

# Policy process theories

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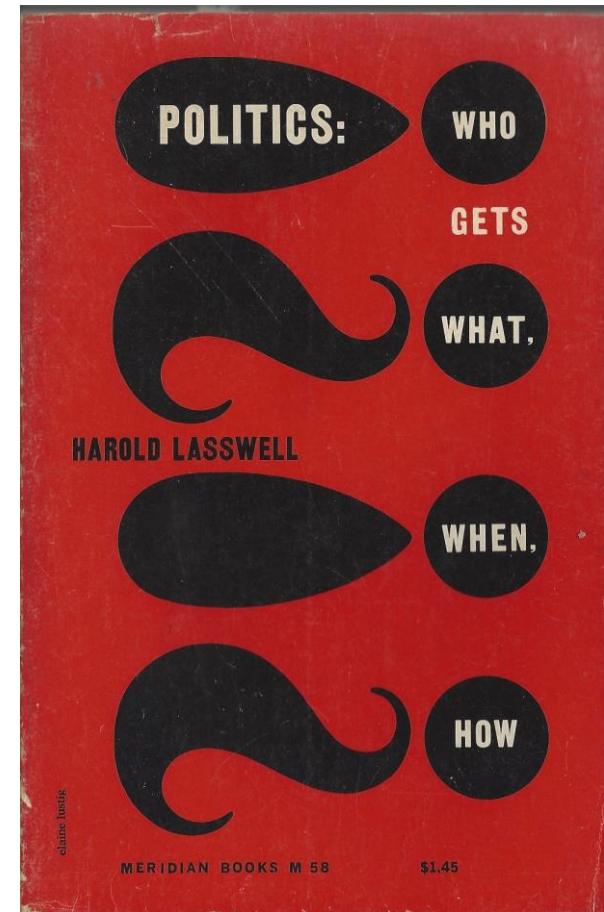
# Outline

- Public policy and policy process
- Overview of the policy process theories
- A network perspective on policy process

# Public policy and policy process

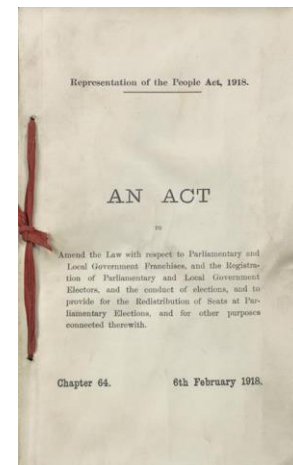
# The “political”

- Activities through which people **make, preserve, and change the general rules** under which they live (Heywood 2012: 2)
- → it produces **collectively binding** outcomes (policies) that bring **unequal distribution** of costs and benefits
- This involves both cooperative (seeking for resources and allies) and conflictual (interfering with opponents) **interactions**



# Polity, politics, policy

- **Polity:** institutional framework of the political system
- **Politics:** focus on **interactions of the actors**, e.g.: voting patterns within the polity
- **Policy:** focus on formation of **particular domains**, e.g.: social or energy, within the polity through collectively binding decisions

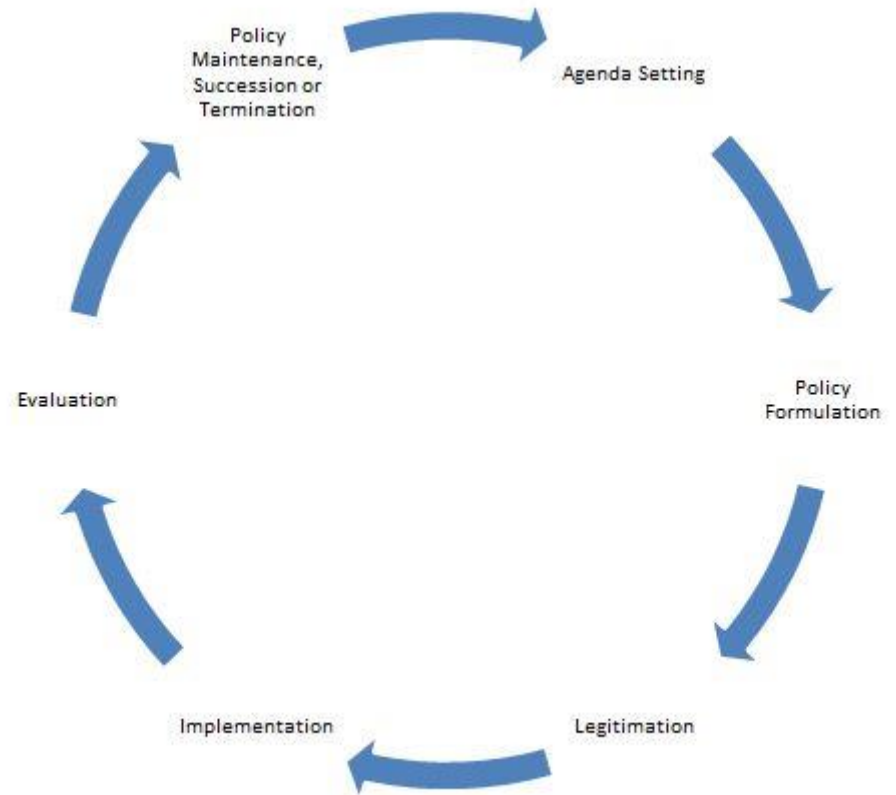


# What is public policy?

- **Public policy:** a government policy that (1) **guides and regulates** actions in a specific (2) **issue area** and within a (3) particular **jurisdiction**
- More inclusive definition: the sum of direct and indirect **topically bounded government activities** with social impacts (see Cairney 2012)
- In democratic regimes, public policies are **enacted** through complex **legislative processes**

# How is policy made?

- The policy-making process can be captured by **policy cycle** model (Lasswell 1956)



# How is policy made?

- But, what about?
  1. **Actors** not directly participating in the legislative process?
  2. More generally, **context** of the legislative process?
- Thus, policy process is much more **complex** than policy cycle suggests...



# Policy process theories

# 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

# Advocacy Coalition Framework

- 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
- Patterns of actors (coalitions) interactions and subsystem configurations facilitate or constrain **policy change**

# ACF: Coal policy in Czechia

Two competing coalitions in a fragmented political system (Ocelík et al. 2019)

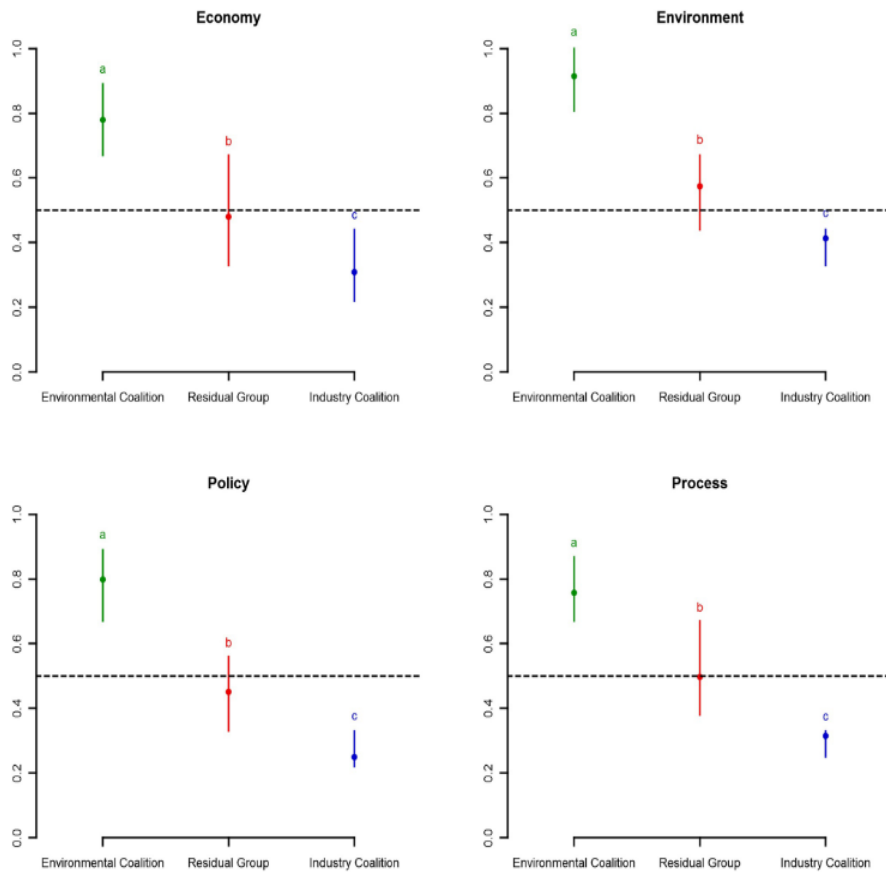


Fig. 1. PCB comparison based on coalition membership.<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>All variables range between 0 (strong pro-coal position) and 1 (strong anti-coal position). For details on PCB dimensions, see the *Data and Methods* section and Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup>Multiple comparisons test was used to determine pairwise differences between the three groups for each dimension. The groups marked with a different superscript letter and different color are significantly different at  $p < 0.05$ . For more information, see Appendix B.

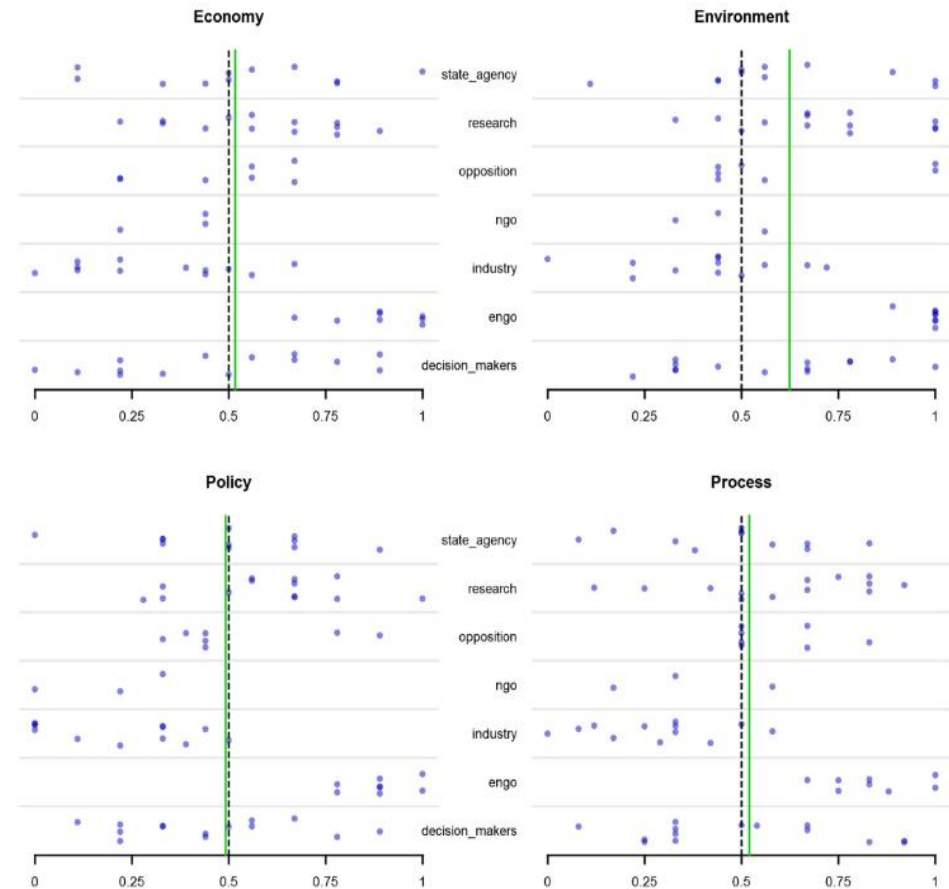


Fig. 2. PCB scores based on actor type.<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>All variables range between 0 (strong pro-coal position) and 1 (strong anti-coal position). For details on PCB dimensions, see the *Data and Methods* section and Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup>The blue dots represent the scores of individual organizations. The dotted line represents a neutral position (0.5); the green line represents the mean value.

# Narrative Policy Framework

- Diverse actors and their coalitions use **narratives** to influence policy process (Jones et al. 2014)
  - A narrative includes:
    1. Setting: contextual factors (e.g., socioeconomic)
    2. Characters: heroes, villains, victims, and beneficiaries
    3. Plot: situates the characters, e.g., “decline plot”
    4. Moral: a take-home lessons containing the solution to the policy problem
- Specific **narrative strategies** aim at particular audience(s) to facilitate or constrain **policy change**

# NPF: Nuclear energy debate in India

- Two coalitions with competing narratives (Gupta et al. 2014)

**Table 5.2** Strategies used by the pro-nuclear and anti-nuclear coalitions

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Winning Coalition (Pro-Nuclear Coalition) [N = 12]</i>	<i>Losing Coalition (Anti-Nuclear Coalition) [N = 43]</i>
Identification of Winners	33% [ <i>n</i> = 4]	47% [ <i>n</i> = 20]
Identification of Losers	0% [ <i>n</i> = 12]	91% [ <i>n</i> = 39]
Distribution of Benefits	100% (Diffused) [ <i>n</i> = 4]	100% (Concentrated) [ <i>n</i> = 20]
Distribution of Costs	—	100% (Diffused) [ <i>n</i> = 39]
Use of Symbols	50% [ <i>n</i> = 6]	81% [ <i>n</i> = 35]
Use of Policy Surrogates	42% [ <i>n</i> = 6]	84% [ <i>n</i> = 36]
Use of Science	67% (100% Certainty) [ <i>n</i> = 8]	91% (100% Disputing) [ <i>n</i> = 40]

*Source:* Public consumption documents produced by the pro-nuclear and anti-nuclear coalitions in the JNPP subsystem.

→ The pro-nuclear coalition succeeded in establishing a “winning tale” emphasizing diffusion of benefits and scientific certainty

A network perspective on policy process

# Policy process as a network

- **Policy process** can be captured **as a network**:
  1. of **diverse**, both state and non-state, **actors** who are
  2. centered around a **specific issue** and who interact at
  3. the **subsystem level** and within
  4. **geographically** and **juridically** defined boundaries

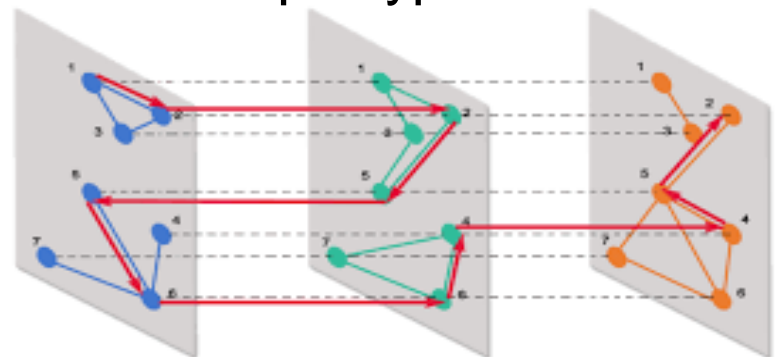


# Policy process as a network

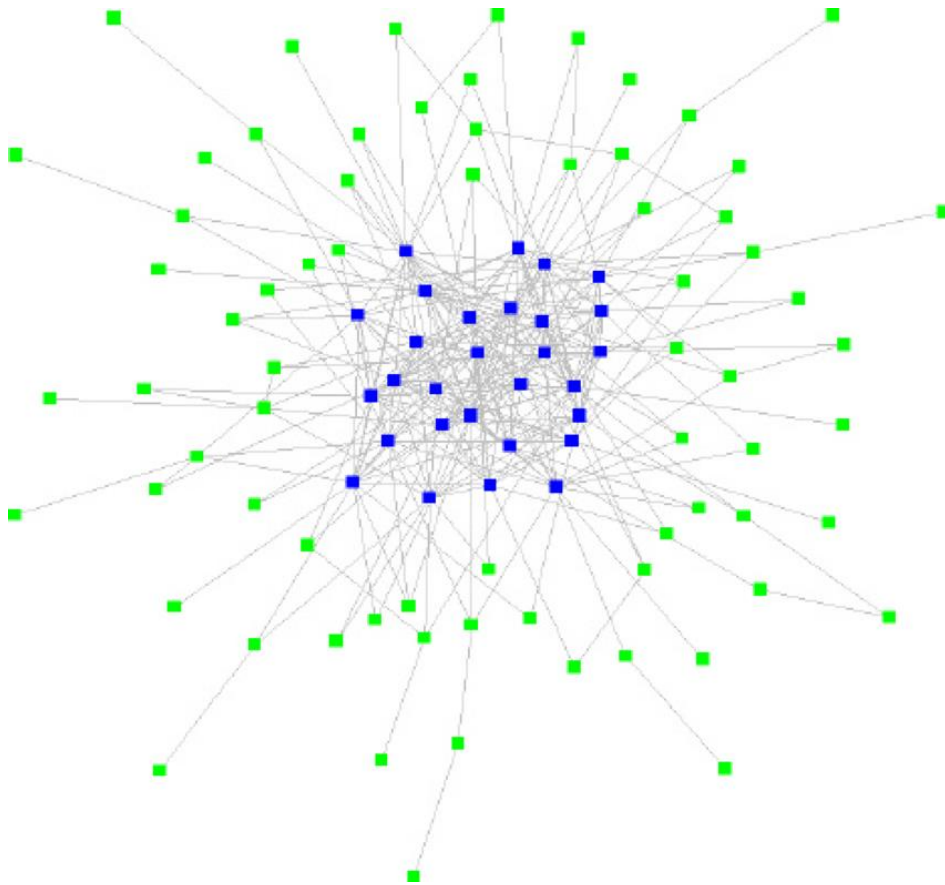
- **Policy process** can be captured **as a network**:
  1. of **diverse**, both state and non-state, **actors** who are  
→ companies, NGOs, social movements, interest groups, academia, etc.
  2. centered around a **specific issue** and who interact at  
→ taxation, healthcare, migration, energy, security, etc.
  3. the **subsystem level** and within  
→ a subset of political system: government, parliament, courts, advisory bodies, etc.
  4. **geographically** and **juridically** defined boundaries  
→ typically, state boundaries and exclusive national competence

# Policy process as a network

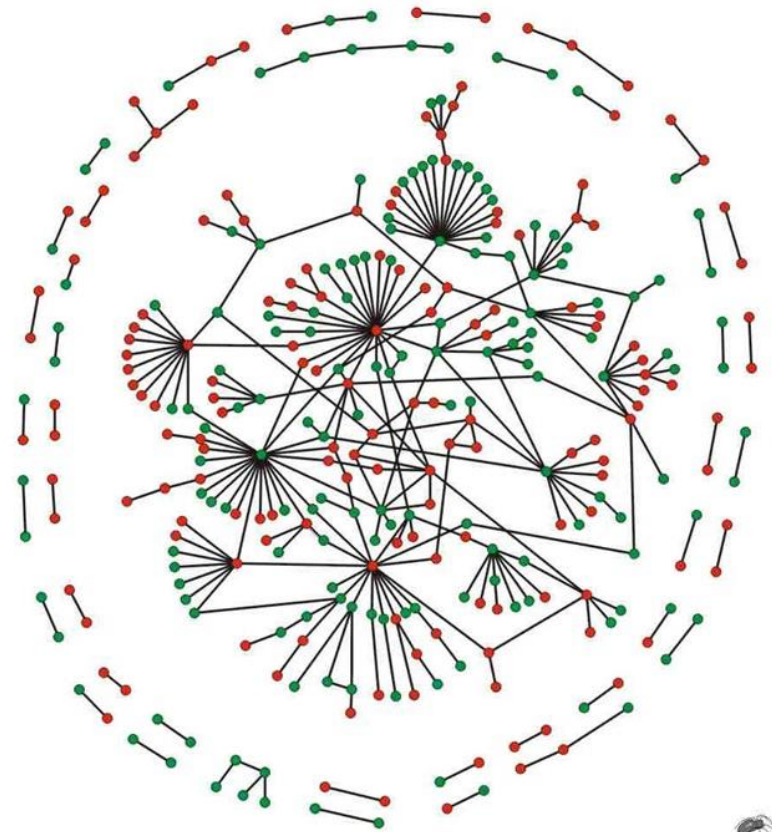
- The **characteristics** of the actors (typically organizations) and their interactions can be defined by:
  1. **Nodal** (individual) **attributes**: organization type, budget, policy preferences, etc.
  1. **Ties**: cooperation, exchange of resources, information flows, membership in umbrella organizations, etc.
- In practice, actors are embedded within multiple types of relationships (**multiplexity**)



# Policy process as a network



Crebs and Holley 2004



Maslov and Sneppen 2002

# Policy process as a network

- The current governance systems are **complex** and often **non-hierarchical**
- **Structure matters:** different forms of organization (poly-centric vs. core-periphery) might influence policy outcomes
- Importantly, policy processes are **different for different policy issues** (e.g., taxation vs. climate change)
- **Government is not the only player** in the game → we need to take into account more actors

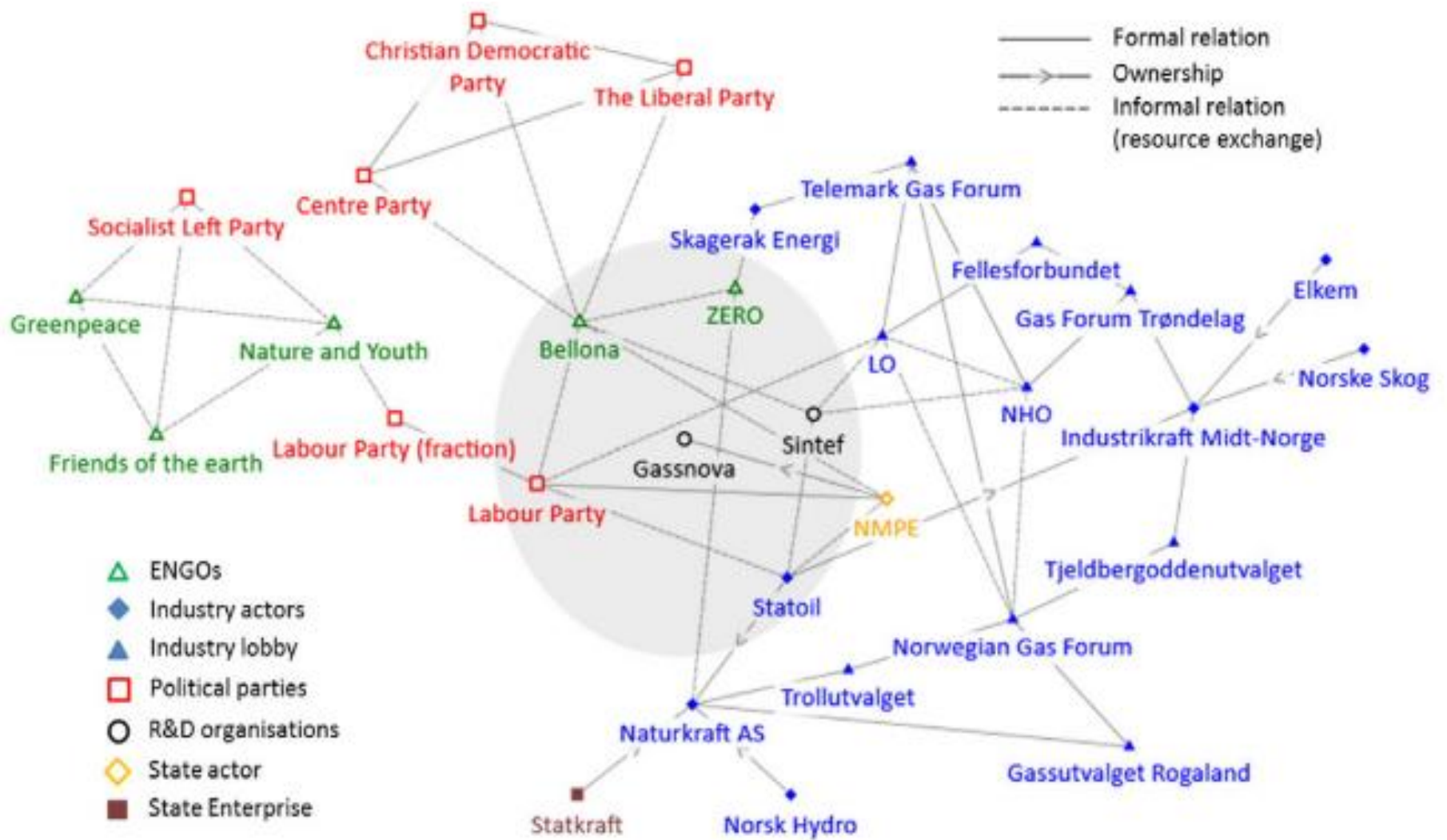


Fig. 4. Mapping of relations between CCS and natural gas proponents and opponents (1998–2004). Shaded area indicates CCS network.

# Conclusions

- **Public policies** are topically bounded sets of governmental (in)actions with societal impacts
- They result from **policy processes** that involve **diverse actors** and their **coalitions**
- Policy actors interact in **complex environments** including institutional and discursive structures as well as more general trends and events
- Policy process **theories** emphasize various dimensions of the policy process → room for theoretical elaboration and integration