



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology



Norwegian Centre for Energy
Transition Strategies

Research directions bridging people, place and policy for widespread societal change

Postdoc project: “Innovation, contestation and social change: Exploring radical ideas in the Norwegian energy transition” (RA1)



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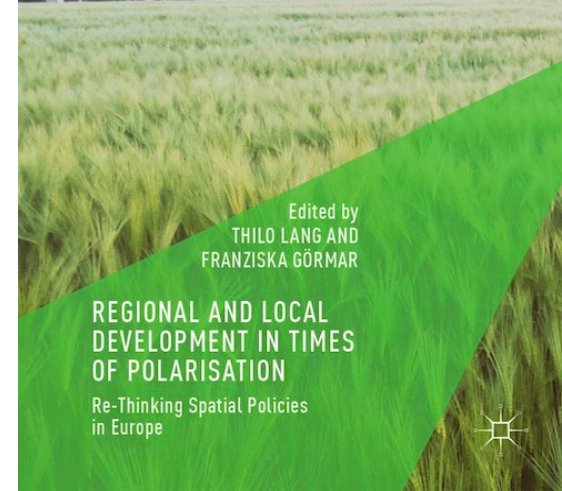
Approach to the Research Topic

“Innovation, contestation and social change: Exploring radical ideas in the Norwegian energy transition”

- **Transition as an interdisciplinary concept** – socio-technical, socio-ecological, economic, political, etc.
- **Research background** – evolutionary economic geography (RIS) and political economy (institutional change, comparative capitalism)
- **Multi-faceted research approach** – System level change, socio-technical regime shift, applying neo-institutionalist approach to ‘socio-technical transformation’ with focus on:
 - Radical vs. incremental transformation, critical junctures and “critical transformations” (Henderson & Jepsen, 2018)
 - Actors and power relations; market and non-market (Sotarauta, 2016; Isaksen & Jakobsen, 2017)
 - Spatial perspective, geography of innovation (Coenen et al., 2012)
 - Apply Varieties of Capitalism (Hall & Soskice, 2001) in international comparison

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Towards territorial cohesion?
Path dependence and path innovation of
regional policy in Central and
Eastern Europe



Edited by
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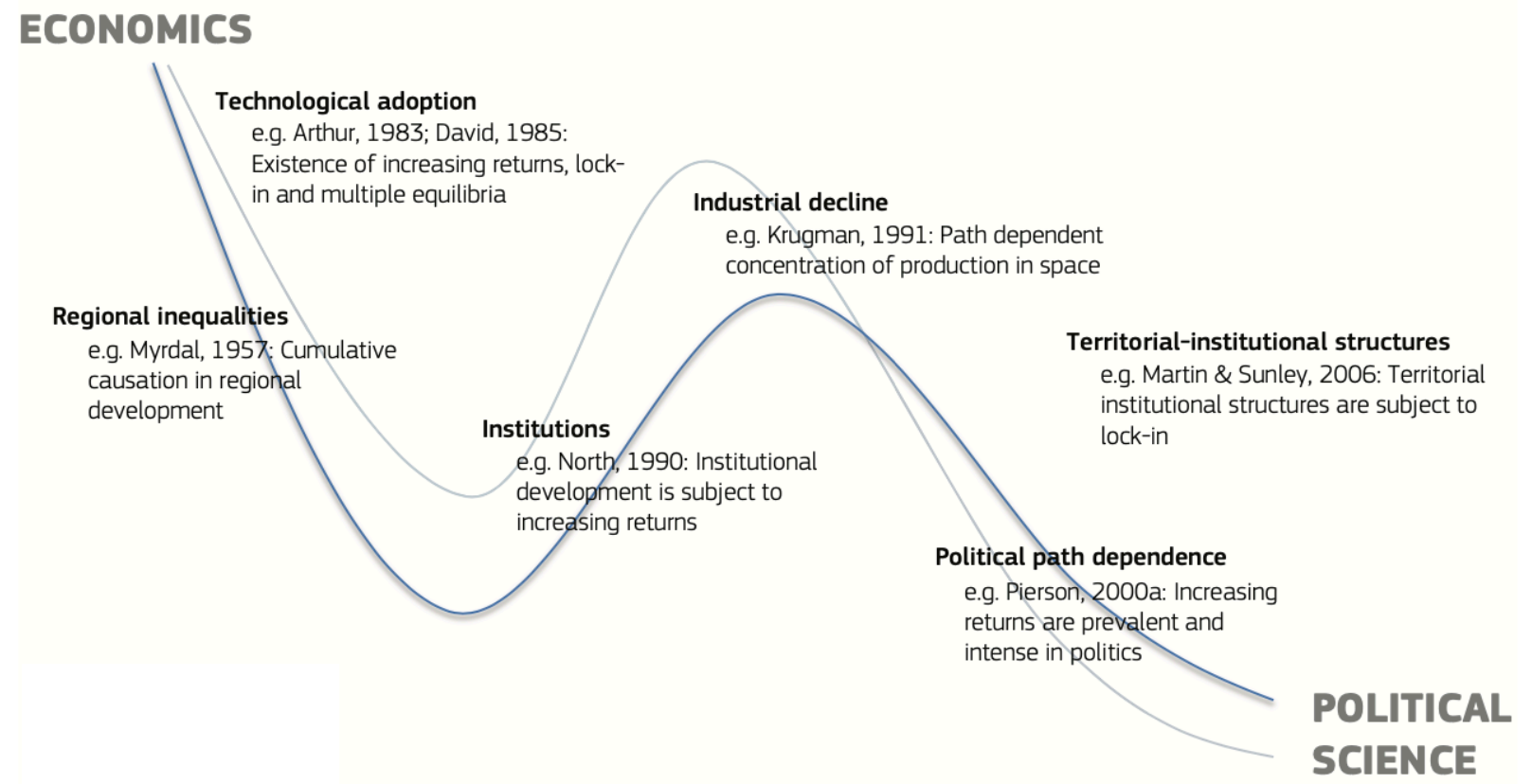
REGIONAL AND LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT IN TIMES
OF POLARISATION

Re-Thinking Spatial Policies
in Europe



Path dependence concept evolution

- Sequence of transition matters in user cases
- From economics, political science and regional development, to socio-technical systems
- Path innovation
 - Future oriented
 - RIS - New path creation
 - Elaborate mechanisms of change on the societal level
- Impact of green taxonomy?



Source: Loewen, 2018

Agency, Discourse and Narrative

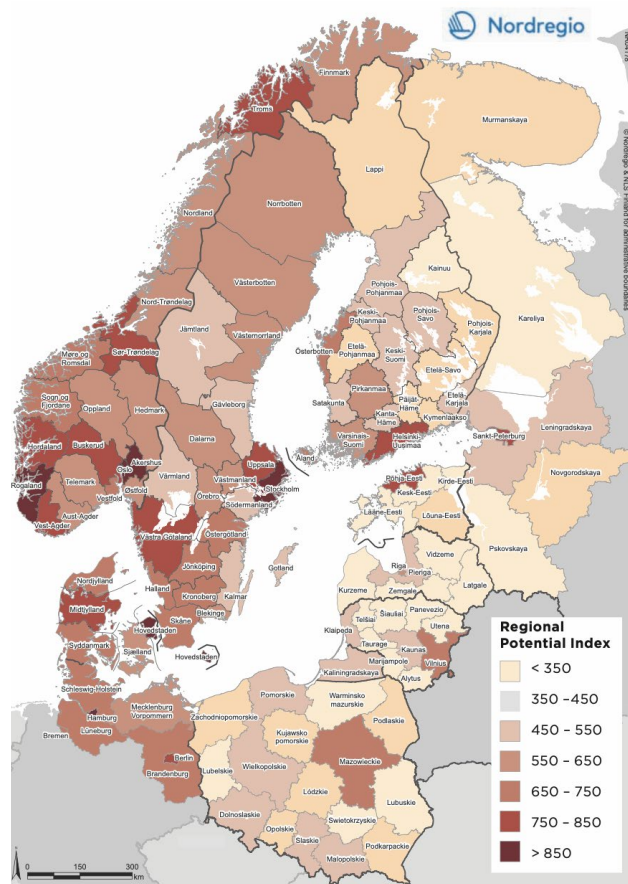
Social Science approach to the path dependency questions

- Shifting scale from institutions to actors
- Who shapes the discourse on sustainability transitions?
 - Discursive Institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008) built on Historical Institutionalism (Thelen, 1999); politics of transition (Smith & Stirling, 2010)
 - Multi-actor perspective (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2016)
- Contestation – whose sustainability gets prioritized?
- Transition agents – agency in RIS, especially non-market, institutional and peripheral actors
- Methods
 - Process tracing
 - Stakeholder analysis
 - Comparative case studies – **USER CASES**



Multi-actor Perspective (MaP) model of sectors
(Avelino & Wittmayer, 2016)

Place – the Geographical Dimension



Places, innovation and transition

- Develop the case(s) in Norwegian regional innovation systems, connecting to geographies of innovation and core-periphery relations
 - Policy mix, positions in Global Production Networks, related variety, etc.
- Interest in non-core, peripheral locations
 - What seeds of radical change sprout in the peripheries? By whom? How are they nurtured or quashed?
- Explore the potential of green niches to support regional development
 - Connect to NTRANS user case(s), Norwegian and international comparators
 - New societal configurations, institutions, networks – Energy hubs?
 - e.g. creating green energy demand → new local value added activities

Workflow – Next Steps

- Connect and prioritize theoretical strands (Literature review and Theoretical work) (Yr1)
- Explore actor roles in regime change (multi-actor perspective) (Theoretical) (Yr1)
- Case development (Empirical work) (Yr1-2)
 - Situate Norway (cases) in map of political economy and transition approaches
 - Analyze actor groups/roles for deep decarbonization
 - Extend to international comparative cases (e.g. British Columbia, Canada)
- Connect actor groups/roles and agency with regional development for a model of sustainable transition (Theoretical and Empirical work) (Yr3)
 - Which actor groups have the highest potential for widespread societal impact?



Thank you



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