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**How Much Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts? Evaluating
Interactions Between Complex Policies**

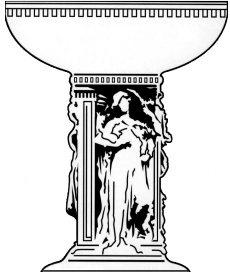
Bicket, M.

A paper presented at The 8th Annual Dupont Summit 2015 on Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy, Friday, December 4, The Historic Whittemore House, Washington DC.

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Dupont Summit 2015

Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy Issues

December 5 ☒ Historic Whittemore House, Washington, DC

BUDDING SCHOLARS CONFERENCE

How Much Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts? Evaluating Interactions Between Complex Policies
Martha Bicket - *Policy Studies Institute*

This presentation focuses on methods for the evaluation of complex policies. In particular, it focuses on evaluating *interactions* between policies and the extent to which two or more interacting policies mutually reinforce or hinder one another, in the area of environmental sustainability.

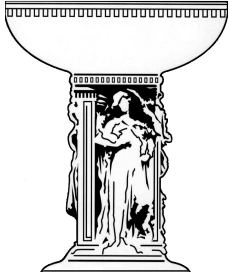
Environmental sustainability is increasingly gaining recognition as a complex policy area, requiring a more systemic perspective and approach (e.g. European Commission, 2011). Current trends in human levels of resource consumption are unsustainable, and single solutions which target isolated issues independently of the broader context have so far fallen short. Instead there is a growing call among both academics and policy practitioners for systemic change which acknowledges and engages with the complex interactions, barriers and opportunities across the different actors, sectors, and drivers of production and consumption. Policy mixes, and the combination and ordering of policies within, therefore become an important focus for those aspiring to design and manage transitions to sustainability.

To this end, we need a better understanding of the interactions, synergies and conflicts between policies (Cunningham et al., 2013; Geels, 2014). As a contribution to this emerging field of research and to inform its next steps, I present a review on what methods are available to try to quantify the impacts of complex policy interactions, since there is no established method among practitioners, and I explore the merits or value of such attempts. The presentation builds on key works in the field of complexity science (e.g. Anderson, 1972), revisiting and combining these with more recent contributions in the emerging field of policy and complex systems, and evaluation (e.g. Johnstone et al., 2010). With a coalition of UK Government departments, agencies and Research Councils soon to announce the launch of a new internationally-leading [centre](#) to pioneer, test and promote innovative and inclusive methods for policy evaluation across the energy-environment-food nexus, the contribution is particularly timely.

References

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Martha Bicket is a Research Fellow in environment and sustainability at the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) in London, UK. She conducts research for a range of clients including UK Government, the European Commission, charitable trusts and industry. Her work focuses on: the circular economy; public acceptability; policy sequencing; and policy appraisal, with a particular focus on projects with long-term consequences. Martha was also an independent evaluator of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. She holds a BSc in Mathematics from the University of Warwick and an MSc in Environmental Technology from Imperial College London.

