



# A Contested Nature of Coal Phase-Out in the Czech Republic

<sup>1</sup>Petr Ocelík

(<sup>1</sup>Lukáš Lehotský, <sup>2</sup>Kamila Svobodová, <sup>2</sup>Markéta Hernychová)

<sup>1</sup> *Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University*

<sup>2</sup> *Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague*



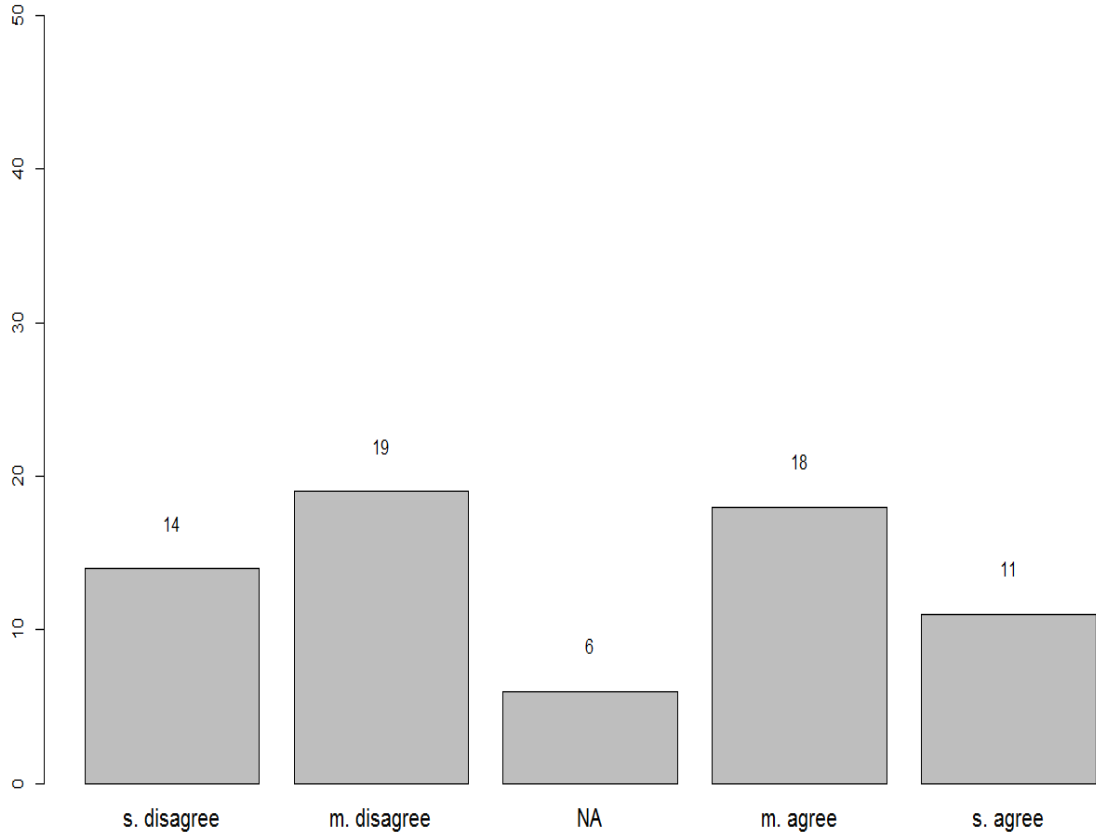
# Center for Energy Studies (CENERS)

- CENERS is a research platform that applies **political science perspective** to study of the **energy field**
- key research areas:
  - energy in foreign policy (focus on V4 countries, Germany, and Russian Federation)
  - European energy policy (focus on external dimension)
  - energy transition (focus on climate change and coal-related policies)

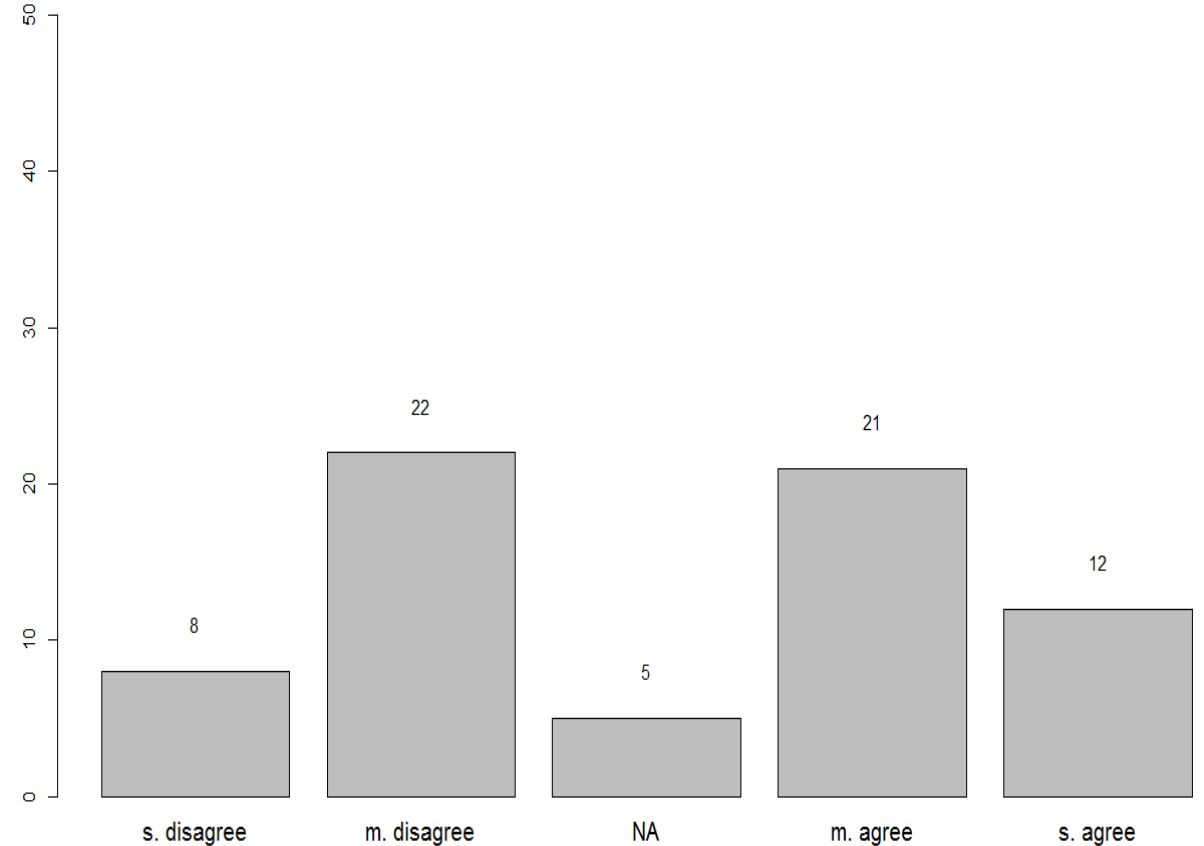
# Research context: a contested transition

- coal phase-out is a part of **energy transition process** that increases **policy uncertainty**
  - any related **policy change** requires support of relevant **policy actors** (Dermont et al. 2017)
  - they **compete** over definitions of specific **transition pathways** (Geels and Schot 2007)
- **Czech Republic** faces a strategic decision: **how to phase-out**
- a **key decision on mining limits postponed** to 2020

**Coal should remain a key part of energy mix and its mining should be developed further (N = 68)**



**Economic benefits of coal mining to society are irreplaceable (N = 68)**



data collected for 68 organizations (state agencies, political parties, NGOs, research organizations, and industry) involved in the coal domain

# Political dimension: advocacy coalitions perspective

- **policy actors** (typically) cannot achieve their objectives on their own
- **public policies are shaped by interactions and coalition formation** where actors share information as well as resources, and exercise power against rival coalitions (Stoddart & Tindall 2015)
- the **advocacy coalition** perspective defines coalition as a group of actors that:
  - (1) share **policy beliefs**; and
  - (2) engage in **mutual coordination**

# Results: usual suspects

- The **Industry Coalition:**

- **dominant coalition** with superior resources and **direct access to decision-making**
- huge **vested interests** that go against transition

- consists of **17 organizations:**

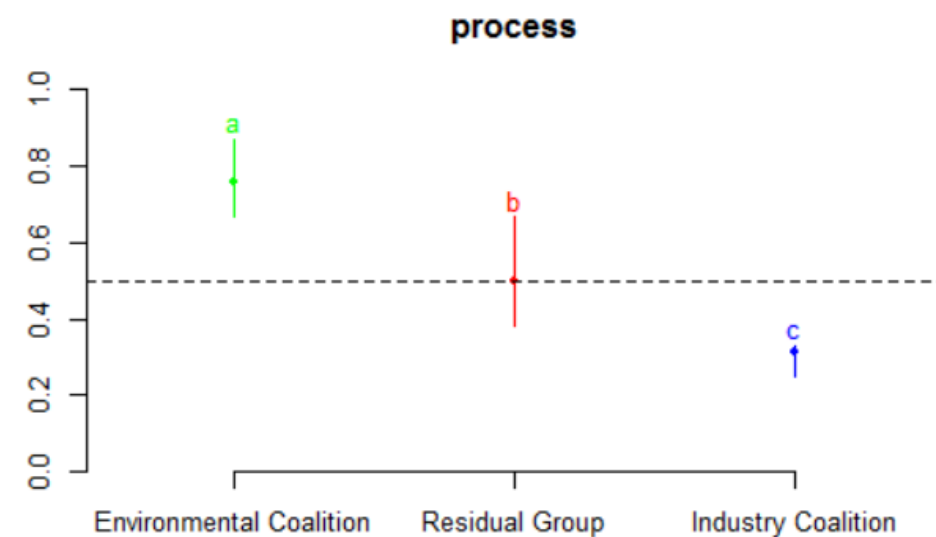
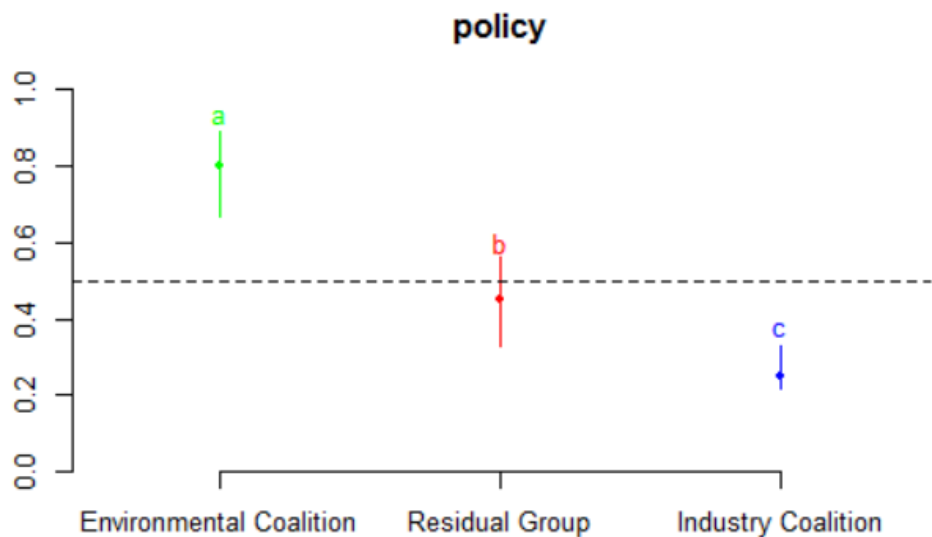
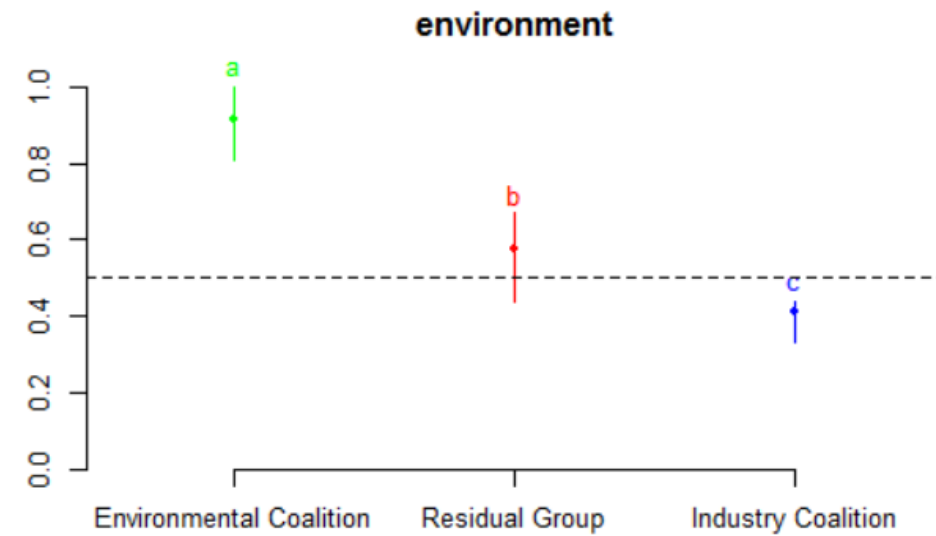
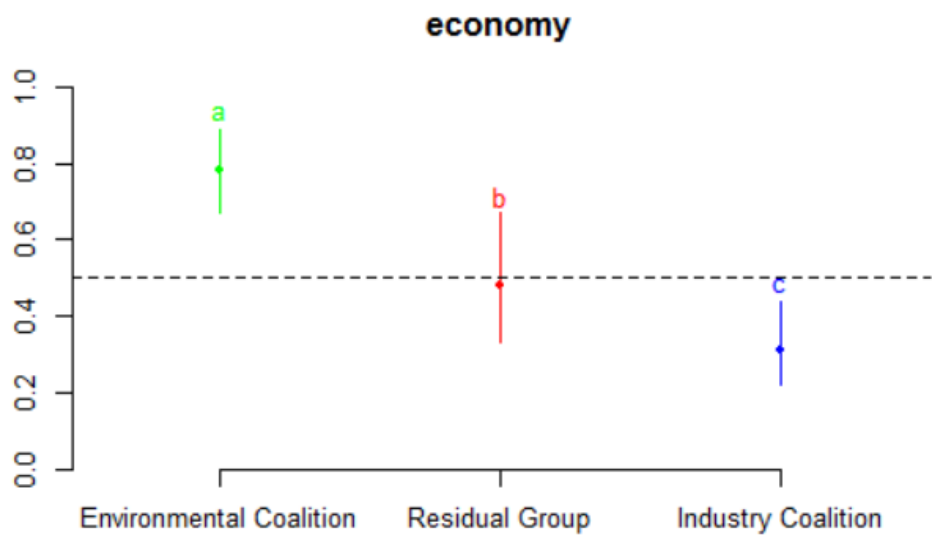
- 3 political parties (central)
- 2 political parties (Ústí region)
- 2 state agencies (central)
- 1 state agency (Ústí region)
- 2 regional agencies (Ústí region)
- 6 companies

- The **Environmental Coalition:**

- **minor coalition** reliant on its **relational capacity** and **expert knowledge**

- consists of **18 organizations:**

- 8 ENGOs
- 2 state agencies (central)
- 2 political parties (central)
- 6 research organizations



the scales range between  $\langle 0,1 \rangle$  ; where 0 = very strong pro-coal position, 1 = very strong anti-coal position  
different letters indicate statistically significant difference between the groups at  $p < 0.05$



the scales range between <0,1> ; where 0 = very strong pro-coal position, 1 = very strong anti-coal position



# Further results: expert information does not bridge

- **expert information** is crucial for management of complex socio-technical systems (Giddens 1990)
  - **evidence-based policy-making**
  - its importance increases under **conditions of uncertainty**
- **technocratic governance**: exp info abrades ideological differences and “builds bridges”
- **expertise politics**: exp info is used to defend ideological positions of their holders/providers

# Further results: expert information does not bridge

- **expert information** is crucial for management of complex socio-technical systems (Giddens 1990)
  - **evidence-based policy-making**
  - its importance increases under **conditions of uncertainty**
- ~~**technocratic governance:** exp info abrades ideological differences and “builds bridges”~~
- **expertise politics:** exp info is used to defend ideological positions of their holders/providers
- **more than 2.5 times more likely to exchange expert information within advocacy coalitions than between the coalitions**

## (Preliminary) conclusions

- two opposing coalitions present
- **fragmentation of the decision-making actors**
  - three competent ministries belong to three different groups
  - limits formulation of coherent policies
- **expert info exchange strongly overlaps with the coalition patterns**
  - does not bridge, but backs initial policy positions
  - limits policy learning
- **major policy change** rather **due to external factors** such as the EU's regulation and macro-economic trends

**Thank you for your attention!**

petr.ocelik@gmail.com