

What is the Future of Fossil Fuels in Times of Greenhouse Gas Neutrality?

Advancing climate policy with collaborative governance? Lessons from the German 'Coal Commission'

- work in progress -

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How to govern timely and just phase-out processes?

- Limited progress in reducing fossil fuel consumption & resistance by incumbent actors (Newell 2018; York and Bell 2019)
- So far limited attention to political process of socio-technical transitions (Kern and Rogge 2018; Köhler et al. 2019)
- Numerous stakeholder commissions set up to discuss coal phase-out pathways (Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, ...)

Collaborative Governance (CG)

“the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.”

(Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh 2012, 2)

+ Consensus-oriented decisions for previously highly contested issues; ...

- Marginalization of weaker actors and radical opinions; ...

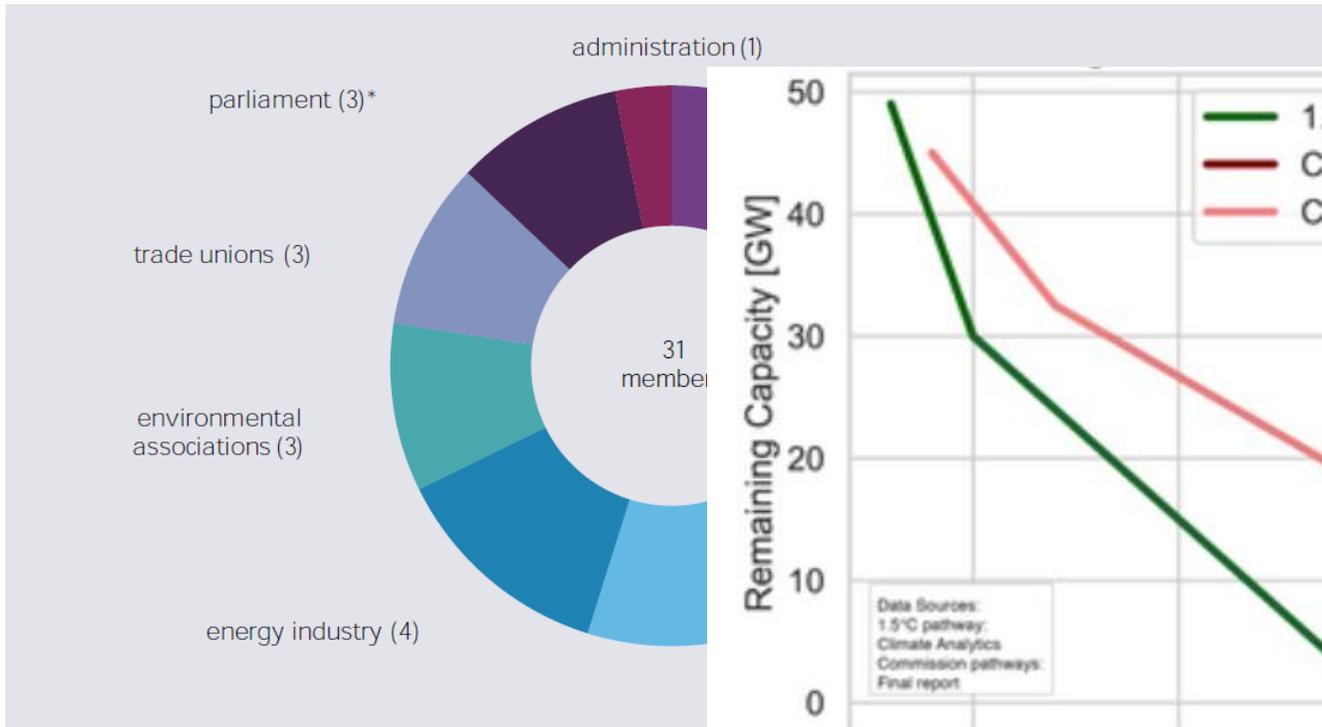
(i.a., Emerson and Nabatchi 2015; Innes and Booher 1999; Kallis et al. 2009; Krick 2013)

CG for climate policy decisions

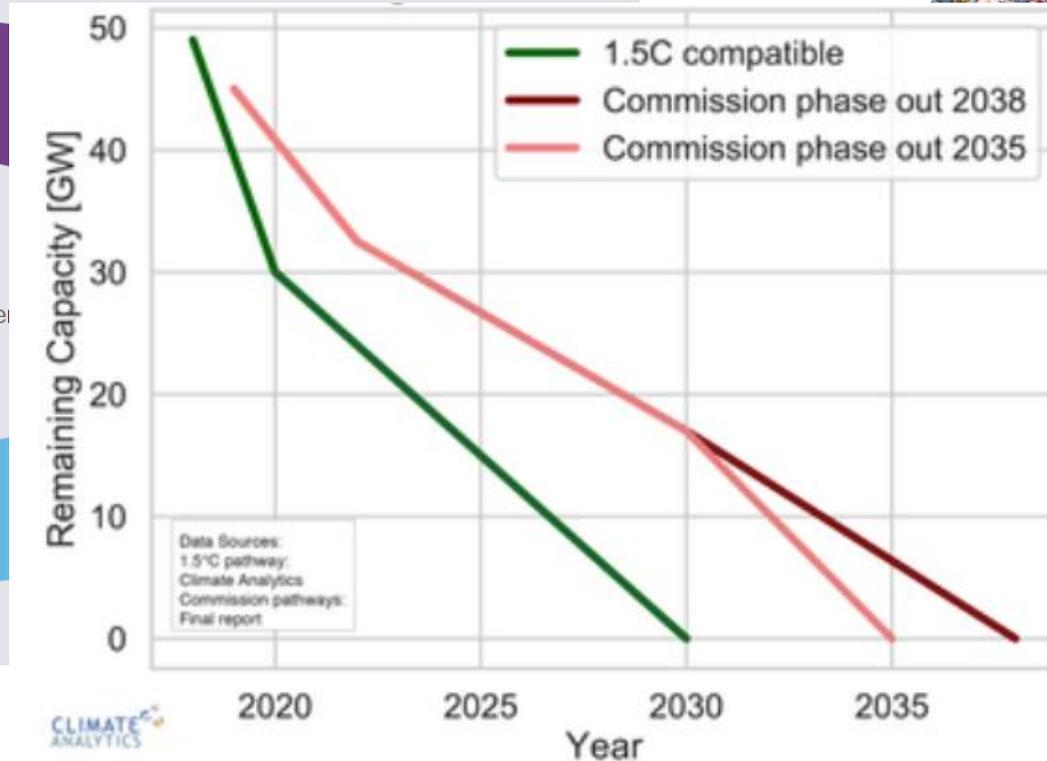
- Positive effect of participation on environmental standard of governance outputs (Jager et al. 2020)
- 1.5°C climate target requires unprecedented changes in energy systems
- Energy transitions: actors with diametrical opposed belief systems (i.a., Markard 2018)

Can stakeholder commissions contribute to achieve the required (energy) system transformations?

Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment ('Coal Commission')



Stakeholder composition.
Source: Agora Energiewende (2019).



Phase-out recommendations vs. 1.5°C.
Source: Yanguas Parra et al. (2019).



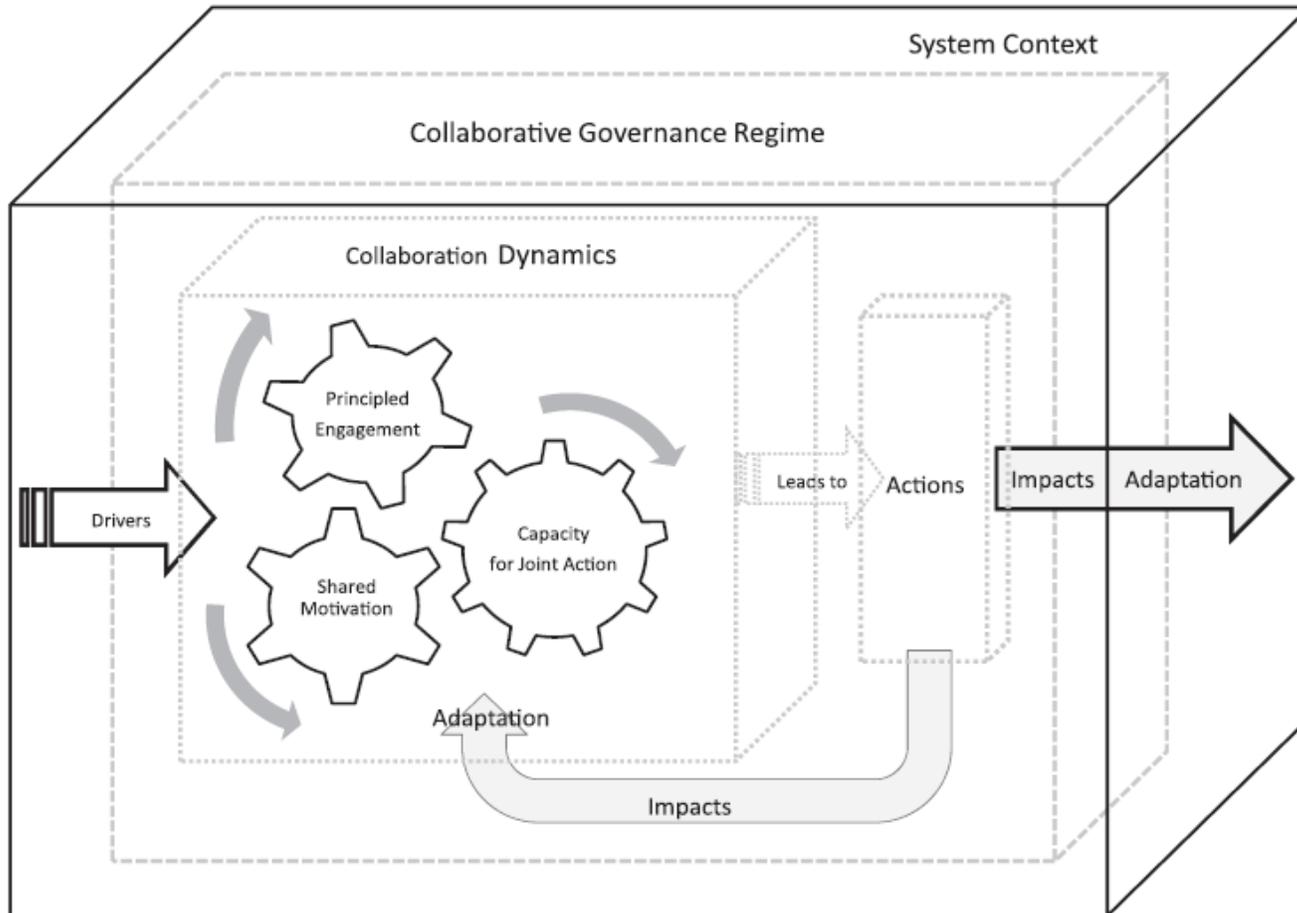
NSB (2019)

Methodology

Theoretical framework for assessment: Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance (IFCG) (Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh 2012)

Semi-structured interviews with members of the commission and of the commission's office (n=18); qualitative content analysis (Gläser and Laudel 2010)

Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance



Collaborative Dynamics		
Principled Engagement	Shared Motivation	Capacity for Joint Action
Discovery	Trust	Procedural and Institutional Arrangements
Definition	Mutual Understanding	Leadership
Deliberation	Internal Legitimacy	Knowledge
Determination	Commitment	Resources

Source: Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012)

The Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance.

Source: Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012, 6)

Results and discussion – Collaborative dynamics

- Collaborative dynamics evolved to varying and limited degrees
 - Commitment of members to find solutions within the commission
 - Limited trust and mutual understanding
 - Many discussions and decisions in exclusive rounds with few members only
 - Large resource disparities between members
 - Commission chairs perceived rather as advocates than as facilitators
 - Rather tough negotiation environment than cooperative atmosphere
- Advantage for well-connected, negotiation-experienced members

Results and discussion - Setting and procedural arrangements

- Selection of commission members and chairs
 - Inclusion of (all) veto-players
 - Legitimacy for commission by broad and balanced representation of interests
 - Exclusion of more radical positions (e.g., 'Ende Gelände'; Fridays for Future); focus on national interests (e.g., Global South not explicitly represented)
- Mandate
 - Target for energy sector not compatible with Paris Agreement
- Influence of Federal Government and Länder
 - Mandate, selection of members, etc. by Federal Government
 - Provision of compensation payments
 - Right to speak and participate for federate state government officials

Results and discussion – achieving ambitious phase-out

- Participation and consent of all veto-players required
 - Recommendations without general approval not viable for political implementation
 - Including also federate state governments and federal government
- Limited bargaining chips for environmental actors (beyond target set in mandate)
- Issues well-known – low likelihood to discover new “win-win” solutions
- Federate states and incumbent actors only willing to agree to phase-out for high compensation payments

Concluding remarks

- Creating new opportunities vs. continuation of incumbent structures
 - Successfully moved coal phase-out debate in Germany from “if” to “when”
 - Strong influence of incumbent actors on recommendations
- Collaborative Governance in contested energy transition situation:
Creating opportunity to find compromises and legitimacy for political implementation – not to achieve radical transformation
- Limitations: Single case and very context-specific

Thank you for your interest!

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