

Electricity – commodity or common property?

Implications of people's attitudes for the forming of sustainable energy policies.

MILEN Conference 2012

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Facebook campaign 2010

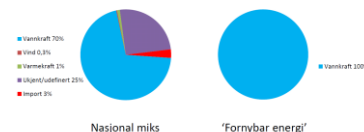
“This is a people’s movement directed towards our authorities! It is soon time to start using the good old H3 tariff. Those who use less than 20.000 kWh (which covers what is most necessary for sustaining a minimum standard of living) should obtain electricity at a very low price, while those who use more should pay more. In this way we obtain a more social profile so that those who over-consume and lives in luxury (*velter seg i luksus*) must also pay more for this per kWh.”



Background for the study

- Project 2009-11 on information as a policy instrument for energy savings
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews

Barents Energi AS / Varanger Kraft tilbyr deg sertifikat 'Fornybar energi'. Dette betyr at vi garanterer at du bare betaler for strøm fra fornybare energikilder. Et slikt sertifikat sikrer at det blir produsert like mye fornybar kraft som den kraftmengden du bruker. Sertifikatet koster 25 kroner i måneden.



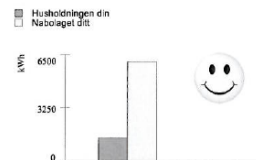
Figuren til venstre viser den nasjonale miksen av kraft (varedeklarasjon), som er utarbeidet av NVE. Den gjelder for kunder av Barents Energi som ikke har valgt sertifikatet 'Fornybar energi'. Figuren til høyre viser miksen du betaler for gjennom å velge sertifikatet 'Fornybar energi'.

Vil du vite mer?
Om den nasjonale miksen: <http://www.nve.no/nytt/mekend/du-velger-energi-og-energi-og-energi>
Om Barents Energi og sertifikatet 'Fornybar energi': www.barents-energi.no/om-barents-energi (se Privat, Kraft, Fornybar energi)

Ny informasjon: Sammenlign forbruket ditt med andre eneboliger i 1388 Borgen.

De fleste eneboliger i dette området bruker normalt mindre enn 6100 kWh i september og januar.*

Husholdningen din brukte 1400 kWh i denne periode i år.
Forskjellen utgjør 77 %.



The Norwegian Context – the coming of an open market

- Hydro Power
- Before 1991:
 - Two-price tariff
 - Wattmeter
 - Limit power outtake
- After 1991:
 - Energy Act
 - Deregulated
 - Free to choose supplier



The Norwegian context – right to access the commons

- The rivers
- Outdoor Recreation Act (1957)
 - The public has the right to access (also camp) and passage
 - Even private property





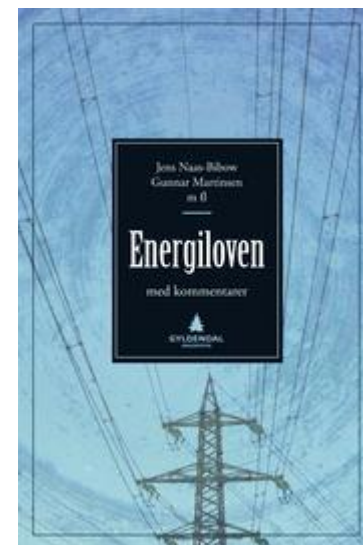
Electricity: Two different attitudes/logics

- A market good
 - One price
 - Externalities
- A common resource
 - Ours (right to access)
 - Justice
 - Implications
 - Export
 - Pricing system

Electricity as a market good

Tommy: "As long as I am paying for it, it is OK."

Lars: "Yes, if it affects the environment, you just increase the price, then you would not have the ability to pay for it, and it will be regulated that way."



Electricity as a common resource

Jon: «I am not a communist, but when it comes to electricity, I am a bit like that. It is a national thing in my opinion. It is ours. It is our rivers they have messed with. It is we who dammed it up».

Frode: “To the extent that we can help others saving electricity, help other people in the world, then we have an obligation to do it as human beings and as a society in the same way as we save and use other resources in a sensible way. It is a resource that can be used somewhere else instead of just wasting it. If we can do that, we can use electricity in a sensible way”.



Electricity as a common resource- the pricing system

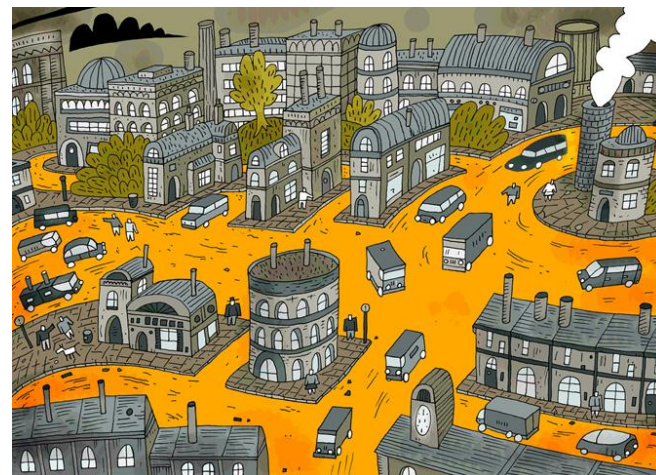
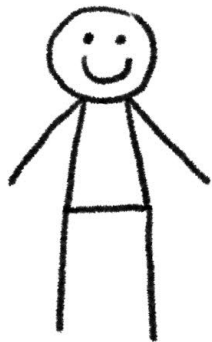
Gro: «Then we have to do it in such a way that if you use more than a certain amount, the cost will double. We should have a norm for how much it costs to heat a house, how much electricity we have to accept at a regular price, and those who want luxury have to pay more.»

Logics – theoretical background

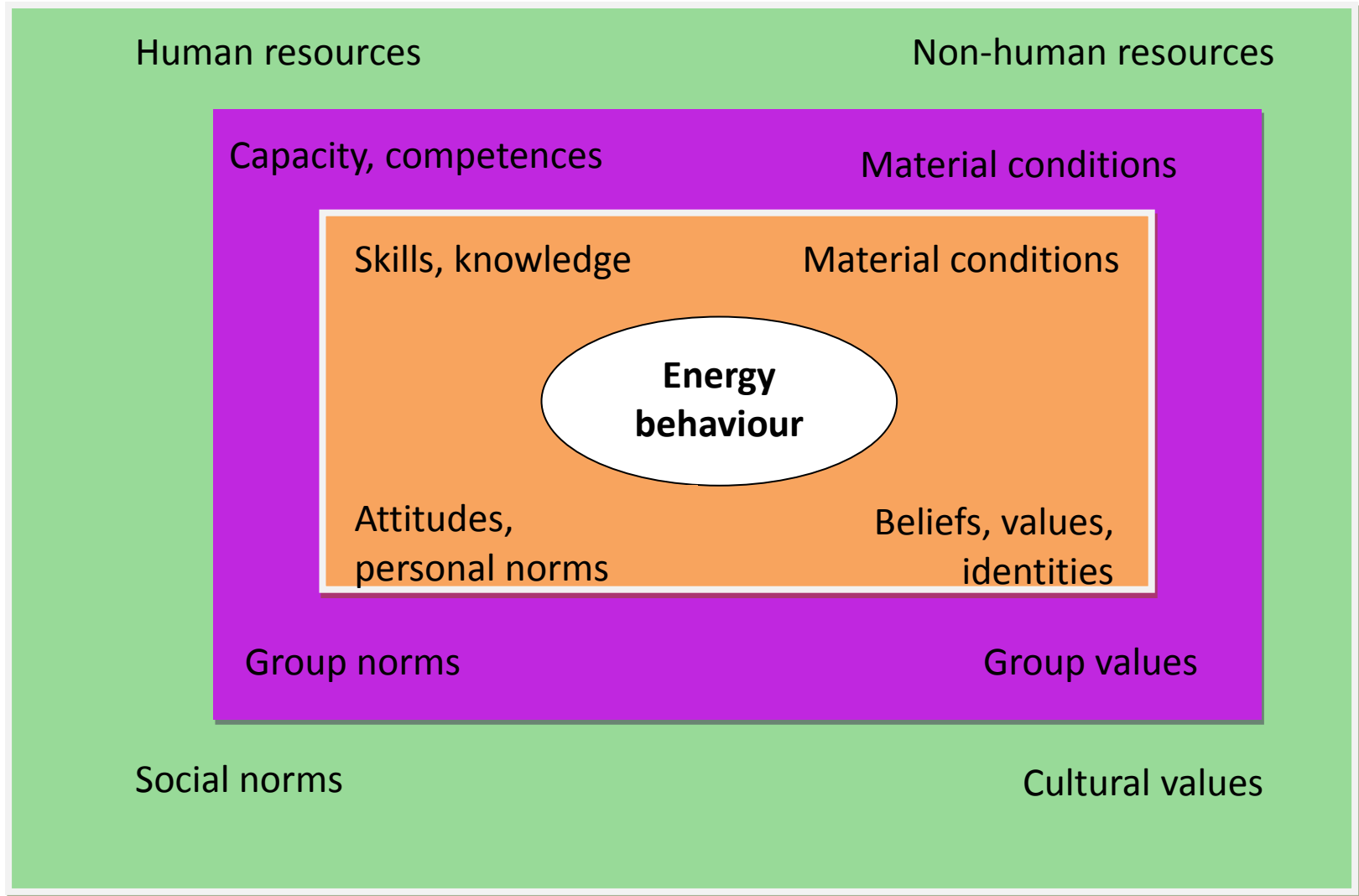
- Sen, Sagoff and Nyborg
- Fields of rationality
 - What factors make up a given logic for action?



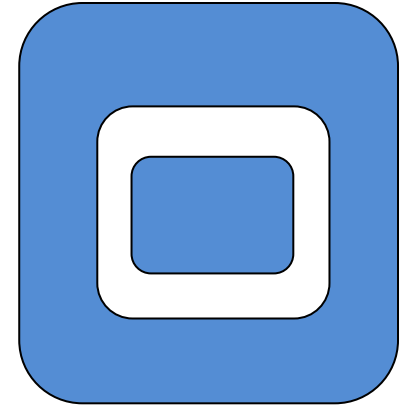
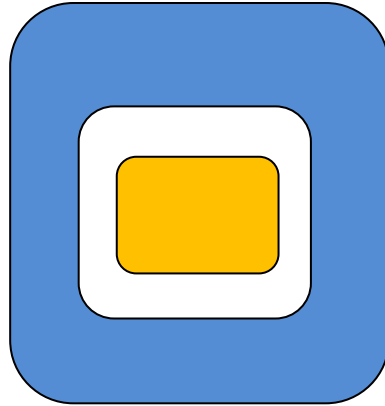
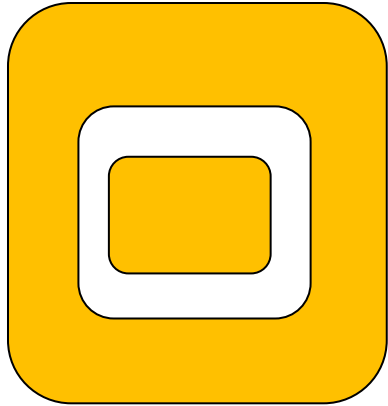
The levels



Field of rationality: Configuration of factors influencing behaviour (Westskog et al. 2011)

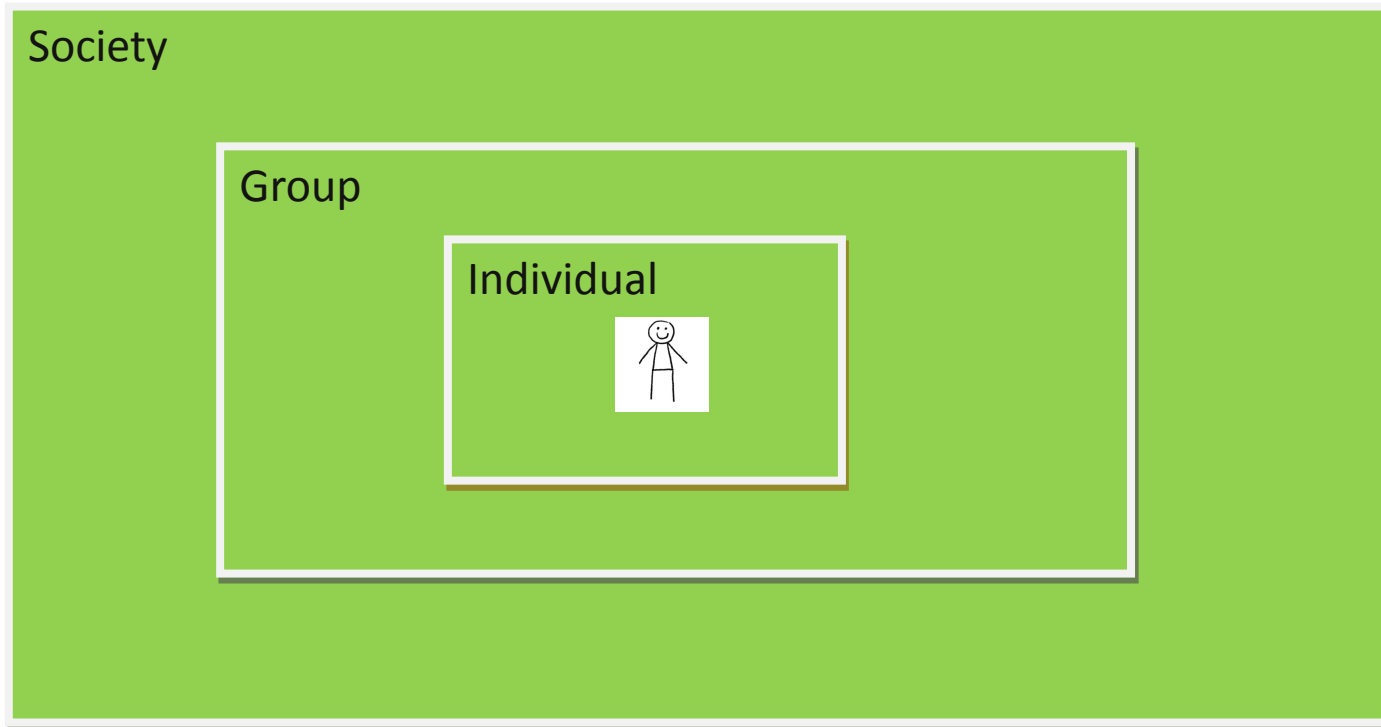


Example: moving from Norway to France



"The reason stateways fail to modify folkways is that policymakers often get it wrong – the experiences the state manipulates are not the experiences that produce the habits that produce the visible patterns they seek to change."
(Stephen Turner 1994: 104)

Policy: matching or changing the existing logic



Importance of coherence - justice

Policy: flat price independent of the level of consumption

Sissel: «It makes me irritated to see those who are building 500 m² cabins , and then they keep the heat on everywhere. I am supposed to save electricity, while they ..., that is what I think. I find that almost despicable. If everybody is supposed to save, then everybody has to contribute.»

Importance of coherence - export

Policy: export when commercially viable

Kåre: «This gives me a bad taste in the mouth because they are draining our energy reservoirs and selling it to Europe, which then makes electricity prices in Norway go up. This should not be allowed, it should have been regulated how much one is allowed to reduce the water level in the reservoirs.»



Sell when
commercially viable



Logic: Market

Sell when we have fulfilled
the basic needs of Norwegians
at a reasonable price



Logic: Common

Conflict
Protest

Concluding remarks

- Different logics – different policy views
- Particularly interesting:
 - Price as a signal of justice, not only efficiency
- Policy: either fit with existing logic or seek to change logic
- Attitudes/logic influenced by a range of factors
- Reintroduce a two-price system for electricity?

