100% CLIMATE NEUTRALITY
Pathways towards a smart society

100% CLIMATE NEUTRALITY
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Track A2: How do cities overcome challenges in their climate transition?

Innovation and Policy Learning in Municipalities

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I.

INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF MUNICIPALITIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Increased Importance of Municipalities

2015 UN Paris climate conference (COP21):

- **2°C & efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C**
- **Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs)**
  - **Voluntary national pledges**
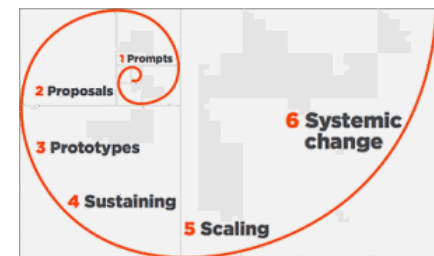 - **Bottom-up approach (instead of top-down targets & deadlines Kyoto Protocol approach)**

Increased Importance of Municipalities

Cities/municipalities are:

- *Major sources of greenhouse gas emissions*

- *Laboratories for experimentation and innovation:*

   — **Climate policy learning *in* and *between* municipalities**

   — **Possible upscaling of innovative city climate measures?**

Sources for illustrations: http://blog.scientix.eu/2015/08/virtual-laboratories-in-teaching-and-learning-science/ and
http://resilia-solutions.eu/2015/11/upscaling-social-innovation-or-the-processes-of-maintaining-grassroots-initiatives-2/

Increased Importance of Municipalities

- *Research has primarily focused on:*
  - ➤ Environmental leader cities and their networks (e.g. C40 and the Covenant of Mayors)
  - ➤ Large/global cities

- *Relatively little attention on:*
  - ➤ Small and medium-sized cites/municipalities
  - ➤ Structurally disadvantaged cites/municipalities

II.

EXPERTS AND POLICY MAKERS

Expert Knowledge and Policy Solutions
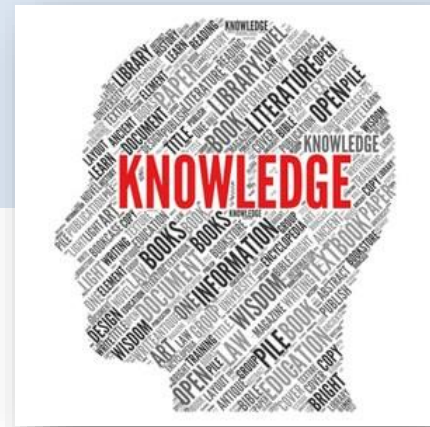
- *'Without knowledge there is no (perceived) problem, no public awareness and consequently no policy process.'* **(Jänicke, 1997, p.7)**

- *'[However,] ...adequate knowledge about the problem itself and available response options is a necessary - although by no means a sufficient - condition for designing and operating effective [solutions]....[P]olicy cannot simply be derived from knowledge, however firm the knowledge base may be'* **(Underdal, 2000, p.3 and p.5)**

Divergence between scientific prescription/expert recommendations and policy outcomes (Keohane, 1997, p.1):

- *'It is easy to assume that those who resist scientifically endorsed environmental policies are ignorant or irrational. Although this characterisation may sometimes be correct, it often leads to superficial analysis and misdiagnosis. Rationality does not simply imply correctness, but merely the pursuit of strategies that are consistent with one's objectives in the light of information available at reasonable cost.'*

# Why Municipalities Fail to Implement Recommendations by Experts:

- **Different local political priorities**:
  - **Lack of political will**
- **Different timelines:**
  - **For example, local government committee schedules, electoral cycle)**
- **Lack of data**
- **Lack of resources** including:
  - **Financial resources**
  - **Staff resources (e.g. few staff and/or high turnover)**
  - **Knowledge resources**
- **Resistance from powerful actors** (e.g. corporations, political parties, stakeholders)
- **Lack of involvement of stakeholders and wider civil society**

Major Tasks and Challenges for Experts:

- **Identify and diagnose problems**
- **Propose effective, efficient and ambitious but also realistic solutions**
- **Supply of *'advanced'* knowledge to help build capacity**
- **Secure funding (e.g. for research, consultancy work)**

Source: https://www.toonpool.com/cartoons/No%20problems%20only%20challenges%20fish_171035

Not all experts always identify 'rational' solutions…
The text in the middle of the complex formula reads:
'Then a miracle occurs'
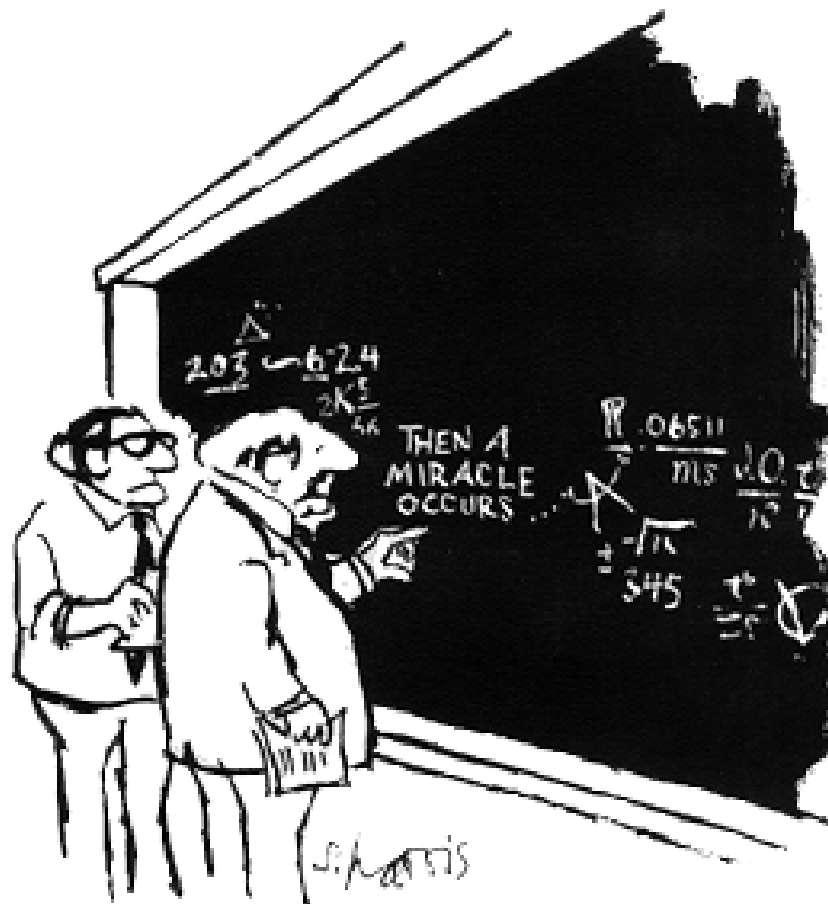
"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

Major Challenges for (Local) Politicians/Practitioners:

- **Mobilise actors (including stakeholders) to undertake action**

- Environmental problems are typically *collective action* problems about *public goods*:
  - Benefits are often widely dispersed while the costs are frequently concentrated

- Create win-win strategies which help to reframe the problem:
  - Ecological modernisation, green economy, green jobs, etc.
  - Rebranding of cities/municipalities (e.g. climate city)
  - Transformations produce winners and losers

- Make use of policy windows:
  - For example, local elections, Paris Agreement, Fridays for Future

Issue Attention Cycle

Anthony Downs (1972), 'Up and Down with Ecology. The Issue Attention Cycle', *The Public Interest,* vol.28, no. 1, pp.38-50.

Five phases of the issue attention cycle:
1) Pre-problem stage
2) Alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm
3) Realising the cost of significant progress
4) Gradual decline of intense public interest, and
5) Post-problem stage

II.

INNOVATION AND POLICY LEARNING

Innovation May Occur Through:

1) **Policy learning** (emulation, transfer and diffusion)

2) **Policy networks** (e.g. transnational networks to disseminate knowledge, identify best practice and establish trust)

3) **International and transnational cooperation** (such as EU (e.g. Covenant of Mayors), OECD and UN)

4) **Economic competition** (e.g. harmonisation of standards)

5) **Coercion** (e.g. more powerful actors demand policy transfer/innovation)

- **Policy convergence through internal learning without transfer: Similar problems require similar solutions**

Policy Learning and Transfer:

- **More easily achievable between similar types of actors** (e.g. similar size, similar resources, similar culture, common language, etc.)

- **General ideas and goals/targets** are more easily transferred than detailed plans and implementation measures

- **Policy instruments** (e.g. fiscal incentives, voluntary agreements) are often altered in the transfer process to fit the national/regional/local context

- **Policy styles** (i.e. relationship between government actors and interest groups/stakeholders) are **difficult to transfer**
  - **National, regional and local context matters**
  - **Municipalities are embedded in national political systems**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Concluding Remarks

- **Municipalities as laboratories for innovation and transformation:**
  - **Transformations produce winners and losers**
- **Transnational networks can encourage policy learning and transfer between municipalities**:
  - **Disseminate knowledge, identify best practice, establish trust**
  - **Common language and understanding are important**
  - **General ideas and goals/targets are more easily transferred than detailed plans and implementation measures**
- **Data is key** for informed **action**
- Local/regional/national **context matters**
- **Expert advice is highly valuable for municipalities**
  - **Experts and municipalities often have different timelines, resources, etc. and sometimes follow different operating logics**