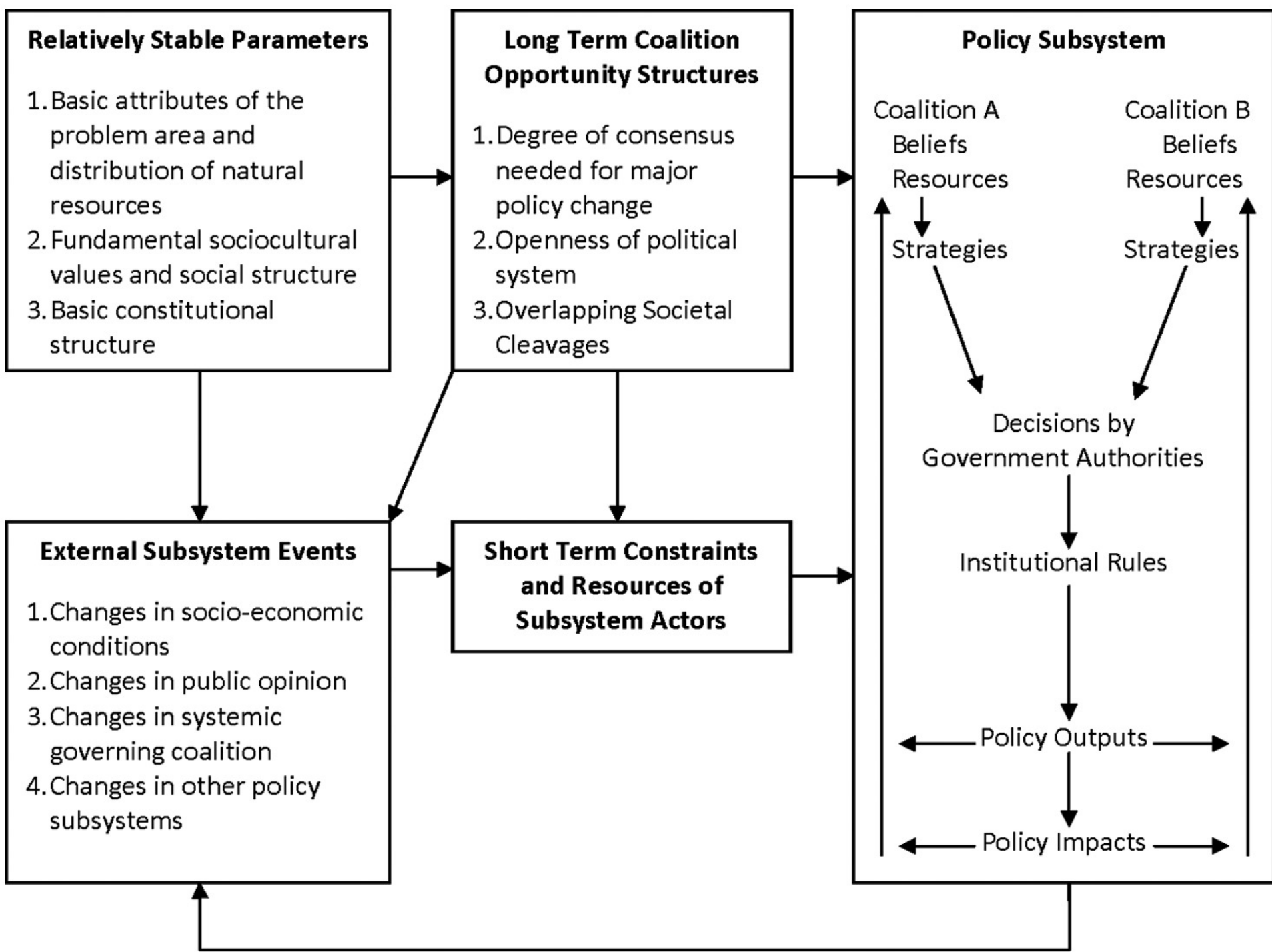
| | Unitary subsystems | Collaborative subsystems | Adversarial subsystems |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coalitions | Dominant coalition with high intra-coalition belief compatibility and high intra-coalition coordination | Cooperative coalitions with intermediate inter-coalition belief compatibility and high inter and intra-coalition coordination | Competitive coalitions with low inter-coalition belief compatibility and high intra-coalition and low inter-coalition coordination |
| Degree of Centralization and Independence | Authority is centralized and interdependence with other subsystems ignored | Authority is decentralized, fragmented across policy subsystems, or both. Coalitions share access to authority. | Authority is centralized but fragmented within the policy subsystem, fragmented across policy subsystems, or both. Coalitions compete for access to authority |
| Venues | Coalition influences decisions in one or two amiable venues (legislature, agencies) | Coalitions attempt to keep decisions within inclusive, consensus-based institutions | Coalitions seek to influence decisions in any amiable venue (courts, legislatures, agencies) |

Policy change

- **Major PC:** changes in the core aspects of the policies
- **Minor PC:** changes in the secondary aspects of the policies

Four **pathways** to policy change:

1. **External events:** changes in government, disasters, crisis, etc.
2. **Internal events:** actor collapses, corruption affairs, etc.
3. **Policy-oriented learning:** gradual change in coalition beliefs reflecting new information
4. **Negotiated agreement:** resulting from collaborative institutions or hurting stalemate



Advocacy Coalition Framework: A Case of Czech Coal Policy

Case study: Czech coal policy

- brown coal production accounts for 46% of TPES and 51% of electricity mix
- it is concentrated in the Sokolov Basin and the **North Bohemian Basin**
- the **territorial mining limits** has been established by **government decree** in 1991

stakes:

- a lifting of “the limits” became a key issue in energy policy since then
- **transition pathway** to decarbonized economy very much depends on the future of coal



Adversarial subsystem

- Defined by (1) **competing coalitions** with (2) low inter-coalition belief compatibility and (3) high intra-coalition and (4) low inter-coalition coordination (Weible et al. 2010: 524)
- Further expected: **coalitions compete for access to decision-making**
- Further expected: (some) experts are principal allies or opponents of the coalitions → **high political use of expert info between coalitions**

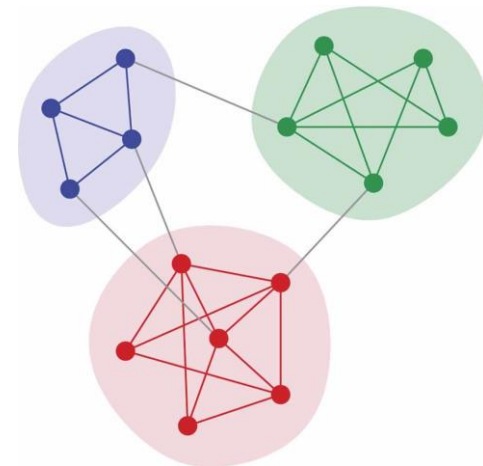
Advocacy coalition detection

1. Shared policy core beliefs

- normative assumptions on how specific **policy field** ought to be organized
- captured by 4 Likert-type scales:
 - **economy:** costs/benefits of coal, regional development
 - **environment:** environmental and health impacts
 - **policy:** future of coal in energy mix, question of the mining limits
 - **process:** trust among key actors, regulatory framework

2. Factions

- **cohesive parts of the field/network**
- groups of actors that are connected more among themselves than with others



Data collection

- organizational actors involved in **coal policy** subsystem

| sector | responded | total | response rate (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| central and regional governance | 16 | 16 | 100 |
| central and regional political parties | 16 | 18 | 89 |
| environmental non-governmental organizations | 8 | 9 | 89 |
| research organizations | 14 | 16 | 88 |
| professional associations & trade unions | 3 | 7 | 43 |
| industry | 11 | 17 | 65 |
| total | 68 | 83 | 82 |

- the survey instrument (a self-administered online questionnaire) collects data on attribute variables: (1) **policy core beliefs** and (2) **network ties**

| network | tie |
|---|---------------------|
| political influence (PI) network | directed binary tie |
| expert information (EI) exchange network | directed binary tie |
| political cooperation (PC) network | directed binary tie |

Usual suspects: Industry coalition

policy core beliefs:

- coal as a basis of economic growth
- should be part of future energy mix
- mining limits should be rescinded
- legislative framework and stakeholder engagement are adequate

- Led by **state-owned energy company** and **Ministry of Trade and Industry**
- Highly influential with **direct access to decision-making**

consists of **16** organizations:

- 2 state agencies (central)
- 1 regional agency (Ústí region)
- 2 political parties (central)
- 3 political parties (Ústí region)
- 1 research organization
- 5 companies, 2 NGOs

Usual suspects: Environmental coalition

policy core beliefs:

- coal mining has severe enviro impacts
- should not be base for future energy mix
- mining limits should not be rescinded
- legislative framework and stakeholder engagement are not adequate

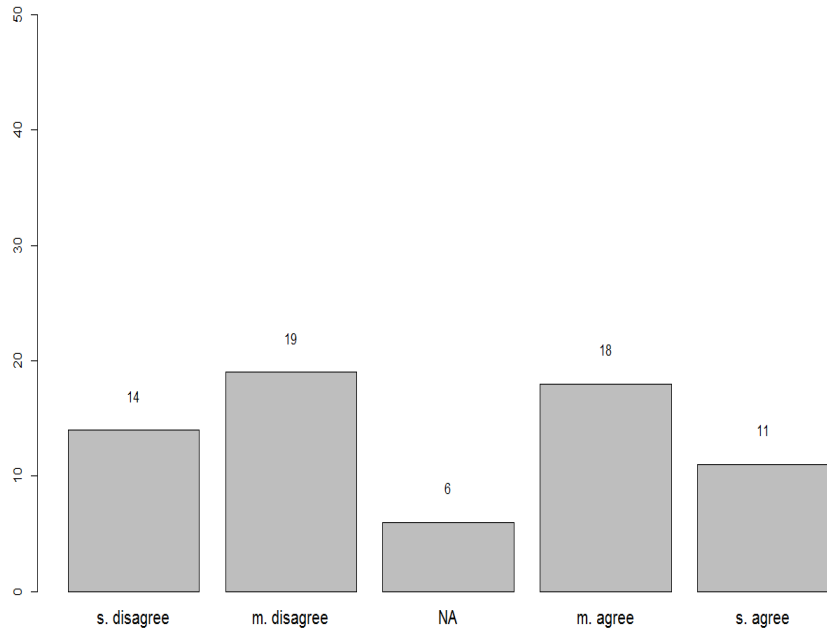
- Consists mainly of ENGOs and research organizations
- Emphasis on **relational capacity** as well as **expert knowledge**

consists of **17** organizations:

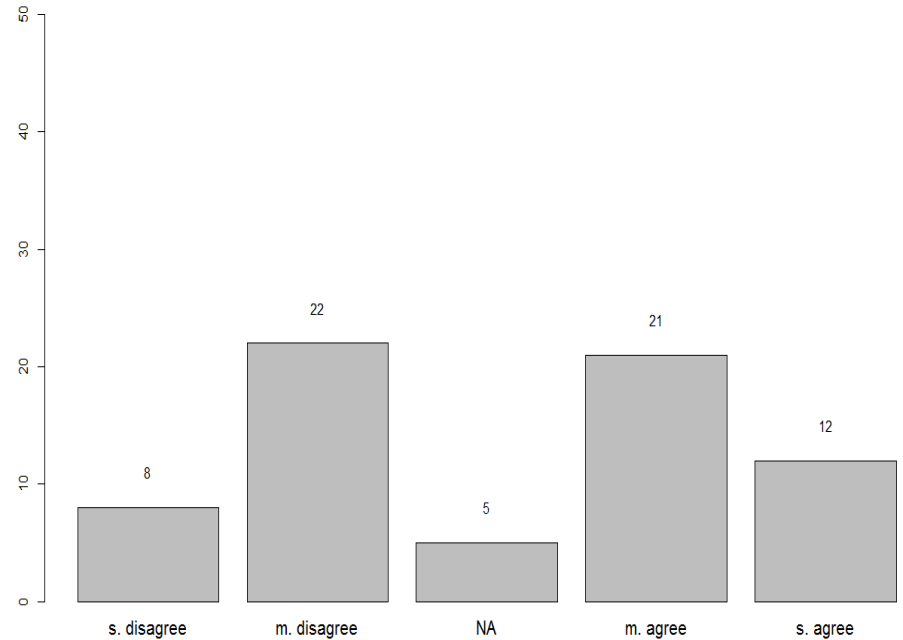
- **8 ENGOs**
- 2 state agencies (central)
- 1 political party (central)
- 6 research organizations

Polarized policy core beliefs distribution

Coal should remain a key part of energy mix and its mining should be developed further (N = 68)

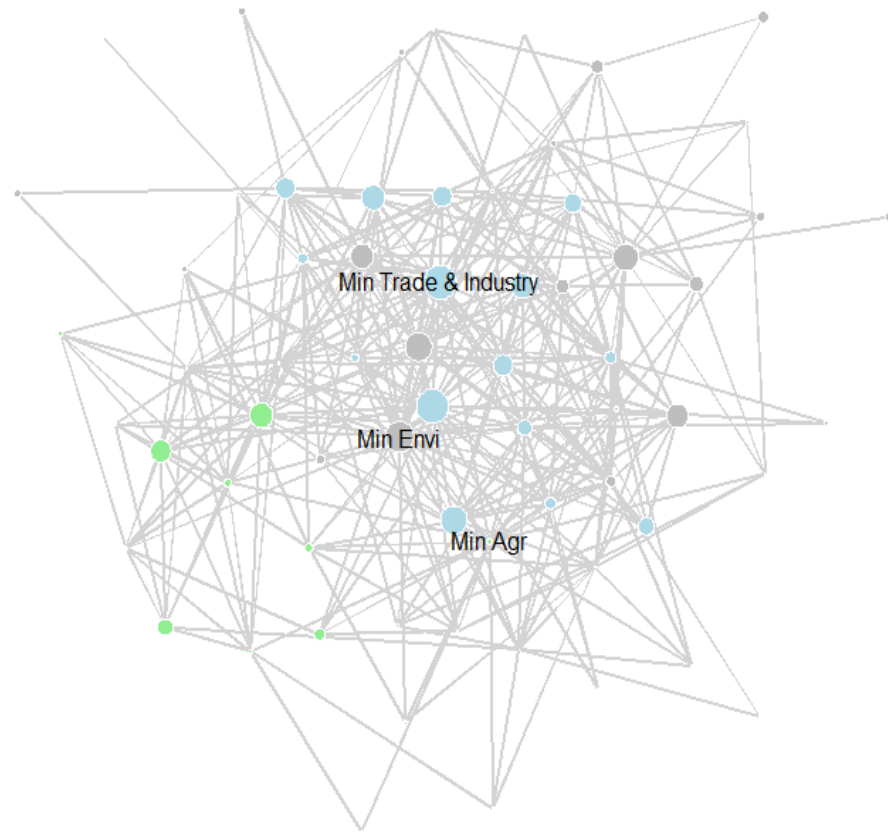


Economic benefits of coal mining to society are irreplaceable (N = 68)



Fragmentation of the decision-makers

- Decision-making actors (DMAs): competent ministries and ruling (central and regional) political parties
- Key DMAs – three competent ministries – belong to different groups



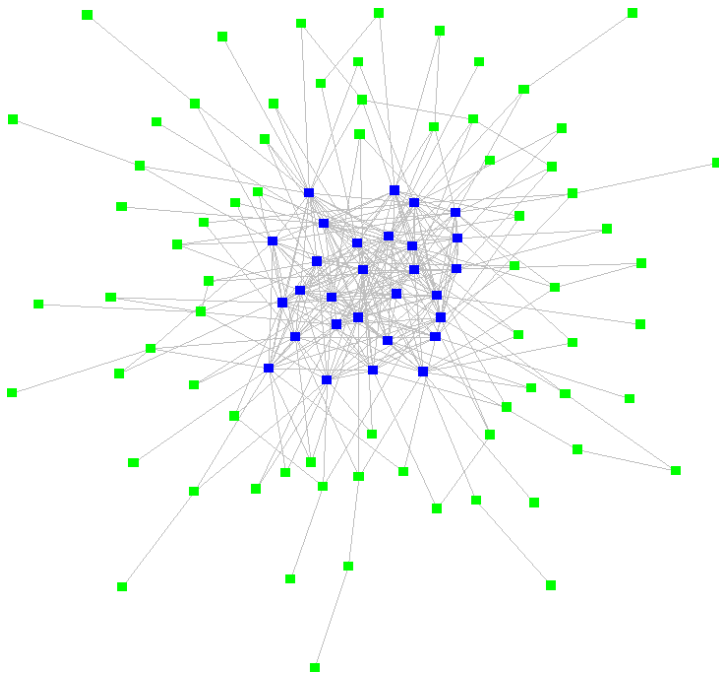
Industry Coalition = blue
Environmental Coalition = green
residual group = grey
node size = reputational power

Use of expert information

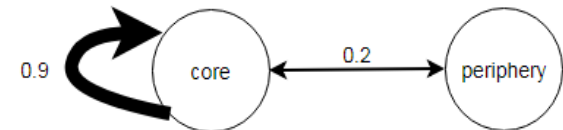
- **Expert information** is crucial for management of complex socio-technical systems (Giddens 1990) – includes **evidence-based policy-making**
- Its importance increases under **conditions of uncertainty** (Cairney et al. 2016)
- Two opposing approaches:
 - **Technocratic governance:** exp info abrades ideological differences and “builds bridges”
 - **Expertise politics:** exp info is used to defend ideological positions of their holders/providers

Block modeling

- Block model (BM) is a **simplified representation of a network** (White et al. 1976):
 - Groups of nodes with similar relations to others (blocks)
 - Patterns of relations among blocks (social roles)



| | core | periphery |
|-----------|------|-----------|
| core | 0.9 | 0.2 |
| periphery | 0.2 | 0.05 |



network density = 0.12
only interactions with sign. different density displayed

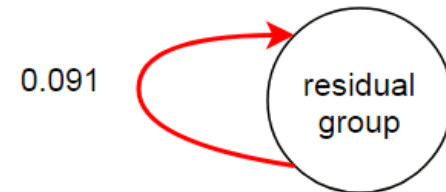
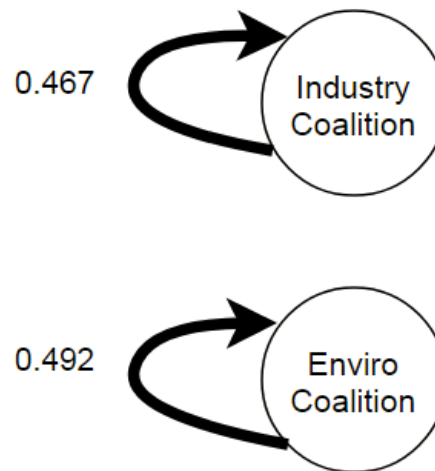
Expert information: Tell me, I am right?

- Coalitions identified based on **political cooperation** and shared **policy core beliefs**

Blocked density matrix: expert information
Adj R² = 0.102

| | Industry Coalition | Enviro Coalition | residual group |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Industry Coalition | 0.467 | 0.161 | 0.158 |
| Enviro Coalition | 0.147 | 0.492 | 0.064 |
| residual group | 0.186 | 0.127 | 0.091 |

Bolded cells indicate significant differences from the average (network density = 0.173)



Network density = 0.173
Only interactions with sign. different density displayed

Expert information: Tell me, I am right?

- **expert information** is crucial for management of complex socio-technical systems (Giddens 1990)
 - **evidence-based policy-making**
 - its importance increases under **conditions of uncertainty**
- ~~**technocratic governance:** exp info abrades ideological differences and “builds bridges”~~
- **expertise politics:** exp info is used to defend ideological positions of their holders/providers
- **more than 2.5 times more likely to exchange expert information within advocacy coalitions than between the coalitions**
- contributes to **polarization** and limits **policy change by learning**

Main findings

- **Two adversarial coalitions** detected
- Support for a **fragmentation of the decision-making actors** → limits formulation of coherent policies
- **Expert info exchange strongly overlaps with the coalition patterns** → limits policy learning between coalitions
- Altogether, findings support the thesis on **contestation of the transition process**
- **Expectation:** major policy change rather due to external factors such as the EU's regulation and macro-economic trends