

IFEM, ST 2025, Environmental Policy and Governance

Deepening key policy concepts

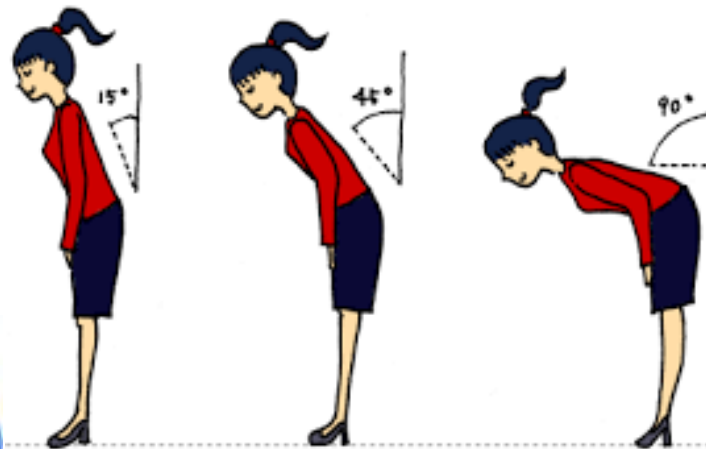
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March 2025

Part I

Key policy concepts in environmental policy and governance

What are institutions?



What are institutions?

- “[A] **set of rules** actually used [...] by a set of individuals to organise **repetitive activities** that produce outcomes affecting those individuals and potentially affecting others” (Ostrom 1992: 19).
- Institutions are the **rules of the game** in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” (North 1990: 3).
- “They are made up of **formal constraints** (e.g. rules, laws, and constitutions) [and] **informal constraints** (e.g. norms of behaviour, conventions, and self-imposed codes of conduct)” (North 1990: 3).
- **Policy instruments are institutions.**

Types of policy instruments

- Regulatory instruments
- Market & incentive-based instruments
- Informative/Supportive measures

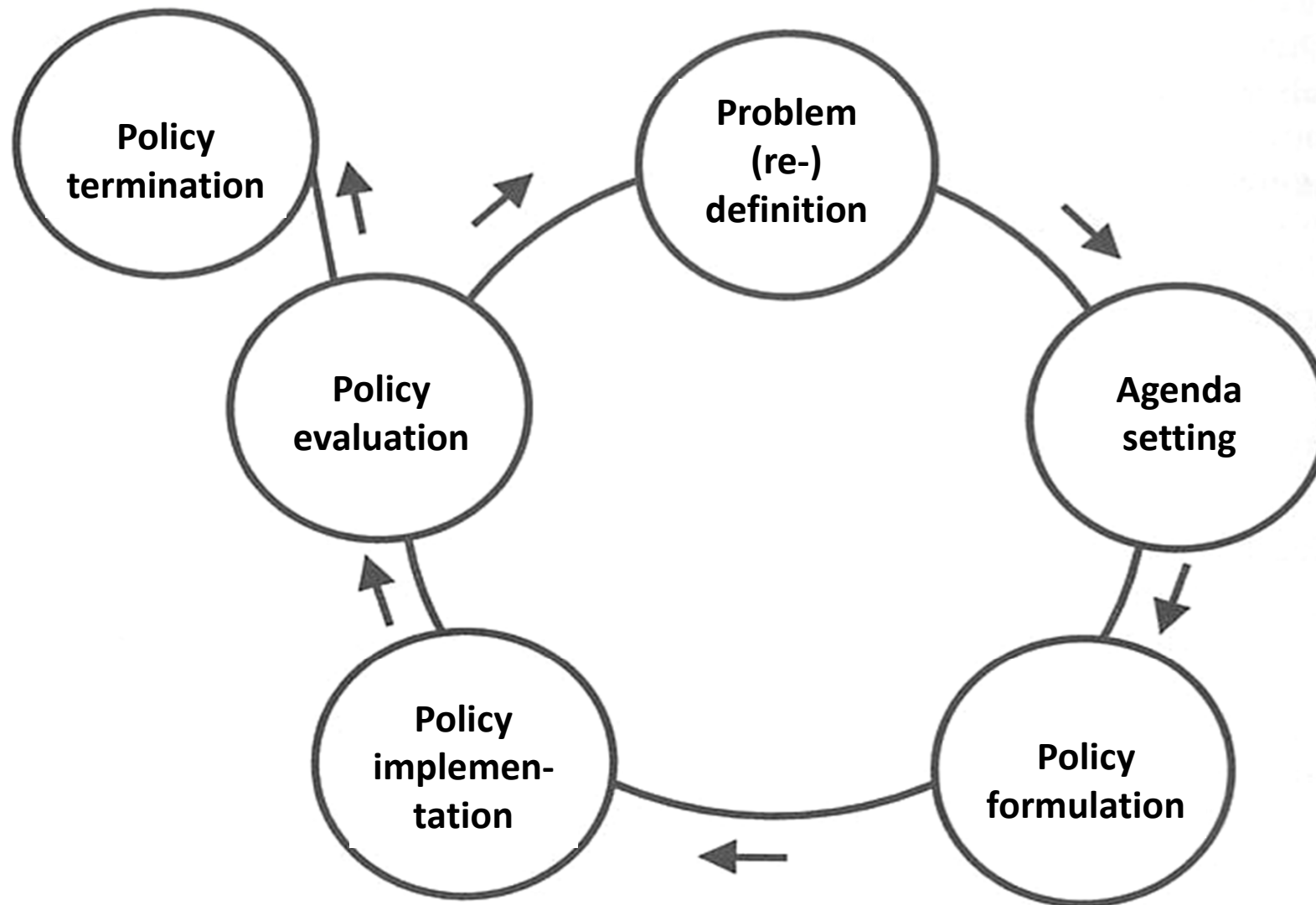


Institutions ≠ organisations

- Organisations = institutions plus people
- “Organisations are **groups of individuals** who share a **common purpose** or common goals (e.g., corporations, universities, schools, political parties)” (North 1991: 5).
- “**Institutions define certain organisations** or social programs, but these programs and organisations are best thought of as not being institutions, but as being defined by institutions” (Bromley 1989: 43).

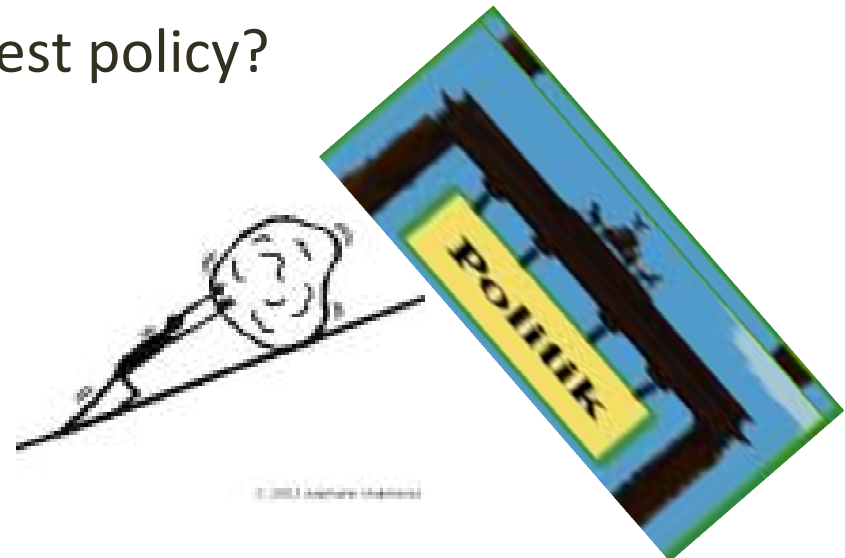
a) The policy cycle

Policy Cycle



Problem definition

- How are problems framed?
- Which aspects are highlighted, which ignored?
- Who play which role for agenda setting?
- ➔ Do you know examples from forest policy?



Policy formulation

- Determines the design of a policy and use of certain policy instruments (regulatory, economic, information)
- Type of decision-making: expert-based rational (technocratic), negotiation, consent, inclusion/exclusion of alternatives/groups

Questions for analysis

- Who formulates policy (bureaucracy, parliament, lobby groups)
- Is policy formulation and choice of instrument sound?

Policy implementation

- Often key for policy success!
- Complex, with internal dynamics, facing reality
 - Top-down ⇔ Bottom-up
 - Interest groups, lobbyists, constituencies,
 - power struggles...
- State and bureaucracy has own interests, goals, objectives, and agendas

Evaluation

Who: Government, Parliament, accounting/control ...

Political meaning:

- Improvement of general information basis (various consequences)
- Improvement of own information status (hidden evaluation)
- Symbolic benefit (e.g. gaining time)

Challenges & chances

1. Sequence of phases often **not** in line with reality
2. Problem-solution logic **contradicts** reality
 - Policy not always wants to solve problems
 - Problem might be used to legitimize sth. else...

=> examples?

3. But: as **standard explanation** model useful

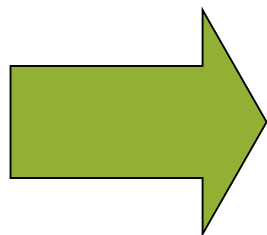
In reality, policymaking is messy! It is “a chaos of purposes and accidents.”
Juma & Clark (1995); Stone (2008)

works because circular reasoning

b) Beliefs & cultures

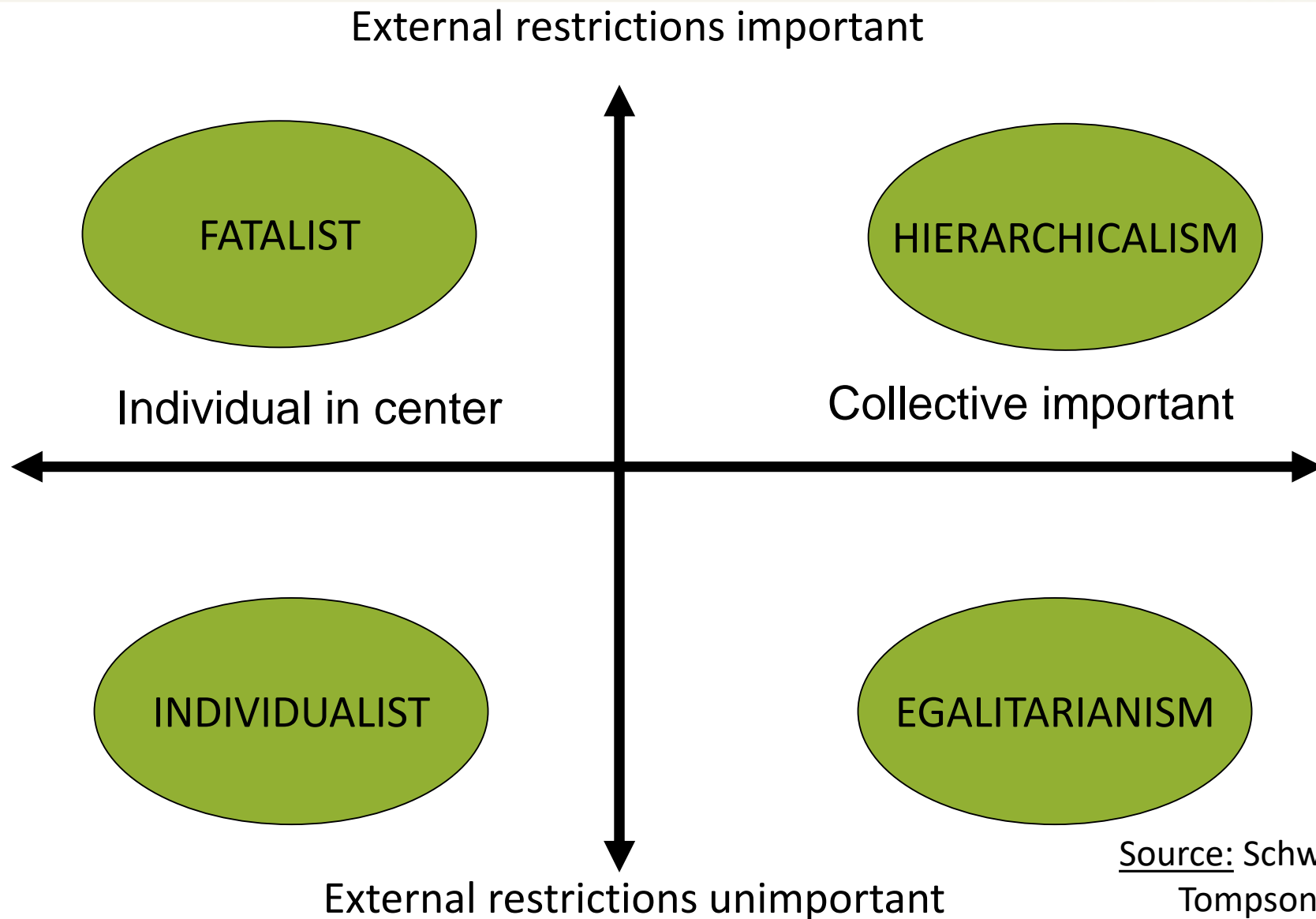
Basic assumption	Politics is struggle of actors over fulfillment of their beliefs
Conflicts	Value- and ideology conflicts between actors
Steering	Instruments are used to fulfill beliefs – and are their basis

Example: Nature as subject of human beliefs



Cultural Theory (Thompson et al. 1990)

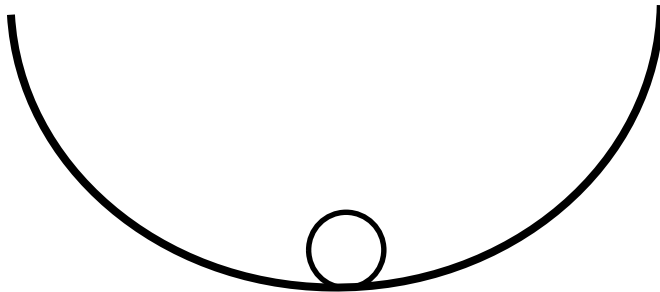
4 type of humans – 4 views on nature



Source: Schwarz &
Tompson 1990

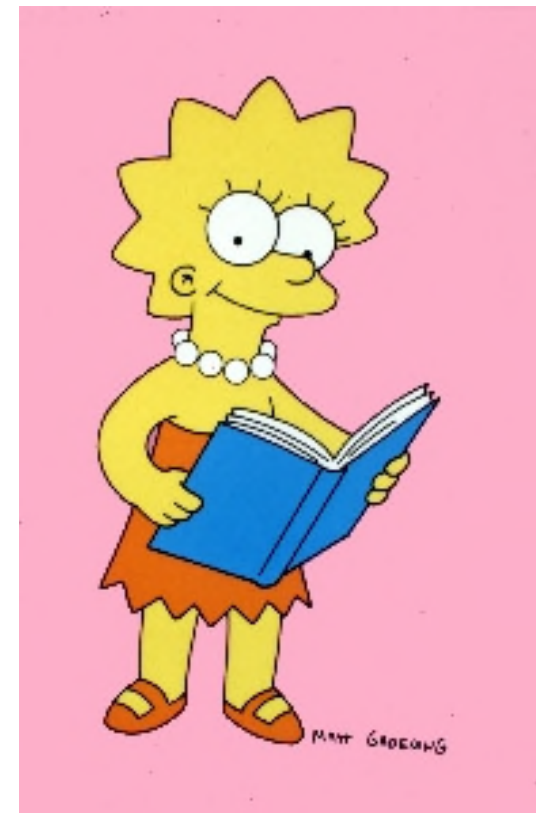
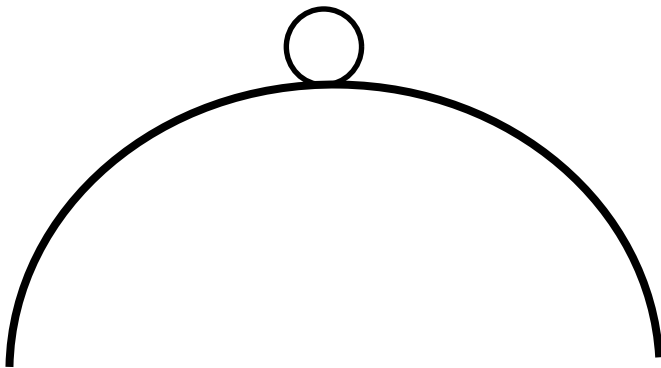
Political culture “Individualist”

- Robust character
- Own freedom is central
- market-oriented/coordinated



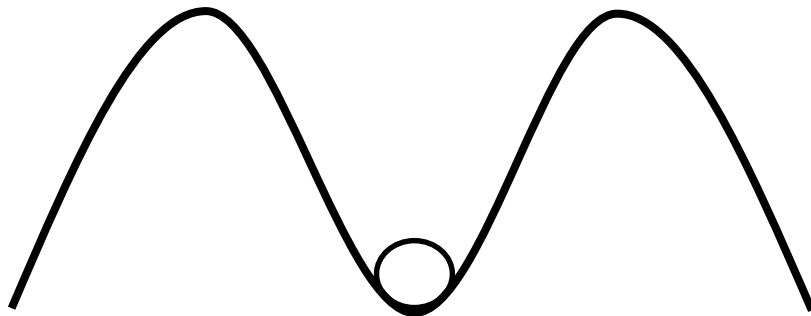
Political culture “Egalitarianism”

- Fragile character
- Anti-hierarchical but social, society is important
- Restriction of market; participation; information



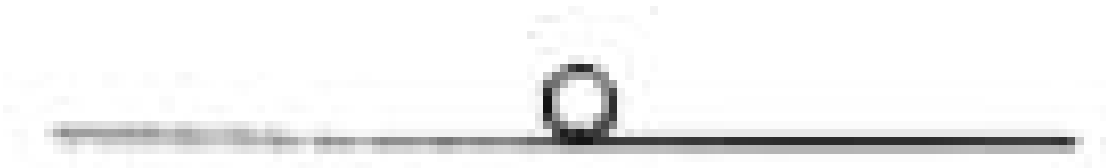
Political culture “Hierarchical”

- Tolerant character (within limits)
- Hierarchy and rules are important
- Steering via laws and regulations



Political culture “Fatalist”

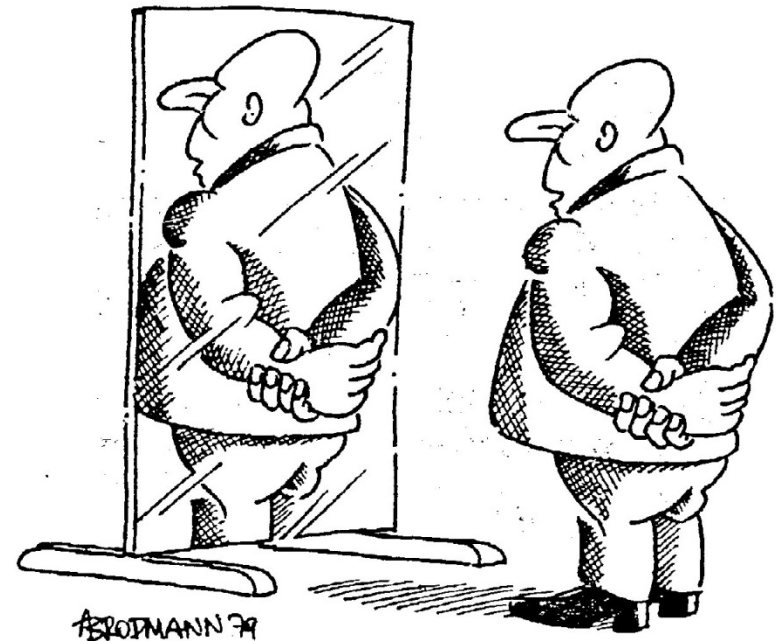
- “Unpredictable” character
 - Left alone, passive, accepted one’s fate
- Is regulated

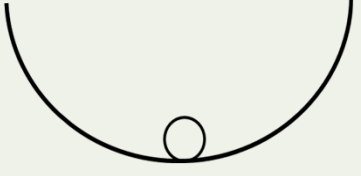
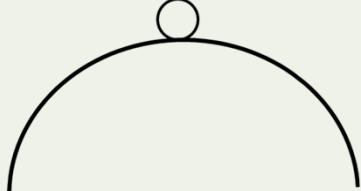
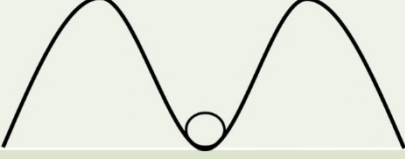
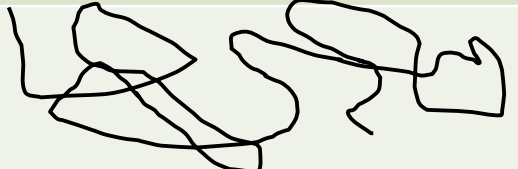


Conclusion

- Different type of actors value nature differently
- With consequences on behaviour!

→ **What type are you?**



1		„Robust“ nature
		Ecosystems are robust, can stabilize themselves
2		„Fragile“ nature
		Ecosystems are fragile, unsustainable levels of consumption, resources are depleted
3		„Tolerant“ nature
		Nature tolerant within given limits (thresholds)
4		„Unpredictable“ nature
		

Views of nature and corresponding policy preferences

(Sotirov & Winkel, 2016; Swedlow, 2002, p. 273)



	Myths of nature	Policy beliefs
Individualism	Nature robust	laissez-faire Free market, greatest scope for business activity Maximum use of natural resources
Egalitarianism	Nature fragile Fragile ecosystems, unsustainable levels of consumption, resources are depleted	Treat ecosystem with great care Limit business activities Decrease consumption Build an alternative society that values smaller scale egalitarian community
Hierarchism	Nature tolerant within given limits	Regulation of human activities Control of nature by experts and procedures Large bureaucratic organizations
Fatalism	Nature unpredictable and capricious	Institutions do not learn, they just cope with unsteady events Make the best of social relationships Use resources by luck

Please discuss:

- Which political cultures can be found in the forest policy arena?
- Do you find the belief/cultures concept fits?



Views of nature and corresponding policy preferences

(Sotirov & Winkel, 2016; Swedlow, 2002, p. 273)



	Myths of physical nature	Policy beliefs	Members
Individualism	Nature robust	laissez-faire Free market, greatest scope for business activity Maximum use of natural resources	Individualistic business interests
Egalitarianism	Nature fragile Fragile ecosystems, unsustainable levels of consumption, resources are depleted	Treat ecosystem with great care Limit business activities Decrease consumption Build an alternative society that values smaller scale egalitarian community	Egalitarian environmental groups
Hierarchism	Nature tolerant within given limits	Regulation of human activities Control of nature by experts and procedures Large bureaucratic organizations	Hierarchical government regulators
Fatalism	Nature unpredictable and capricious	Institutions do not learn, they just cope with unsteady events Make the best of social relationships Use resources by luck	Fatalists

Coalitions and Alliances

- Actors with same „political culture“ often form coalitions to influence policy (2-4 politically active cultures can be usually observed in land-use/environmental policy)
- Depending on the topic, sometimes „inter-cultural“ strategic alliances are formed

Conclusion

- The concept puts beliefs and political cultures center stage in policy analysis
- Belief systems are often resistant, changes difficult

Transfer to the forestry sector: The forest-environment conflict in Germany

The situation in Germany

- Established „Sustainable Forest Management“ (defined majorly by sustainable wood production/yields & multifunctionality)
- Forest as resource for wood/timber- and energy business; Germany has largest timber stock in Europe!
- But: Various societal demands for forests (recreation, conservation...)
- Growing conflict potential over forest demands;
- Central coalitions: Nature conservation vs. Forestry/wood-processing industry (e.g. National park debates...)

Transfer: Forest-environment conflict



Please watch carefully the videos and discuss following questions:

- How does the presentation of the timber cutting measure differ between Greenpeace and the Hesse State Forest Service?
- What picture of nature-society is transported?
- Which ideologies/values have the parties?
- Which (informal) underlying interests can be there?

Hesse State Forest Service:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmysCJiyuPk>

Greenpeace: Camp gegen Abholzung:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5LOd0UVX6g> (in German)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEznN9ML9nk> (Boreal Forests)

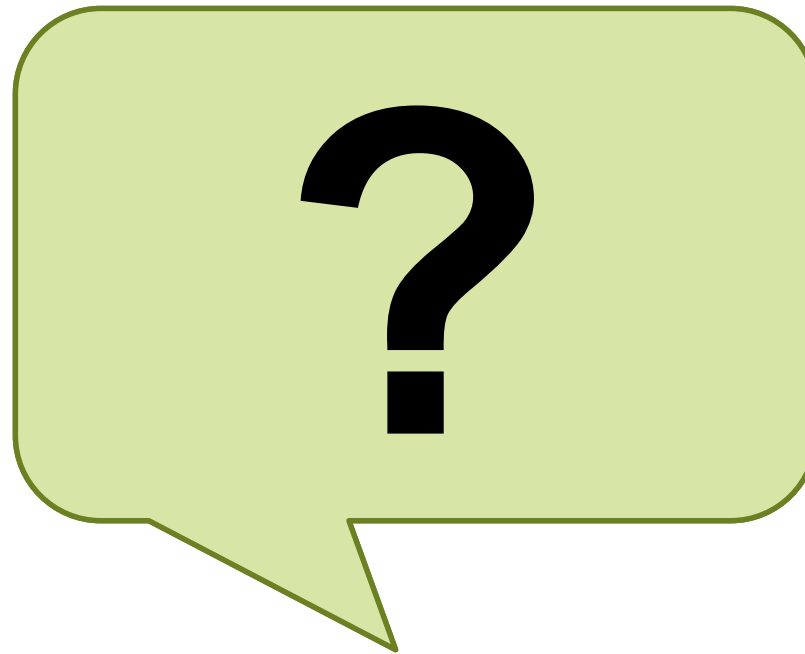
Resource and (largely) an interest conflict

- **Who is responsible** (forest or nature conservation administration?)
 - **Whose policy should regulate** (Forest or Nature Conservation Act)?
 - **Whose budget** should raise to employ more staff?
- ➔ In its sum, the value and interest conflicts can be best displayed as a struggle for institutions of forest governance system over time.



Summary

- Conflict protection ↔ use is central for German forest policy
- Conflict has various dimensions (ideology/beliefs; power; resources)
- In reality, dimensions are often difficult to disentangle
- Conflict resolution efforts in past decades:
 - Institutions for sustainable forest management (good forest management practice; certification schemes - FSC, PEFC)
 - Protected areas
 - More recent/niches: Cooperation (PPP) and participation
 - More recent/niches: Incentive-based instruments in forestry



Finish [2]