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Climate Governance and Sustainable Public Policy: A Secondary-Data Analysis of Institutional Capacity, Political Will, and Environmental Performance

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Abstract

Climate governance has made the transition from the fringe of environmental governance to the core of public-administration reform, reflecting the expectation that states are now required to harmonize the reform requirements of economic development and institutional modernization and, at the same time, to comply with international legal mitigation obligations. This study explores how does Climate Policy Integration (CPI) the degree to which climate is integrated across sectoral policies – correlate with measurable sustainability outcomes, and how does the extent to which CPI is related to measurable sustainability outcomes differ depending on Institutional Capacity and Governance Quality and depends on Political Will and Leadership Commitment in relation to a country's Socioeconomic Development level and Climate Vulnerability. The study uses a secondary-data documentary research design in which pre-existing and publicly available cross-national indices, primarily the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI, published by Germanwatch, the NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network International) and the Environmental Performance Index (EPI, published by the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy and Columbia University), are combined with peer-reviewed literature on climate-governance and policy-integration. The secondary evidence suggests that countries with strong regulation and institutions and high political ambition tend to perform better than others of similar income with weaker governance structures, and that countries with high fossil-fuel dependence or poorly developed institutions do worse than countries of similar income with stronger structures in fact the poorest are the countries with the least ambition, and the countries with the most ambition are those with the strongest governance. In order to organise the secondary evidence that has accumulated from the various pieces of evidence, a conceptual framework in the form of five constructs is proposed that will also guide future primary research: 1) Independent variable: Climate Policy Integration, 2) Mediator: institutional Capacity and Governance Quality, 3) Moderator: Political Will and Leadership Commitment, 4) Dependent variable: Sustainability and Environmental Outcomes, and 5) context: Socioeconomic Development and Climate Vulnerabilities. Finally, policy implications for developing and transitional economies, methodological limitations of secondary data designs and an agenda for future empirical work are presented as conclusion.

Keywords: Climate Governance, Climate Policy Integration, Institutional Capacity, Political Will, Sustainability Outcomes, Environmental Performance Index, Climate Change Performance Index, Public Policy, Secondary Data Analysis, Climate Vulnerability

1. Introduction

Large scale climate change is considered by some governments to be less a matter of 'environment' addressed by an environment ministry, and more a matter of 'governance', engaging a variety of ministries such as energy, finance, agriculture, urban planning, trade, social protection and others (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010). This has resulted in the notion of climate

governance, which can be defined as the sum of institutions, rules, actors and processes which lead to decision making, and implementation of decisions and commitments, that might affect the mitigation and adaptation of climate change risks in society (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2005; Jagers & Striiple, 2003). In the general context, this is precisely the case, namely, what extent climate policy is taken into consideration in non-environmental sectoral policies (also known as climate or environment mainstreaming or mainstreaming of climate policy, which will be referred to as climate policy integration, or CPI in short) (Lafferty & Hovden, 2003).

There is ample empirical evidence that shows the need for this type of integration. Since the mid-2000s, there has been a number of cross-national indices published annually, most prominently the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) and the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), none of which currently gives any nation in the world a "very high" rating based on what the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C pathway implies. When looked at side-by-side, however, these same indicators reveal significant and consistent gaps among countries with comparable income levels that can't be attributed to economic development, but rather to variations in institutional capacity, regulatory design, and political commitment (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2024).

This variation raises the key question of this research: how does climate policy integration become or not become "visibility" on sustainability outcomes through institutional and political perspectives? While drawing on the literatures of public administration and comparative governance, this paper points out that the CPI–outcome relationship is indirect and mediated by the institutional capacity, and by governance quality, which in turn is also amplified or dampened by the level of political will and leadership commitment that exists in the country at any point in time in the light of a country's socioeconomic development level and its structural exposure to climate risk.

This study will be a secondary data research article (documentary research) instead of attempting to gather new primary data through survey or interview. It builds methodologically on (a) the peer-reviewed literature on the topics of climate policy integration, environmental policy integration, and collaborative/polycentric climate governance and (b) the publicly available, methodologically transparent cross-national indices (the CCPI, Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2025, 2026, and the EPI, Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2022, 2024) and refers to the well-established Worldwide Governance Indicators presented by the World Bank. This approach also helps to reduce the sampling restrictions, non-response, and social desirability biases of primary data collection on the topic of political commitment to climate action, which was itself prone to rhetorical over-promises (Dubash, 2021).

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. In Section 2 literature pertaining to each construct in the proposed conceptual framework was reviewed. The methodology of secondary data (index selection criteria and analytical technique) is presented in Section 3. The data are organized around descriptive tables and figures selected from the CCPI and EPI in Section 4. The findings and their discussion with regards to the conceptual framework are presented in Section 5. Section 6 draws implications for policy. The limitations and future research agenda are presented in sections 7 and 8, before the conclusion.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Climate Policy Integration (Independent Variable)

Climate Policy Integration (CPI) is the process of integrating climate mitigation and adaptation goals into various sectoral policy areas (energy, transport, agriculture, industry, urban development) and making climate policy no longer the exclusive concern of a ministry for

environment (Lafferty & Hovden, 2003; Mickwitz et al., 2009). The notion is an extension of previous work on environmental policy integration (EPI, not to be confused with the Environmental Performance Index with the same acronym), which found that environmental goals work best when integrated across the entire governmental spectrum of action, as opposed to having their own departments (Jordan & Lenschow, 2010).

Significance: CPI is here treated as the independent variable because it is the main policy lever that is at the disposal of governments: the scope and scale of climate aspects embedded in non-environmental laws, budgets and sectoral plans. According to Runhaar et al. (2018), there are two different approaches to integration: weak, in which climate objectives are noted, but not a priority; and strong or embedded, in which such objectives are embedded by defining the rules of sectoral decision-making. Skjærseth (2021) makes the same point that it is not so much the actual integration that matters, but rather the depth of integration, and therefore what the consequences of the climate policy are.

2.2 Skill Building Environment (Mediator)

Description: Institutional Capacity and Governance Quality is the administrative, regulatory and coordinative effectiveness of the state system, which executes the translation of the policy moves into the policy impacts. Most widely operationalised by dimensions including control of corruption, rule of law, regulatory quality and government effectiveness – consisting of the six dimensions of the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2011).

At the same time this study highlights the importance of institutional capacity as a mediating variable, or a mechanism through which climate policy integration can be translated into sustainability outcome. Jänicke (2005) showed that “pioneer” countries in environmental policy not only have far-reaching goals, but also the capacity for action and strict administration as well as realistic enforcement. As in otherspaces, however, Meadowcroft (2007) again argues that national sustainable-development strategies are not particularly successful or unsuccessful based on their formal mandate, but rather on the capacity to coordinate between the various bureaucracies expected to implement them. In the absence of such a leveraging role, the integration of climate change into policy making can become more symbolic than substance (Dubash, 2021).

2.3 Political Will and Leadership Commitment (Moderator)

Political Will and Leadership Commitment is an umbrella term that comprises the ongoing prioritisation of climate goals at the leadership and political level, e.g. by allocation of funds, prioritisation of laws, and by ensuring continuity across election cycles (Compston, 2009).

Significance: Political will is represented as a moderating factor that enhances or hinders the translation of institutional capacity to outcomes. This "framing" is supported by comparative case evidence: The individual country reports published by the CCPI have repeatedly identified switch-over in government administration as a factor behind the steep increase or decrease in a country's climate performance (Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2025, 2026). This is in line with Compston (2009), who posits that even comparable bureaucratic capacity can result in vastly different performance in climate change in countries, depending on the strength of elite commitment.

2.4 Sustainability & Environmental Outcomes (Dependent Variable)

Sustainability and environmental outcomes are the real and tangible impacts of climate governance: GHG emissions trajectory, renewables share, energy efficiency, air and water pollution levels, ecosystem health and biodiversity protection (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2024).

Significance: Outcomes not policy are happening because as is well known in implementation studies, an 'output' (the laws enacted) does not automatically translate into an 'outcome' (measurable change) (Meadowcroft, 2007). The two indices (CCPI and EPI) in this study are outcomes-oriented, meaning they account for emissions indicators alongside renewable-energy shares, and in the case of the CCPI, a discrete climate-policy sub-score, which makes it possible to look at outcomes and also at the policy effort (Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2025).

2.5 Socioeconomic Development

This contextual construct includes at least three factors that determine a country's susceptibility: overall income levels, industrial structures, and energy sources/dependence, including fossil fuel dependence (Adger, 2006).

Significance: Context is essentially presented as a background condition in relation to the independent and dependent variables, which influences the opportunities and constraints for all of the variables, rather than being a variable in the causal chain. The present clustering of undistinguished fossil fuel exporters whatever level of governance may exist in the other parts of their economy (Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2026) suggests that the incentives are structurally different when it comes to the energy sector and decarbonisation. In particular, given the interaction between context and vulnerability and the capacity of the central state, Ostrom (2010) argued that polycentric governance multi-level and multiple centres of authority is especially important.

2.6 Hypothesised Relationships

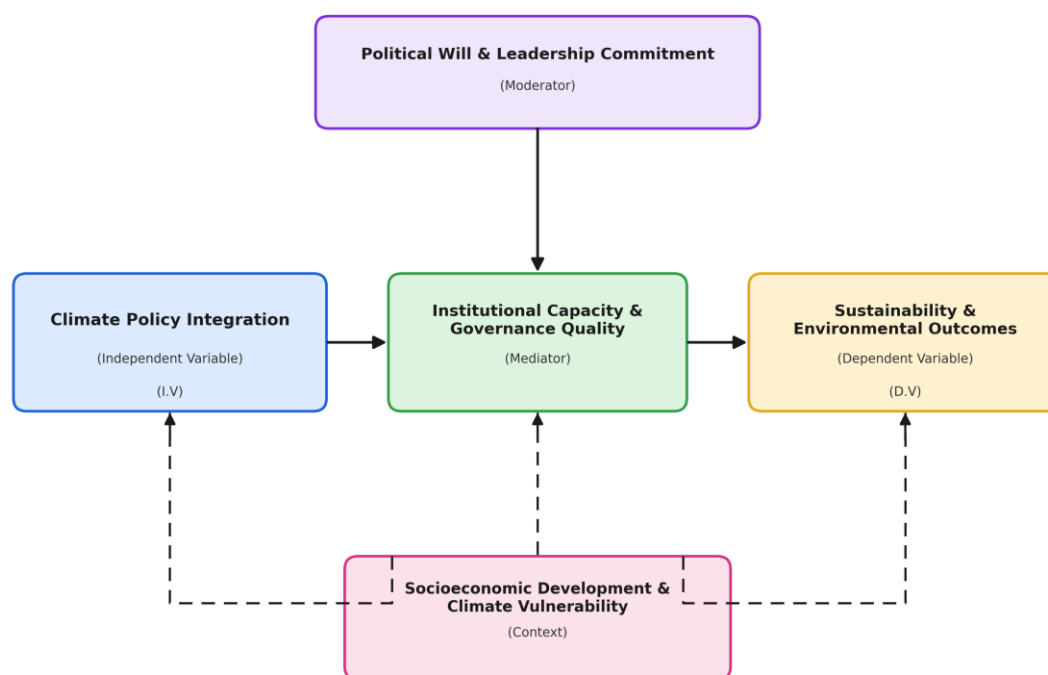
Based on the review discussed above, the study proposes the following propositions, following the conceptual framework presented in figure 1:

H1: The sustainability and environmental results will be more favourable when climate policy is integrated to a higher degree.

H2: Institutional capacity and governance quality is the mediator between the integration of climate policy and sustainability outcomes.

H3: There will be a moderation effect between the institutional-capacity-to-outcomes pathway – the same institutional capacity will yield better outcomes under continued political will and leadership commitment.

H4: Baseline levels of climate policy integration, institutional capacity and sustainability outcomes depend on socioeconomic development level and climatic vulnerability.



Proposed Conceptual Framework — Climate Governance and Sustainable Public Policy Outcomes is shown in Figure 1.

Adapted from climate policy integration framework of Lafferty & Hovden (2003) and the governance-mediation logic of Jänicke (2005) and Meadowcroft (2007).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research type in this research is not primary survey or a research type that uses an interview-based approach but secondary data and documentary research. Here, along three lines, secondary-data research is appropriate. On the first hand, the constructs of interest are already assessed longitudinally over time and measured across countries in a standardised way in publicly documented methodologies by specialist organisations, and collecting new primary data at this scale is duplication and less reliable. Second, the social desirability bias in primary surveys is a major problem for self-reported political will (Dubash, 2021), and outcome-based secondary indices mitigate this concern by grounding the understanding of political will in actual emissions, energy, and/or policy implementation data, not verbal expressions of political will. Third, a secondary data design permits analysis to cover dozens of countries and in the EPI's case, as many as 20 years of similar data that could not be found in any one study.

3.2 Data Sources

Two major secondary data were used supplemented by reference to a third data one:

(i) The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), which is a yearly report since 2005 by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network (CAN) International. The CCPI combines 63 countries and the European Union, which are together responsible for over 90% of global GHG emissions, in four weighted categories: GHG Emissions (40%), Renewable Energy (20%), Energy Use (20%) and Climate Policy (20%), which is based on structured assessment from about 450 climate and energy policy experts each year (Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2025, 2026).

(ii) Environmental Performance Index (EPI), which is published by the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy and Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science

Information Network every two years. Each year, the edition analyzes 180 countries on 58 indicators across 11 issue categories, including environmental health, ecosystem vitality, and climate change (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2024).

(iii) Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi (2011) report how the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which consists of six aggregate dimensions: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption, represent an independently validated proxy of the institutional-capacity construct.

3.3 Analytical Technique

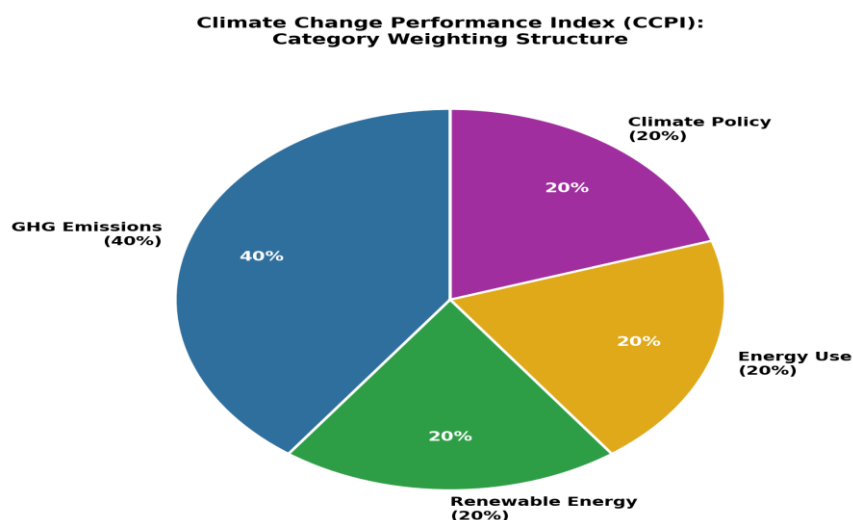
The analysis follows three stages, similar to the common practice in secondary-data analysis and documentary analysis (Bowen, 2009). Descriptive synthesis involves the extraction and tabulation of index scores, category weights and rank positions to describe the status quo of international climate governance performance. Second, comparative pattern analysis: countries are classified by structural characteristics (fossil-fuel export dependence, income level and recorded change in government during the period observed) and the trajectory of the respective indices compared based on this classification to look for patterns consistent (or not) with the four hypotheses of the study. Third, thematic literature synthesis: extensive peer-reviewed climate-governance literature analyzed from the perspectives of the emerging patterns in the literature through the index produces the interpretive account described in Section 5. No statistical tests are conducted with primary respondent data because none is collected; indeed, any variations in numbers referred to are deducted from the published indices on which they are based, and presented as descriptive rather than inferential statistical tests (regression, correlation or structural equation modelling). It may be appropriate to ask about the scope and boundary conditions after the first step.

The study is limited by going only to countries that have overlap in both the CCPI and the EPI, which in turn span nearly the entire globe but do not include several small countries with limited reporting systems. The observation window is focused on the most recent published editions (CCPI 2025–2026, EPI 2022 and 2024), with earlier editions as necessary to demonstrate changes in rank over time (Section 4.3).

4. Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

4.1 The Climate Change Performance Index: Organization and latest findings

The weighting of the categories in the CCPI (Figure 2) reflects the focus of the CCPI on measurable emissions outcomes (40% of the overall score) rather than only policy intent, operationalising the "outcome-over-output" reasoning highlighted in Section 2.4.



Source: Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & Climate Action Network International, CCPI Methodology (ccpi.org).

Figure 2: CCPI Category Weighting Structure

Source: Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & Climate Action Network International, CCPI Methodology (ccpi.org).

The qualitative positioning of both CCPI editions in the last two are summarised in Table 1. As one might expect from H3 and H4, relatively high institution scores and high policy scores are correlated with one another, and, as expected, those at the low end of the scores are concentrated in the “petrostates” the major fossil-fuel producers even when the policy may exist de jure.

Table 1: CCPI 2025–2026 — Selected Top and Bottom Performers and Attributed Drivers

Country	CCPI Position	Attributed Driver (per CCPI country assessment)
Denmark	Top-ranked (ranks 4th–5th; top 3 left vacant both editions)	Only country rated ‘high’ on the Climate Policy sub-index; sustained cross-government commitment
United Kingdom	Riser (6th in 2025; 2nd in 2026)	Coal phase-out completed; new restrictions on fossil-fuel project licensing
Netherlands / Morocco	Top 5 (2025 / 2026 respectively)	Consolidated renewable-energy and policy scores
Chile	Riser (up 5 places to 7th in 2026)	National climate law (2022); net-zero-by-2050 target; ambitious NDC (2025)
China	Very low overall; possible emissions peak signalled	Renewable/EV leadership offset by continued fossil-fuel expansion
India	Faller (23rd; ‘medium’ category)	Rising emissions trend despite renewable growth
Saudi Arabia / Iran / Russia / UAE	Bottom of ranking (both editions)	High fossil-fuel export dependence; weak climate-policy sub-scores
United States	Faller (down 8 spots to 65th in 2026)	‘Very low’ rating across all four categories; 2025 withdrawal from the Paris Agreement

Source: Compiled by the authors from Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International (2025, 2026), CCPI Results and Press Releases.

4.2 Environmental Performance Index

This year's edition of the Global Environmental Performance Index (EPI) examines the cross-national environmental performance of 163 countries.

Figure 3 shows the top 15 countries as per EPI 2022 the latest version with score tables comparable throughout this spectrum. In line with the institutional-capacity mediation argument in section 2.2, countries at the top end of the scores tend to be European countries, that is, those that score high on governance-quality dimensions as measured by the World Bank as well as on the climate-specific indicators.

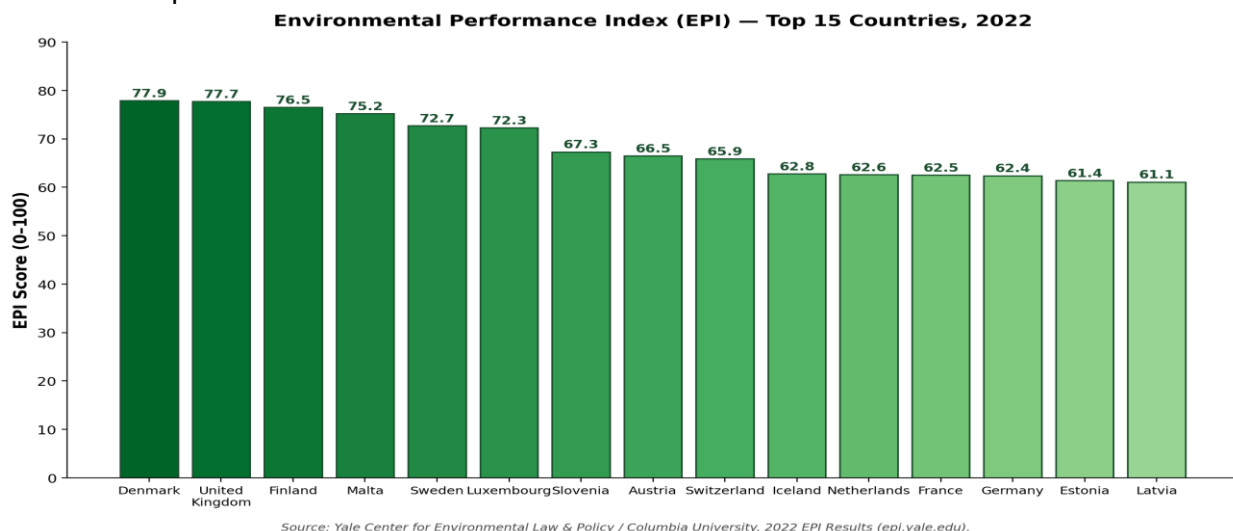


Figure 3: Environmental Performance Index (EPI) — Top 15 Countries, 2022

Source: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy / Columbia University, 2022 EPI Results (epi.yale.edu).

Summary descriptive statistics on the constructs that were studied were reported in Table 2 which was based on secondary sources to which primary survey administration was not undertaken.

Table 2: Descriptive Overview of Secondary Indices Used in This Study

Index / Construct Proxy	Coverage	Scale	Leading Country (latest edition)	Source
CCPI — overall score	63 countries + EU	0–100 (top 3 ranks left vacant by design)	Denmark	Germanwatch et al., 2025–2026
EPI — overall score	180 countries (177 in 2026 edition)	0–100	Estonia (75.3–75.7, 2024)	Yale/Columbia, 2024
WGI — Government Effectiveness	~215 economies	–2.5 to +2.5 (standardised)	Varies by year	World Bank (Kaufmann et al., 2011)
EPI — 10-year score change (context: rank mobility)	180 countries	Points change, 2014–2024	Malta (+18.7)	Yale/Columbia, 2024

Source: Compiled by the authors from the cited primary index publishers.

4.3 Score on Mobility and the reform dynamics

A helpful pattern for this study's hypotheses is how countries move over editions of the EPI and CCPI, also called “rank mobility over time” the movement of individual countries up or down the EPI and CCPI over a two-to-four year period this minimizes the effect of slower-moving, structural country factors like income level or resource endowment. Figure 4 illustrates the performance of the three countries that consistently achieved grades above 70% for the last two EPI editions in 2022 and 2024.

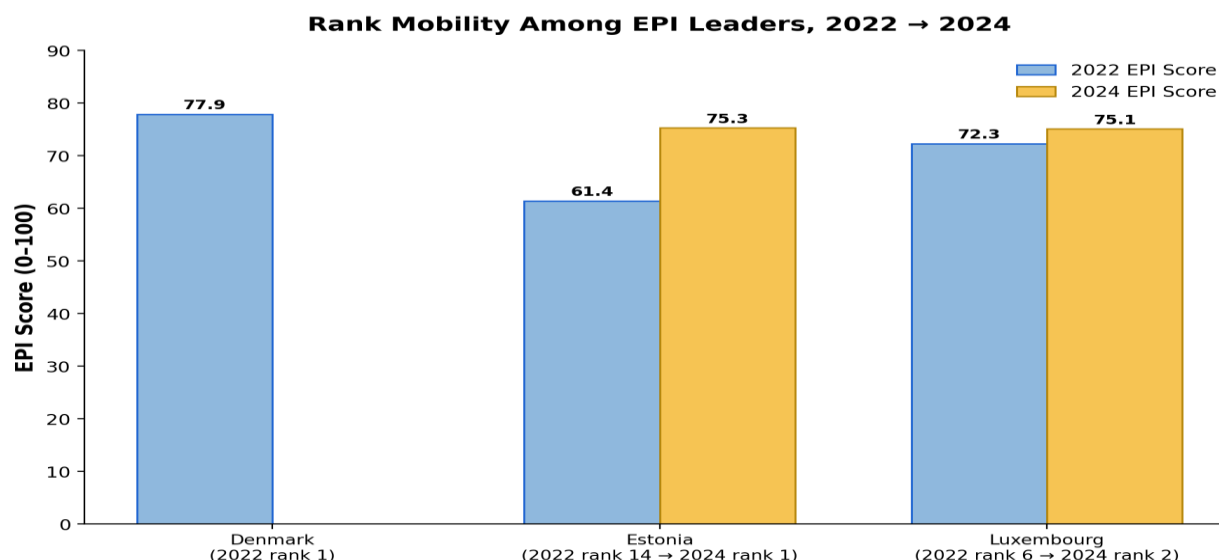


Figure 4: Rank Mobility Among EPI Leaders, 2022 → 2024

Source: Yale/Columbia EPI 2022 and 2024 Results. Denmark's 2024 numerical score was not separately reported in the cited public sources; its rank fell to 10th.

Estonia's impressive ranking gains from 14th (2022, score 61.4) to 1st (2024, score 75.3) are largely due to a stated transition towards a carbon-neutral energy sector by 2040 and its ~40% GHG emission reductions as a result of phasing out oil-shale electricity generation with renewable and low-carbon sources, as detailed in the EPI 2024 report (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2024). While it is not a comprehensive improvement across all 58 indicators, it is a highly weighted policy domain (energy sector decarbonisation) that has a disproportionately significant impact on the aggregate outcome scores, and which therefore can show a significant change over a relatively short time horizon – an example of the potential for targeted institutional and policy reform in accordance with H1 and H2. On the other hand, the example of Denmark, and how it has shifted from 1st rank to 10th rank, despite not having lost institutional capacity, is a good example of the reasoning in 2.3 that political prioritisation is not a permanent institutional asset, but it must be actively maintained; according to the EPI 2024 report, the reason for Denmark's fall is that harder-to-abate sectors of the economy are impossible to lower to the level of the easier emissions reductions (Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy & Columbia University, 2024).

Table 3 is used to map the patterns, detected in Sections 4.1-4.3 onto the five constructs of the conceptual framework in figure 1 to summarise the secondary evidence to support each possible relationship.

Table 3: Secondary Evidence Mapped to the Conceptual Framework

Construct	Role in Framework	Representative Secondary Evidence
Climate Policy Integration	Independent Variable	CCPI Climate Policy sub-score (20% weight) varies widely even among countries with similar emissions profiles
Institutional Capacity & Governance Quality	Mediator	Top-15 EPI countries cluster among the world's highest scorers on WGI Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality
Political Will & Leadership Commitment	Moderator	UK's 2025 rise and US's 2025–2026 decline both coincide with documented changes in government priorities, not institutional capacity
Sustainability & Environmental Outcomes	Dependent Variable	EPI/CCPI aggregate and sub-category scores (GHG trend, renewable share, ecosystem vitality)
Socioeconomic Development & Climate Vulnerability	Context	Persistent clustering of major fossil-fuel exporters at the bottom of the CCPI regardless of general governance quality

Source: Developed by the authors from the secondary sources cited in Sections 4.1–4.3.

5. Discussion

The secondary evidence presented in Section 4 provides wide support for the four hypotheses proposed in Section 2.6, as well as suggests important boundary conditions. To support H1 and H2, countries with explicit climate-policy integration and the highest institutional-capacity scores, including Denmark, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and the Netherlands, rank at the top of both the CCPI and EPI, respectively; countries with comparable and higher per-capita income and lower regulatory and administrative institutional-capacity scores are not found in similarly high rankings. This aligns with “pioneer country” thesis of Jänicke 2005 and the finding of Meadowcroft (2007) that “effective national sustainability strategies are not just ambitious targets, but also implementation capability.”

This evidence from the rank-mobility in 4.3 provides in particular strong support for H3 (moderating effect of political will). Profound score shifts in many countries are more likely to reflect real switches in political commitment to the level and persistence of progress on the corresponding sets of policy options (energy-sector decarbonisation and Coal Phase out) than to genuine jumps in commonplace baseline administrative effectiveness. This is consistent with Compston's (2009) notion that political will acts as a door that opens and closes over institutional capacity; exactly the moderating relationship shown in figure 1.

Support for H4 is manifested in the fact that in most of the CCPI's editions the countries with large energy shares are grouped in the lower part of the list even if they score well on the general (non-climate) governance indicators. This indicates a socioeconomic and resource-endowment context does not just introduce “noise” into the CPI outcome relationship but also represents structural constraints on the level of integration implementable and on the returns from a given level of institutional capacity – which is what Ostrom (2010) proposed with her argument that solutions to climate governance must be thought of as a setting rather than being transferable to various settings.

Subsequent, all these patterns suggest that research on climate governance needs to move beyond asking a bivariate question (is there climate policy or not?), toward a more institutionally focused question: When does climate policy integration become actual sustainability achievements, and what are the implementation capabilities, continuing support from political elites, and contextual structures that are needed to make this happen? Such re-understanding inevitably has consequences for policy makers, which is seen next.

6. Policy Implications

Based on the analysis, three implications can be drawn for policy makers in transitional and developing economies. First, climate policy design investments should not be placed at the expense of investments in the form of public-administration reform; potential symbolic results from climate policy integration are evident in Section 4 (Dubash, 2021). Secondly, since political will is a moderating rather than a background variable, commitments on climate action can be institutionalized to prevent policies from being reversed with a change of Government as happened in the U.S. in 2025. Third, resource driven and highly vulnerable economies should not be compared to structurally different economies based on a single undifferentiated index scores but can be compared in a more context sensitive way, for example by comparing a climate-policy sub-score of a country with its emissions trend that may be driven by structural factors beyond short term policy influence.

7. Limitations

This research is of a secondary-data type study and thus has the limitations of the sources as well as documentary analysis general limitations. First, the quality and timeliness of the internationally reported statistics on which the CCPI and EPI are based depend on the country that is providing them, such as the national GHG inventories, and the EPI's Climate Policy category involves expert assessment, which while methodologically robust and transparent frequently carries an element of judgement (Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute & CAN International, 2025). Secondly, since this study does not involve original primary data, it is not possible to identify how changes of administrative behavior occurred at the level of individual ministers or individual organizations (e.g., how exactly the change in the ministerial coalition affected how administration was carried-out); the causal story in Section 5 should consequently not be interpreted as representing statistically validated causal inference but rather merely as a plausible, literature consistent interpretation of aggregate secondary patterns. Third, a handful of illustrative country cases (in Section 4.3) used to evidence rank-mobility patterns were selected based on the quality of available documentation, but do not necessarily represent a broader sample of the universe of 63–180 countries covered by the underlying indices, and thus cannot be generalised. Finally, rank changes in individual indexes are at least in part due to methodological changes between editions (e.g. the EPI's 40 indicators were reduced to 58 for the 2024 edition, and the number of countries covered dropped slightly from 177 countries in the 2022 edition).

8. Future Research Directions

Following the conceptual framework proposed in here, 4 directions for the future research are suggested. For one, H1–H4 can be tested statistically, instead of being descriptive, by including multi-year representations of the CCPI, EPI, and WGI series as a merged longitudinal series in formal panel-data econometric testing. Second, the causal processes that this study infers from aggregation-level patterns might be verified via primary qualitative investigations that involve structured interviews with high-ranking officials from countries that have had rapid rank mobility (Estonia and the U.K., in the eras studied here). Thirdly, sectoral replications (energy, agriculture, transport) would be done to find out if the proposed framework is generally applicable or policy

domain-dependant. Fourth, considering the context construct of the framework, comparative research that was specifically designed around resource-constrained and highly climate-vulnerable economies such as Pakistan, other states in South Asia and small island developing states would make the scope of the framework more relevant than is the current practice of having predominantly high-income and high-capacity countries dominating the top spot in both indices considered.

9. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the links between climate policy integration and observed sustainability outcomes and suggested that the effect of climate policy integration on measures of sustainability outcomes is mediated by the capacity of the institutions and the quality of governance in the country; it can be moderated by the political will to implement climate policies and leadership commitment to do so; and it can be conditioned by socioeconomic development levels and climate vulnerability. The study used a secondary-data, documentary research design, informed by a conceptual framework of 21 elements within a five-construct matrix which posited that, policy integration alone is not sufficient to predict outcomes; that institutional capacity channels the policy integration relationships over time; that political commitment strengthens or weakens those relationships over time; and that structural environment sets the outer bounding contexts in which those three variables act. All the evidence collected here point to the fact that as the world gains headway into the implementation decade of the Paris Agreement, closing the gap between ambition and outcome will rely not so much on an ever-growing number of climate strategies, but rather on better institutional and political conditions for the implementation of strategies.

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