

From the streets of Brussels to sites of local materialization

A return journey to evaluate (un-)sustainable pathways of bioenergy policy mobility and translations

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Governance of (un-)sustainability?!

“I strongly believe in the potential of green growth. I therefore want Europe’s Energy Union to become the world number one in renewable energies” (Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission President)

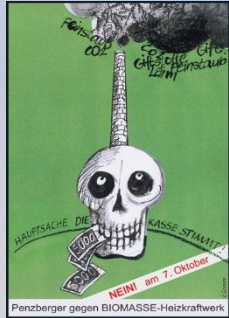
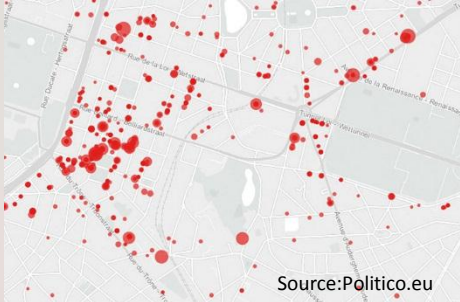
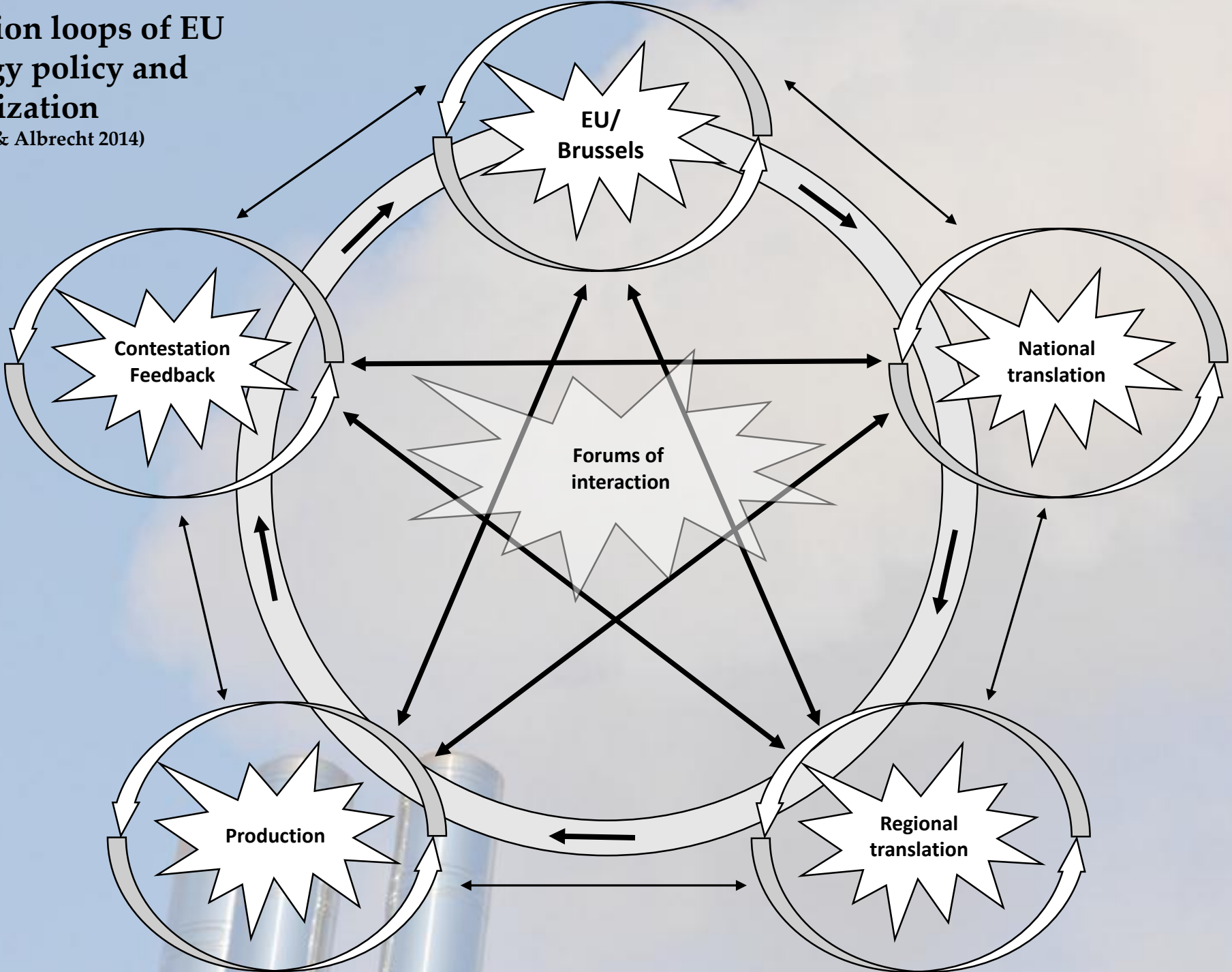
- Economic growth/development & Sustainability: “green growth”, “sustainable growth”, ...
- Common framing of development/policy in sustainable terminology to combat problematization of climate change and environmental degradation (EU, OECD, UN, ...)

Questions:

- Are these ambitious proclamations bound to deliver fundamental changes to reduce our society’s environmental impact or merely to sustain unsustainable practices through a democratic rhetoric of sustainability ? (e.g. Blühdorn, 2013)
- How are ambitions/aims translated between policy design and materialization and vice versa?

Translation loops of EU bioenergy policy and materialization

(Kortelainen & Albrecht 2014)



Looking at (un-)sustainable translations

Brussels (Design/translations):

- “our bible is the directive” DG ENER officer: allow national translation of targets/approach
- Influences: incumbent energy industries, associations, DG & COREPER priorities, NGOs
- EC “puts break” on sustainable issues

National translations:

- Focus on own industries/strengths/resources/legislation
- Own resource vs. import oriented (externalization of sustainability)

Regional translations:

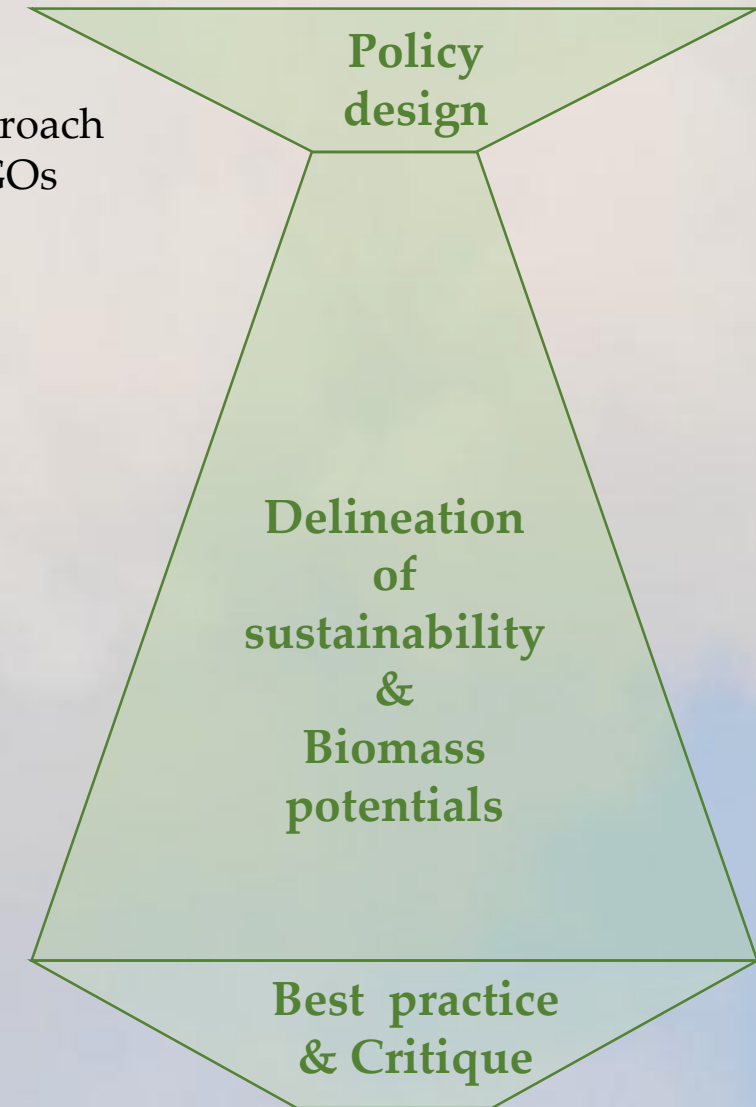
- Regional boosterism, local economy first approach, strong economical reasoning,
- local, added regional value: sustainability/environmental impacts as side issue

Production/market translations:

- Feasibility, market gap, pragmatism, competition with fossil fuels
- consumer argument: cheaper (pay back time) & local value

Contestation/Feedback translations:

- Best practice examples towards policy alterations (economic/Co2 success)
- Economic (industry/entrepreneurs) vs. environmental (NGO) critique



Wrap up....

- Lot of approaches/translations are un-sustainable and mere development with a sustainable rhetoric
- Energy as investment issue compared to environmental protection: reshuffling of responsibilities away from Environmental authorities (e.g. DG ENVI, national ministries,..)
- Missing binding EU framework for sustainability of biomass (heavy resistance) or auditing environmental performance of best practice examples
- Problematic pathway to market renewable solutions in terms of return on investment and cheaper practice to consumers (does fossil heating provide return on investment?)
- Allowing policy translations that externalize environmental aspects (import based) are problematic to develop a sustainable energy transition.

Thank you

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