Introduction

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1 Swiss Competence Center for Research in Energy, Society and Transition (SCCER CREST)

In 2014, the Swiss Confederation established the Swiss Competence Center for Research in Energy, Society and Transition to respond to important challenges posed by the Swiss energy transition, envisaged by the so-called “Energy Strategy 2050”. It was only in 2017 that 55 researchers within SCCER CREST decided to form a specific work package dealing with energy governance. The work package aims at identifying and providing recommendations to overcome governance challenges, thereby making energy governance more effective, efficient, and transparent. The researchers seek to achieve impact by scientific analysis, by the provision of data or legal recommendations on governance arrangements as well as by the active

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engagement with stakeholders, and by creating new networks within governance systems themselves. This book comprises some of their most important insights from their research during the seven years of SCCER CREST.

To be effective, research on governance needs to cut through the several disciplines that make up the social sciences. As a consequence, our research in energy governance is essentially interdisciplinary: In SCCER CREST, researchers mostly from political science, law, and management contributed to the work package. Nevertheless, research on governance necessarily draws upon frameworks of other disciplines such as sociology and psychology, for instance. Only a broad perception of governance allows us to evaluate, for example, the social acceptance of (energy) regimes or to analyze the changes in investor behavior to complement existing research findings from behavioral economics.

Involving such a great number of disciplines results in the use of a variety of different methods, from normative to qualitative and quantitative empirical methods. These methods include, but are not limited to, content analyses, comparative case studies, network analyses, and interviews, as well as predictive analyses that are based on theoretical modelling and simulations. Sometimes, different problem perceptions, approaches, and methods give rise to conflicting results – this is to be expected and inherent to the scientific process and not to be judged or resolved by the coordinators of a scientific research project.

The variety of researchers involved in CREST’s work package on energy governance introduces a specific set of challenges to overcome barriers to collaboration. First of all, in order to pursue the jointly set goals of our research, a shared perception of the term “governance” is needed (Sect. 2.1). Second, a common understanding of the abilities and limits of the different research methods is required to see what research on “energy governance” might possibly achieve; we provide an overview on the research presented in this book in Sect. 2.2. Furthermore, and inherent to state-sponsored research projects, there is the understandable urge to provide accountability for the research funds spent: Bureaucrats easily succumb to the fallacy that, among any group of researchers, there should be a commonly accepted vision of the future and a commonly accepted way forward; since this is mostly not the case, we conclude this introduction with some thoughts on “narratives” (Sect. 3).

2 Research on Energy Governance

2.1 *On “Governance”*

Theories on “governance” have emerged in and have been transfused between many of the social sciences. The term is used in many different ways today by different researchers (as well as non-academics) and its meaning seems to be quite imprecise and open to many different interpretations. That may be the reason, as Adrian Rinscheid has put it, why various researchers representing different disciplines (social sciences, law, economics) can cooperate under this “umbrella term”. For

the purpose of this research project, we have incompletely theorized the term “governance” in order to start the contemplated research of the energy system and not to lose time trying to unify the several underlying governance theories.

In general, we see that the transformation of a whole industry requires overcoming legal, political, and behavioral obstacles—that is, overcoming situations in which the current state of governance impedes the transformation towards the policy goal and in which more adequate policies, regulations, and processes could facilitate the transformation. Against this backdrop, a common point of reference for our research might have been set by Elinor Ostrom, who would “ask where the rules that individuals use in action situations originate”.¹ The policy process theories applied by Raphael Klein and Matthias Finger basically still use that approach to understand why actors behave as they do; of course, because actors are not totally rational and the policy process is complex, their approach has undergone some refinement.

Applying this perception of governance, we analyze obstacles to good governance by highlighting the role of key actors including the results they achieve. The key actors in energy governance are inherently heterogeneous in their policy preferences as well as in their practices of handling, steering, and defining policies and markets. These actors are also multi-leveled: Some are nested state actors (municipalities, cantons, and federal government), others are non-state and transnational (e.g., individuals, market participants, political parties and interest groups, industry associations, and NGOs). Incorporating this broad battery of actors into a comprehensive—legal, political, and economic—framework of analysis helps to investigate not only formal procedures, such as political and democratic processes, but also market behavior and societal practices. As evidenced in the contribution by Lena Schaffer and Alessio Levis, researchers of energy governance are not only interested in the policies and institutions that have to be implemented and designed for a successful energy transition; they are also investigating how the relevant actors discuss energy policy within the public sphere—that is, how these actors establish governance mechanisms from discourses.

Keeping this in mind, we understand why scholars of political science like Adrian Rinscheid refer to Rod Rhodes in order to shed light on the various understandings of governance, stipulating that governance is a new (at that time) and different (or “complementary”) mode or process of governing that can be distinguished from markets and hierarchies as governing structures.² Governance, according to Rhodes, is described as “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” that are somewhat autonomous from the state and resist central guidance; the “challenge for government is to enable these networks and to seek out new forms of

¹Ostrom (2005), p. 19.

²Rhodes (1996), p. 652.

co-operation”.³ This approach is more comprehensive than those we sometimes find in the economic literature.⁴

Thus, most of our research on energy governance analyzes how the behavior and practices of the actors in the energy industry influence policy implementation and how they feed back into the existing legal, political, and economic framework, reshaping the dynamic energy governance system. Consequently, we focus on the behavior as well as the positive and normative framework of political actors, bureaucracies, courts, international organizations, lobby groups, civil society, economic actors, and individuals; our analysis comprises the emergence of new policies, the enabling of such policies by use of legal instruments and procedures, and the implementation of such policies including their feedback loops. For legal scholars like Markus Schreiber, this requires to look beyond governmental or legislative behavior and to take into account the actions of private actors, including public-private hybrids, and the possibilities for cooperation between the state and the private sector.⁵ For legal scholars, the governance perspective has the advantage of analyzing the actual state of affairs, without being narrowed down too early by preconceived, normative notions such as the rule of law or democracy⁶—this, of course, does not preclude the inclusion of normative elements such as “good governance”. Nevertheless, and again referring to Rhodes, governance by self-organizing networks may be seen as a challenge to democratic accountability, but it might also be seen as a mode of governing that empowers citizens.⁷

2.2 *The Governance of the Energy Industry*

This book is structured in three parts. Part I deals with the interactions between the Swiss and European energy systems and policies, taking into account the Swiss system of multi-level governance. Against the backdrop of these and other framework conditions, in Part II, we take a closer look at state and non-state actors that drive (or are affected by) the energy transition; actors, which might use certain catalysts or which might face obstacles. The first two parts place greater emphasis on international and domestic institutions, laying out legal, political, and business contexts in which incentives and behaviors of various actors are considered. Based on the observed behavior of these actors, in Part III, we illuminate some of the emerging and more detailed questions to be answered with regard to two types of key actors: voters and other stakeholders such as industry players and interest groups. The overarching question that runs through Part III is what type of issues we need

³Rhodes (1996), p. 666.

⁴See, e.g., Williamson (2000), p. 597.

⁵Cf. Hoffmann-Riem (2011), p. 18.

⁶Müller (2008), p. 58 et seq.; Schuppert (2008), p. 13, 27.

⁷Rhodes (1996), p. 666 et seq.

solve in order to mitigate policy and acceptance risks that are expected in the process of an energy transition in Switzerland.

2.2.1 Interactions Between the Swiss and the European Energy System in the Context of the Swiss System of Multi-Level Governance (Part I)

Developments in international energy governance are important and often neglected conditions for the success of the Energy Strategy 2050. Such developments potentially comprise global climate policy, the changing institutional landscape of energy governance, changes in the political economy of renewable energies and European energy geopolitics, developments of global oil trade and markets, and new transnational challenges provoked by a global digital revolution (e.g., cyber security of smart grids). In this first part of the book, we analyze how the Energy Strategy 2050 interacts with such developments: Which developments on the global and European level will impact the success of Swiss energy governance? And how can Switzerland leverage its assets and strengths to support an energy transition on the European or even a global scale? Such questions, of course, are more easily answered by learning from experiences abroad, as seen in the comparative analysis by Sebastian Heselhaus, who describes the quest of the EU and Switzerland to shape the future energy mix: Should these entities combat climate change or prioritize security of supply? In the global context, energy governance also points to quite complex interactions between different actors at multiple levels, which is clearly visible in the field of climate change law: The chapter by Julia Hänni and Tienmu Ma seeks to provide an overview of how this interaction—involving judicial, legislative, and executive actors at the national, European, and international levels—has shaped how the area of climate change is regulated in Switzerland and beyond.

As the contribution by Benjamin Hofmann, David Kolcava and Philipp Thaler shows, Switzerland may be seen as a shaper in European electricity governance: Swiss influence is especially visible in matters related to grid management and cross-border electricity trade. Despite being a non-EU country, Switzerland has relatively high access to important European governance bodies. Switzerland also possesses structural power in serving as a European transit hub for electricity and as an important source of technical expertise. However, the authors highlight uncertainties resulting from the present lack of an electricity agreement between Switzerland and the EU, giving rise to a recommendation to strive for viable forms of energy cooperation with the EU and to strengthen the transit function and technical expertise of the country. Putting a policy transfer from Europe on display, Leonore Haelg, Tobias S. Schmidt and Sebastian Sewerin observe how policy instruments to boost the deployment of RE have diffused from frontrunner countries like Germany to jurisdictions like Switzerland: Switzerland implemented its first comprehensive support policy with the adoption of a cost-covering and technology-specific feed-in tariff in 2009, following Germany's example. Nevertheless, policy designs look

very different in both countries, which makes it interesting to examine the reasons for these policy design differences.

2.2.2 Catalysts and Obstacles for State and Non-state Actors Driving the Energy Transition (Part II)

Given the Swiss federalist system, the enabling of policies in the context of a multi-level governance structure provides interesting insights as well. Martin Föhse emphasizes the fact that the energy sector has been subject to regulation since ancient times, with the cantons as primary drivers of lawmaking in Switzerland. Recently, however, more and more competencies have been transferred to the federal level. This transfer, together with the increasing complexity of the subject matter, has led to a legal framework that is difficult to understand and to apply, even for legal experts. It becomes clear that the Energy Strategy is the result of different energy strategies and networks of affected stakeholders and shaped not only by legalistic considerations of good lawmaking but very much also by dynamics of power, agency, and politics. Particularly, we see that Swiss multi-level governance affects the formulation and implementation of energy policy goals, for instance, because of the necessity to achieve sufficient socio-political acceptance for certain policy instruments. In this context, Raphael Klein and Matthias Finger investigate the impact that the electorate can have on the transition towards carbon neutrality, in particular looking at the Swiss electricity market. They use a hybrid agent-based model that allows them to study which policy instruments are more likely to be implemented depending on the Swiss electricity market progression and on policy actors' interests. They show that the electorate has a limited impact on the policy chosen and on the electricity market. Overall, an environmentally conscious electorate leads policy actors to select the carbon tax as a policy most often, which has the adverse effect to increase the electricity price and to exacerbate the import dependency in winter. At the same time, this is not sufficient to stem the construction of gas turbine power plants.

Confronted with visible state action driving energy governance, we easily lose sight of bottom-up approaches that enact decentralized, local energy strategies. While the energy sector is moving away from a traditional utility regulation to a market regime, we may identify private arrangements that coexist with public-sector regulation. Consequently, it is important to know how legal and political processes are influenced by and impact the practices and processes of local and private actors in the governance system. This way, we account for the fact that energy governance not only comprises state institutions but a broad variety of stakeholders that have their own agendas and interests—e.g., private service providers, existing market participants, and municipalities that all work towards the creation of self-sufficient energy regions or that adopt localized energy strategies. Thus, we acknowledge that these actors construct governance arrangements that do not involve governmental actors (e.g., area networks or virtual power plants using privately owned heat pumps).

One of the newly emerging hybrid actors in energy markets are utilities that not only carry out the public tasks assigned to them by the legislator but that are also active as entrepreneurial entities in the private sector. Andreas Abegg and Phil Baumann shed light on these activities, which range from electricity products for large customers, photovoltaic and e-mobility installations to services in the field of building services engineering, internet offerings, and the sale of household appliances and which can give rise to distortions of competition. As they point out, it is not only cross-subsidization but also financing advantages, exceptions to taxation, and considerable economies of scope that need to be considered when allowing such entities to operate on private markets. In this context of new business models, Mary Jean Bürer, Matthieu de Lapparent, Massimiliano Capezzali, and Mauro Carpita point out that we continue to measure progress on energy transitions in a superficial and extremely limited way, while the study of smart second-generation policies for the energy transition is neglected in the literature. Understanding how to redesign energy governance to allow for business model reconfiguration among incumbents and how to stimulate business model innovation from start-ups and new entrants is important for a viable energy transition in the long term. Existing laws will often not be suited to accommodate a new technology or business model, and the legislator may be slow in reacting to these new challenges. As evidenced in the contribution by Peter Hettich, many innovative business models with a potential of benefiting the consumer might be preempted by overcautious regulation, e.g., looking at the restrictions in the use of smart meter data or taking into account the effects of grid charges. However, as Markus Schreiber shows in his contribution, legal provisions may also serve to promote innovation: In his view, laws which stipulate favorable conditions for renewable energy sources might serve as an obvious example. In his contribution, Markus Schreiber investigates how the legislator, regulatory agencies, and private standard-setting bodies are responding to three different energy innovations: new renewable energy sources, new storage systems, and smart grids. He seeks not only to analyze commonalities and differences in the approach but also to identify best practices.

In summary, these contributions show that a thorough understanding of the agendas, interests, and arrangements of actors involved in the energy transition helps to make recommendations for a suitable legal, political, and business framework for the transformation of energy systems—a framework that fosters the goals of energy market regulation on all levels of the state and strengthens private autonomy at the same time. In particular, we have to ask which innovative forms of governance (e.g., network governance and forms of self-regulation) help to achieve a sustainable energy future, enabling adaptive and interactive systems which are able to learn and improve.

2.2.3 Understanding the Pressure Points of Policy and Acceptance Risks in the Context of Everchanging Framework Conditions (Part III)

In order to find more effective policies, it is important to know how interests and practices of key stakeholders can influence energy policymaking. Only if the role played by competing domestic interests is understood, can a sustainable transformation of energy systems succeed. In light of the asymmetric redistribution effects generated by a transformation of the energy system, we again need to look beyond state actors and make inquiries about the socio-political acceptance of certain policies by a variety of stakeholders such as voters, interest groups, and individual companies. Moreover, energy governance needs to respond to the puzzle that public acceptance for renewable energy technologies and policies is high, whereas the implementation of policy innovations is slow, particularly compared to other countries. In order to trace the socio-political barriers of a sustainable transformation of the energy system, we therefore need to examine strategic choices and other sources of influence asymmetries among different interests. With this in mind, the first two chapters of Part III look into challenges around voter perceptions, and the last two chapters focus on other stakeholders such as interest groups and individual companies.

Moving beyond the topic of diffuse public support, this part of the book first identifies two specific factors of energy policymaking in Switzerland that need to be addressed with regard to voter preferences. Here, media coverage of certain issues plays an important role: Adrian Rinscheid and Linards Udris investigate the patterns in media coverage in Swiss energy policymaking and the extent to which the media influence voters' decisions at the ballot. Based on the media coverage in the run-up to three recent energy-related referenda (2015 initiative "Energy tax instead of VAT"; 2016 nuclear phase-out initiative; 2017 referendum on the federal Energy Strategy 2050), they demonstrate that the three energy policy referenda are characterized by patterns similar to non-energy votes but also have distinct features. They find that the failure of the phase-out initiative can be partly explained by exposure to newspaper coverage: One in four left-wing voters who had initially been in favor of the popular initiative but were exposed to strongly negative coverage about it during the "hot" campaign phase changed their initial voting intention. Looking at the evolution of public discourses on energy policy in general, Lena Schaffer and Alessio Levis analyze another important factor reflecting policy discussion and contestation within the political arena from a more macroscopic viewpoint: They make a case for the disaggregation of energy policy and its public perception to add to our understanding of energy transition pathways, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the idiosyncrasies of Swiss energy policy regarding temporal as well as sectoral variation. In their contribution, they argue that an increased politicization of energy policy may affect future policy choice, and thus any account on energy transition policy needs to scrutinize potential feedback effects from policies that will manifest in policy discourses.

Another crucial factor for achieving the objectives of the Swiss Energy Strategy 2050 is to mobilize sufficient amounts of capital. While investments in energy infrastructure used to be exclusively the domain of electric utilities, recent experience shows a rise in investor diversity, suggesting an increasing importance of institutional investors, such as pension funds and insurance companies and community finance. However, despite the entrance of new investors and significantly reduced technology cost, “soft costs”—e.g., the policy risk premium and the cost of capital—still hamper the financing of projects in Switzerland. Lowering these costs—which are perceived differently depending on investor type—may be important for achieving Swiss energy policy targets.

Looking specifically at wind energy, we see that the administrative processes in Switzerland are particularly long and complex, with the planning phase taking up to a decade, more than twice as long as the European average. Against the backdrop of the slow development of wind energy projects in Switzerland, Anna Ebers Broughel and Rolf Wüstenhagen quantify the risk premium that lengthy permitting processes imply for wind energy investors in Switzerland; they suggest ways to reduce policy risk, i.e., ways to design “investment-grade” policies. They have empirically investigated the policy risk premium for financing renewable energy projects to get a realistic understanding of how capital flows from different investor groups (e.g., institutional investors vs electric utilities vs retail investors) will change under various policy scenarios. Their model shows that the highest profitability risks are related to the availability of feed-in tariffs, but other changes in the permitting process can also have a critical impact on the project’s bottom line. The findings illustrate that energy project developers in Switzerland face a significant policy risk premium in the pre-construction stage.

Part III closes with the work by Duygan et al. by zooming out and providing a bird’s eye view of perceptions on the energy strategies pursued by various interest groups, companies, and cantonal administrations in Switzerland. With regard to issue dimension, too, their work provides a rare opportunity for us to peruse through those actors’ perceptions on a wide range of transition measures that have been debated in the context of the Energy Strategy 2050: electric vehicles, wind energy, deep geothermal energy, hydropower, and feed-in tariffs. By using novel data from an original survey conducted with more than 300 energy actors, they show that there is large variance in how realistic these actors think the Energy Strategy 2050 measures are in each of the aforementioned energy subdomains. Some actors believe strongly that the considered measures are absolutely realistic, while others believe the opposite. In some cases, such beliefs are correlated with the degree to which the actors are engaged with media-related activities, implying that what voters see in the media could reflect only the perception that is on one end of the stakeholder perception spectrum. As Rinscheid and Udris find out, voter opinions can depend substantially on what is covered by mainstream media. Therefore, these findings combined, we illuminate an emerging challenge that policymakers will face in the near future: How can they make sense of the divergence in energy stakeholder perceptions about the transition paths, and how can they communicate on it with voters without biases?

In short, Part III of this volume covers the concluding elements of the regulatory cycle, evaluating the impact of specific energy policies on various actors and their views. It also reminds us of the fact that, in addition to designing and implementing specific energy policies, policymakers in Switzerland will likely be required to better communicate the diverging views and preferences held by energy actors to their own voters. Elections and referenda will then determine the level of public acceptance for each of these measures, all of which gives rise to new issues on diverse political agendas that will let new legislation emerge.

3 A Narrative for the Energy Transformation?

Given the plethora of findings and recommendations compiled in this volume, the reader rightly will ask whether these can be stitched together into an integrated narrative, thereby providing guidance on how to transform an energy industry.

In general, public funding agencies nowadays are keen on having such narratives because they make it easier to explain to politicians and taxpayers how research projects have contributed to the achievement of political goals. For communication purposes, significant funds are reserved for image videos and shiny brochures, even in basic research, even in the social sciences. On the upside, a decreasing distance to politicians makes it easier for social scientists to obtain third party funding to pursue their research interests. On the downside, such funds rarely are granted without strings attached. When funding research in the social sciences, politicians are not only deprived of photo opportunities in laboratories or high-tech industrial plants; they will also have a hard time to accept that most research that is done in the social sciences will materialize just in text and will not be commercialized: There are no technologies to be explored and developed, no innovations to be developed for commercialization.

In contrast to technical research producing technical innovation, the research results in the social sciences are less tangible. In particular when pursuing controversial political projects, politicians might still hope that social scientist help them to achieve “social innovation”—that is, to find ways to increase the social acceptance of the government’s plans for the energy industry. It is questionable, however, whether a government should ask researchers to engage in such “social engineering”. Commonly accepted policy goals (e.g., a carbon-free energy supply) should not be mixed up with political goals (i.e., the Energy Strategy 2050). A statement by Henry Kissinger comes to mind:

[I]n some respects the intellectual has never been more in demand; that he makes such a relatively small contribution is not because he is rejected but because his function is misunderstood. He is sought after enthusiastically but for the wrong reasons and in pursuit

of the wrong purposes. . . . [A]ll too often what the policymaker wants from the intellectual is not ideas but endorsement.⁸

Of course, politicians wish their policy proposals to appear science-based and, consequently, without alternative. Vice versa, researchers always have to fear that their research could be steered or channeled to support a political goal. Such fears are fomented when, as it is often done these days, the research results of very diverse research groups are boiled down into simple narratives that tell readers, briefly, how funded research contributed to one or another political goal. As John Kay and Mervyn King recently phrased this phenomenon:

Our need for narratives is so strong that many people experience a need for an overarching narrative – some unifying explanatory theme or group of related themes with very general applicability. These grand narratives may help them believe that complexity can be managed, that there exists some story which describes ‘the world as it really is’. Every new experience or piece of information can be interpreted in the light of that overarching narrative.⁹

Drawing from the intriguing allegory of the hedgehog and the fox, Kay and King circumscribe beautifully what is wrong with such an approach:

The hedgehog knows one big thing, the fox many little things. The hedgehog subscribes to some overarching narrative; the fox is skeptical about the power of *any* overarching narrative. The hedgehog approaches most uncertainties with strong priors; the fox attempts to assemble evidence before forming a view of ‘what is going on here’. We both have the experience of dealing with researchers for radio and television programmes: if you profess an opinion that is unambiguous and – for preference – extreme, a car will be on its way to take you to the studio; if you suggest that the issue is complicated, they will thank you for your advice and offer to ring you back. They rarely do. People understandably like clear opinions but the truth is that many issues inescapably involve saying ‘on the one hand, but on the other’.¹⁰

In order to provide some closure to this extensive research project, the editors of this volume would very much like to provide the readers with the two or three “most important” recommendations for decision makers. However, this would devalue, even deface, the work of our researchers. In order to properly consolidate the results contained in this volume, the assumptions and value judgments that are the foundations of our work would need to be discussed extensively. It is very unlikely that a consensus could be reached on only a few of the many parameters that influence the success of the energy transformation. With good reasons, for example, the assumptions of the government regarding the electricity demand in 2050 may be regarded as frivolous by some or as well-founded by others. Consequently, with an aggregation of our results and a push for consensus, recommendations will become much more generic and, therefore, meaningless. Even if such consensus could be achieved, good advice for decision-makers would require not only a reference narrative but also an

⁸Kissinger (1959), p. 30, 33.

⁹Kay and King (2020), p. 219.

¹⁰Kay and King (2020), p. 222.

admission that this narrative could be false; we would therefore need to provide decision-makers with a set of alternative narratives that might be relevant, as well.¹¹ Since, in this volume, the overarching narrative is set by the government in the form of its Energy Strategy 2050, it seems indeed a formidable task for researchers to challenge the government's narrative in every conceivable way in order to detect misconceptions and potentials to make it more resilient to alternate futures. This would constitute a huge task in itself and a task that does not form part of the research design chosen here.

While the urge to disseminate the results of large (and expensive) research projects to the wider public is innocuous, the push for integrated narratives is not. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a narrative as "a story or representation used to give an explanatory or justificatory account of a society, period, etc." Based on this definition, Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Shiller shows, in his recently published book, how such narratives may go viral and cause or support changes in the economy and in economic behavior.¹² For political scientists familiar with narrative studies, this is nothing new: Already in 2012, our research partner Giorel Curran emphasized that narratives and discourses are central to how we interpret and understand the world:

The capacity to construct and disseminate compelling stories about particular issues is hence critical to an agent's capacity to advance their interests (sic!).¹³

In policy studies, the relevance of narratives has even led to the development of a distinct research program, bound together by the "Narrative Policy Framework", which has resulted in several hundred academic publications over the past decade.¹⁴ These studies focus on the power of narratives in various ways, for instance in terms of their influence on public perceptions. As Elizabeth A. Shanahan and colleagues put it:

Policy narratives are the lifeblood of politics. These strategically constructed 'stories' contain predictable elements and strategies whose aim is to influence public opinion toward support for a particular policy preference.¹⁵

Giorel Curran rightly points out that "[t]he capacity to shape the main knowledge claims of discourses so that the interests of some actors are promoted while others are contained thus connotes a considerable exercise of power."¹⁶ Such power has not been granted to the editors of this volume. In order to form a narrative, we would need to select the supporting elements suitable for the composition of a storyline, bypassing a process that normally is, at least in part, left to the peer review process that validates contributions to the progress of science. Conflicting results, that

¹¹ Kay and King (2020), p. 285.

¹² Shiller (2019).

¹³ Curran (2012), p. 236.

¹⁴ E.g., Shanahan et al. (2011), p. 535 et seq.; Shanahan et al. (2018), p. 173 et seq.

¹⁵ Shanahan et al. (2011), p. 374.

¹⁶ Curran (2012), p. 236.

normally would point to possibilities for further research, would most probably find their place based on how they fit the overarching narrative. Furthermore, connecting the research results of this volume towards an integrated narrative would necessarily be a construct, since the individual researchers involved never have intended that their results should support a general storyline. In short: Joint visions and common narratives are not indispensable parts of the scientific method but rather political instruments.

The analysis of discourses and narratives in a certain field of interest *ex post* is completely different from drafting and constructing narratives for the use of agencies and policymakers *ex ante*. While the *ex post* analysis of narratives is an accepted field of scientific research, the *ex ante* construction of narratives forms part of a playground for public affairs departments and spin doctors. We are confident that the readers of this volume will understand our qualms, that they will accept our conclusion that there is no easy recipe to follow here, and that they will enjoy the diversity of insights furnished to them when reading this book.

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