Multiple Intergovernmental Venues and Coalition Strategies for Influencing Policy

The ACF assumes that coalitions seek to alter the behavior of governmental institutions in order to achieve the policy objectives in their respective policy cores. In an intergovernmental system, coalitions have a multitude of possible venues, including legislatures, chief executives, administrative agencies, and the courts at all relevant levels of government. The means (guidance instruments) at their disposal include (1) seeking to influence legislatures to alter the budgets and the legal authority of administrative agencies through testimony and campaign contributions; (2) trying to change the incumbents of various positions, whether they be agency political appointees, agency civil servants, or elected legislators and chief executives; (3) trying to affect public opinion (a potentially powerful exogenous factor) via the mass media; (4) attempting to alter target group behavior via demonstrations or boycotts (Wellstead, 1996; Loeber and Grin, 1999); and (5) trying to gradually alter the perceptions of a variety of actors through research and information exchange.

Both Schlager (1995) and Mintrom and Vergari (1996) have criticized the authors of the ACF for focusing their attention almost exclusively on coalition beliefs, thereby neglecting coalition behavior. Although generally correct, this criticism overlooks the authors' efforts to address the strategies that coalition actors pursue within an intergovernmental subsystem (or set of nested subsystems). The ACF begins by assuming that coalitions will seek to utilize their resources efficiently, that is, to produce the most policy benefits for the cost incurred. In an earlier analysis, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993, pp. 227–230) suggested that

1. In general the costs of an instrument are usually proportional to its benefits. Changing a statute brings great benefits but is extremely difficult in a separation-of-powers system (Moe, 1990). Convincing an agency to alter one of its rules is easier but also produces benefits that are lower in scope and duration. Changing a line item in an agency's budget is even easier but usually produces even smaller benefits.

2. It is usually easier to alter the rules or budget of a state agency by appealing to its federal agency sovereign than by appealing to the state authorities. The former involves only one major veto point (the federal agency), whereas the latter involves the legislative process plus the governor.

3. In virtually all cases, the critical factor affecting costs is the policy predisposition of the responsible official: If she or he is sympathetic to (or a member of) the coalition, the costs are comparatively low. If she or he is hostile (i.e., a member of an opposing coalition), the costs are extremely high—if not out of the question. If she or he is neutral, they may be feasible.

4. Some types of resources work better in some institutions than in others. Solid technical analyses are more likely to influence administrative agencies or courts than legislatures. Conversely, mobilizing public/constituency support may be more influential with a legislative committee than with an agency.

The bottom-line conclusion is that coalitions should (and do) spend an enormous amount of time "venue shopping," to use a term coined by Baumgartner and Jones (1993) with a lineage going back to Schattschneider (1960). Most of the recent discussion has focused on shopping among different legislative committees, or the legislature versus the chief executive versus the courts, at a single level of government. But the choices are much broader than those in any intergovernmental policy subsystem. In fact, there is considerable evidence that coalitions pursue multiple venues at multiple levels, often simultaneously, in a constant effort to find some that will bear fruit.

For example, Figure 6.3 lists some of the major strategies pursued by members of the environmental coalition since 1984 in an effort to arrest the decline of numerous fisheries in the San Francisco Bay/Delta (Sabatier and Zafonte, 1999). The data reveal that, over a fourteen-year period, this coalition pursued at least fifteen different strategies aimed at the legislatures, courts, and multiple agencies at both federal and state levels. In general, the strategies pursued were consistent with the first and third principles developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993).[23] Most of the efforts were directed at agencies or courts, as such efforts tend to be less costly and more likely to succeed than strategies aimed at legislatures. Most of the efforts by the environmental coalition were directed at presumably sympathetic officials, for example, the EPA or the endangered-species agencies. The clearest example of selecting relatively sympathetic venues was the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). Environmentalists pushed it for three years while a sympathizer, Congress member George Miller, chaired the House Interior Subcommittee on Water, and both houses were Democratic. As soon as both houses of Congress went Republican (after the 1994 elections), farmers appealed for a drastic revision of the CVPIA—but their efforts failed amid multiple Congressional vetoes.

One final note: A frequent result of venue shopping is policy stalemate: Coalition A dominates one venue, and Coalition B dominates another. When approval from both is required, the result is a stalemate. Dudley and Richardson (1996) provided a nice example from British roads policy. During the 1980s, the highway lobby controlled the Department of Transportation, although environmentalists received a sympathetic hearing at many public inquiries regarding specific location decisions. The end result was a stalemate until a neutral/environmentally sympathetic Minister of Transportation managed to broker a temporary compromise.

1. *1984–1985:* Invoked international migratory bird treaties to convince the Bureau of Reclamation to close the Kesterson Wildlife Refuge and the San Luis Drain (which eventually discharges into San Francisco Bay) because of selenium contamination.

2. *1986–1988:* Presented testimony at hearings of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in an unsuccessful effort to convince it to issue more stringent water quality standards.

3. *1987–1990:* Convinced the federal EPA to initiate the San Francisco Estuary Project under the Clean Water Act in an effort to reach a policy consensus (largely failed).

4. *1989–1992:* Joined with agricultural and urban water users in informal negotiations known as the Three Way Process (with very mixed success).

5. *1989:* Successfully petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to list the winter-run salmon as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. Soon thereafter, the species was also listed under federal law by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

6. *1991:* Successfully sued the federal EPA for failing to force the SWRCB to issue new water quality standards for the Delta, as required by the Federal Clean Water Act.

7. *1991:* Unsuccessfully petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to list the Delta smelt as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act.

8. *1992–1993:* Unsuccessfully petitioned the SWRCB to issue more stringent water quality standards for the Delta under state water quality legislation.

9. *1989–1992:* After a long battle, convinced Congress to fundamentally alter the statute governing the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) to provide more water for fish, increase water rates to farmers, and encourage voluntary water transfers from agriculture to urban areas.

10. *1992–1993:* Successfully petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Delta smelt as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

11. *1993:* Successfully sued the EPA to force it to issue water quality standards for the Delta under federal law by December 1994.

12. *1994:* Engaged in successful negotiations with all the affected interests to come up with a basic agreement for dealing with the Delta's problems (the 1994 Bay/Delta Accord), which was then approved by the EPA and the SWRCB.

13. *1995–1996:* Successfully fought efforts by agricultural interests to convince the Republican-dominated Congress to (a) revise the CVPIA and (b) sell the CVP to its users.

14. *1995–1999:* Engaged in negotiations with a variety of federal and state agencies over a long term solution to the Delta's problems (the CALFED process).

15. *1996:* Successfully joined with ag and urban water users to convince the California Legislature to propose a bond issue to help fund some of those solutions. With no opposition, the bond (Prop 204) was easily approved by the electorate.

FIGURE 6.3 Strategies Pursued by the Environmental Coalition to Protect San Francisco Bay/Delta Fisheries Since 1984

Across-Coalition Learning and Professional Forums

One of the most influential aspects of the 1987–1988 version of the ACF was its contention that policy change is not simply the result of competition among various interests in which financial resources and institutional rules are critical, but that "policy-oriented learning" within and between coalitions is an important aspect of policy change (Sabatier, 1987, 1988; Jenkins-Smith, 1988, 1990). Learning about a topic is, however, filtered through preexisting beliefs. In particular, actors tend to accept information confirming existing beliefs and to screen out dissonant information. This is even more true of policy core beliefs than of secondary aspects (Coalition Hypothesis 3).

Several recent studies have tended to confirm this argument. Eberg's (1997, pp. 208–209) summary of learning processes regarding waste management in Bavaria and the Netherlands found that (1) learning was far more frequent in secondary aspects than in the policy core (thus, Coalition Hypothesis 3 was supported) and (2) that actors occasionally altered policy core learning on the basis of information coming from others within the same coalition. In addition, Freudenburg and Gramling (1997) provided a great example of how strong perceptual filters can be.[24]

Because learning among members of the same coalition is relatively unproblematic, attention has focused on identifying the conditions for learning *across* coalitions. Since 1988, we have made two sets of revisions in the framework on this topic.

First, the OCS leasing case revealed a situation in which there was very little across-coalition learning but in which there was considerable learning by a policy broker, Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus. He became convinced that drilling posed fewer risks than he had previously thought, and he had the legal authority to fundamentally alter the content of the administrative regulations regarding drilling (Heintz, 1988; Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair, 1993). This case led to the following hypothesis (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 219):

Learning Hypothesis 5: Even when the accumulation of technical information does not change the views of the opposing coalition, it can have important impacts on policy—at least in the short term—by altering the views of policy brokers or other important government officials.

The impact of such learning depends upon how much influence that official has to actually change policy and make the change stick. Andrus, for example, certainly had the authority, and his changes stuck because he was succeeded as Secretary of the Interior by James Watt, who was extremely proleasing. Had he been succeeded by an environmentally sympathetic person, the residue left by his learning might have been more ephemeral.

Second, given the role of professional forums in supposedly facilitating learning between coalitions (Learning Hypothesis 4), Sabatier and Zafonte (1997) developed a number of supplemental hypotheses concerning the characteristics of successful forums (see also Sabatier, 1998b). A successful forum is defined as one in which consensus is reached among previously disagreeing scientists on whatever technical and policy issues are placed before it, and (2) in which the forum's decisions are accepted by the major coalitions involved. Following is a brief enumeration of the critical characteristics:

1. *Composition:* The forum should be composed of both (a) scientists clearly associated with each of the major coalitions and (b) neutral scientists (one of whom should be chair). The former are necessary because coalition leaders need to have representatives whom they trust, and the latter are needed to remind participants of professional norms regarding acceptable evidence, methodologies, and so on, and to indicate to the advocacy scientists when a professional consensus is beginning to emerge.

2. *Funding:* For the forum to be credible, funding must *not* come from sources dominated by a specific coalition. Instead, funding should come from (a) a foundation, (b) a legislative body in which all coalitions are represented, or (c) multiple agencies representing the various coalitions.

3. *Duration:* A forum should meet at least a half dozen times over a year or so. The assumption here is that it takes time for scientists from different coalitions to analyze their hidden assumptions, to critically evaluate the evidence, and to begin to trust each other.

4. *Context of a mutually unacceptable policy stalemate:* A forum will be successful only when each of the coalitions views a continuation of the status quo as unacceptable. Anyone who regards the status quo as acceptable will be unwilling to take the risks involved in changing important policy beliefs. Real compromise—or "true" success for a forum—requires both that scientists be willing to alter their relevant perceptions (concerning, for example, the seriousness of various causes of a problem) and that the coalitions make the relevant change in their policy preferences. A necessary, but not sufficient, condition for this result to occur is that all coalitions view a continuation of the status quo as unacceptable.

Because meeting all four conditions is quite difficult, we conclude that successful professional forums should be relatively rare. This would be particularly true in decentralized political systems like the United States, where coalitions that do not agree with the conclusions of a professional forum have *numerous* points of appeal (courts, legislatures, agencies at different levels of government) that have

different biases. Thus dissatisfied coalitions can almost always find at least one route of appeal (venue) that will substantially block or delay implementation of the new policy. In more centralized systems—such as England—where routes of appeal are restricted, it may be possible for a coalition to change policy simply by convincing a policy broker of the merits of its point of view without having to change the views of the other coalition(s).

Major Policy Change

One of the major strengths of the ACF is that it provides a relatively clear-cut criterion for distinguishing major from minor policy change: Major change is change in the policy core aspects of a governmental program, whereas minor change is change in the secondary aspects.[25] Thus, it is the *topic* and the *scope* of policy change that determine whether it is major or minor. Linking change to scope also makes it clear that the same change may be "minor" for one subsystem but "major" for a subsystem nested within it. For example, changing automotive emission standards may be "major" for the automotive pollution control subsystem but relatively minor (i.e., dealing with secondary aspects) for the larger air pollution control subsystem. The ACF thus provides a clear reference point for determining the magnitude of change.

On the other hand, Mintrom and Vergari (1996, p. 425) are quite correct when they fault the ACF for neglecting the conditions under which major policy change occurs:

[The ACF] directs our attention to thinking about the ways that belief structures arise and adjust over time to bring stability to a policy subsystem.... [But] it does not direct our attention to exploring the processes that determine when [major, i.e., policy core] policy change will actually take place. Clearly, not all exogenous shocks and not all instances of policy learning translate into policy change. We need to better understand why particular policy changes materialize.

How do we respond?

First, one needs to remember that changes in the policy core of governmental programs are infrequent events. The vast majority of changes occur in the secondary aspects. Like any large-scale, infrequent events, they are difficult to predict.[26] Second, the cases by Brown and Stewart (1993) on airline deregulation and by Mawhinney (1993) on Canadian education have led to a revision of Hypothesis 5/Policy Change Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 5/Policy Change Hypothesis 2 (revised): Significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g., changes in socioeconomic conditions, public opinion, systemwide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems) are a *necessary, but not sufficient,* cause of change in the *policy core* attributes of a governmental program.

The basic argument is that such perturbations provide an opportunity for major policy change, but that such change will not occur unless that opportunity is skillfully exploited by proponents of change, that is, the heretofore minority coalition(s).[27]

Third, the 1993 version of the ACF separated "changes in public opinion" from the broader category of "changes in socioeconomic conditions" in order to give public opinion greater emphasis (see Figure 6.4). The basic argument is that although public opinion is seldom knowledgeable enough to affect policy specifics, it can certainly alter general spending priorities and the perceived seriousness of various problems (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 223).

Fourth, Jan Eberg, Sonja Waelti, Pierre Muller, and several other European scholars have reminded us that the degree of consensus needed to institute a major policy change varies considerably across countries. The range is (1) from less than a majority (in nondemocratic countries and in strong states such as France; cf. Jobert and Muller, 1987, pp. 80–100); (2) to a bare majority (in Westminster systems like the UK and New Zealand); (3) to a supermajority (as in separation-of-powers systems like the United States); (4) to a consensus (as in Switzerland or the Netherlands). The degree of consensus required is a function of basic constitutional structure and cultural norms. It clearly affects the constraints and strategies of subsystem actors, as well as the probability that major policy change will actually occur. In fact, the degree of consensus required to institute a major policy change is so important that it should be added to the basic structural diagram of the ACF (see Figure 6.4).

Fifth, we must remember that a hierarchically superior unit of government may attempt to change the policy core of a "subordinate" level (Mawhinney, 1993; Sewell, 1999). Anyone familiar with the implementation literature is likely to view this as an exceedingly problematic enterprise that is strongly dependent upon the relative resources of coalitions at the two levels (Rodgers and Bullock, 1976; Van Horn, 1979; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1989; Stewart, 1991).

Sixth, we suspect there may be two very different processes of major policy change within a given policy subsystem at a specific level of government (i.e., one that is *not* hierarchically imposed). On the one hand is the replacement of one dominant coalition by another. Sometimes a tremendous surge of public concern about a problem leads to a process of competitive policy escalation by elected officials (or political parties) and thus the replacement of one coalition by another virtually overnight. The 1970 Clean Air Amendments in the United States are an example (Jones, 1975). On the other hand, and far more frequent, we suspect, is a scenario in which the minority coalition increases in importance and attempts to take advantage of an opportunity afforded by an external perturbation but doesn't have the votes in the legislature to push through a substantial change in the policy core of governmental policy. This circumstance is particularly likely in systems where much more than a simple majority vote is required for major change. In such a situation, the minority coalition is likely to resort to *any* tactic that will garner additional votes, including offering pork barrel benefits, trying to
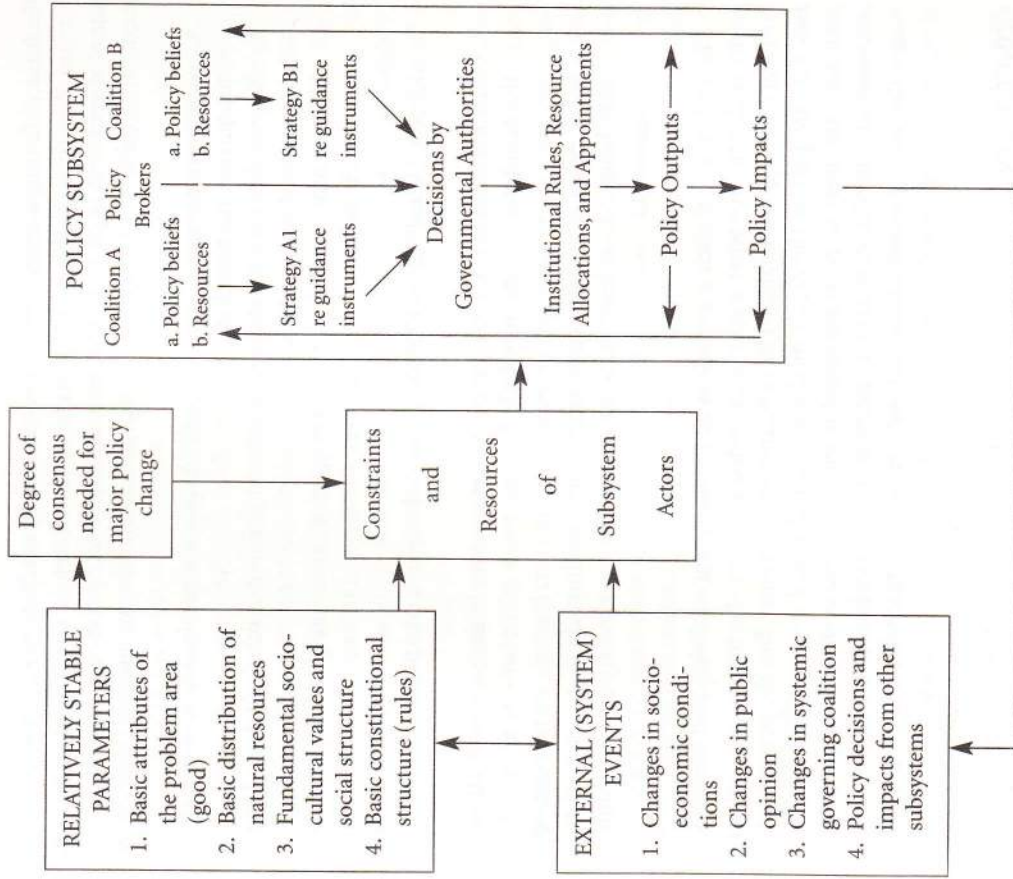
FIGURE 6.4   1998 Diagram of the Advocacy Coalition Framework

manipulate the dimensions of the issue to appeal to different constituencies, giving bribes, and attaching the bill as a waiver to other legislation (Evans, 1994; Mintrom and Vergari, 1996). In short, obtaining major policy change in supermajoritarian systems usually requires that an advocacy coalition augment its resources by developing short-term coalitions of convenience (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 27) with a variety of other groups.

But there is at least one alternative that has been neglected by many policy scholars until recently. In situations in which *all major coalitions view a continuation of the current situation as unacceptable*, they may be willing to enter negotiations in

the hope of finding a compromise that is viewed by everyone as superior to the status quo. We suspect that the conditions for such a successful consensus process (i.e., one that results in legally binding agreements viewed by everyone as an improvement) are similar to those for a successful professional forum discussed previously:

A. A stalemate exists wherein all coalitions view a continuation of the status quo as unacceptable.

B. Negotiations are conducted in private and last a relatively long time (e.g., at least six months).

C. Negotiations are led by a facilitator (policy broker) respected by all parties and viewed as relatively neutral.

In addition, Daniel Kuebler (1999) suggested a fourth condition:

A. Major conflicts must not be purely normative. If they are normative, the facilitator can do very little because most actors will be extremely reluctant to compromise on policy core norms. Instead, there must be some reasonably important empirical questions that can be used to alter beliefs or at least to point to areas of uncertainty that facilitate compromise.

The end result of such a process is not a dominant coalition and several minority coalitions but what might be regarded as power sharing among coalitions (analogous to a grand coalition in parliamentary systems). But the perceptual biases that are part of the ACF's model of the individual suggest that such grand coalitions are likely to be quite unstable unless (1) the arrangement produces a continuously "fair" distribution of benefits to all coalitions and (2) new leaders committed to consensus replace old warriors within the coalitions.[28]

CONCLUSIONS

The ACF has been around for ten years now—which should be long enough, according to the ACF, to allow a reasonably accurate assessment. During that period, it has generated considerable interest by a variety of scholars in the United States and other OECD countries. In addition to the thirty-four cases mentioned in Table 6.2, there are at least a half dozen other major studies under way that seek to apply it critically.

A Preliminary Assessment

The ACF does a reasonably good job of meeting the criteria for a scientific theory outlined in Chapter 1, which are largely drawn from Lave and March (1975) and King, Keohane, and Verba (1994):

1. Most of the *critical terms are clearly defined*, and most of the ACF's propositions appear to be clearly stated and internally consistent. At any rate, the definition of "advocacy coalition" was clear enough for Schlager (1995) to criticize us for ignoring the portion dealing with coordinated behavior.

2. It has *two causal drivers*: (a) the core values of coalition members and (b) external perturbations. In this sense, it is similar to theories of population dynamics in biology, where population levels are a function of (a) competition among individuals and species seeking to maximize inclusive fitness and (b) external perturbations.

3. It certainly has lots of *falsifiable hypotheses*.

4. It is fairly *broad in application*; that is, it appears to apply reasonably well to most policy domains in at least OECD countries.

The ACF has also aroused interest, and constructive criticism, from a wide variety of scholars, including those trained in institutional rational choice (Edella Schlager, Bill Blomquist, Michael Mintrom) and those predisposed toward cognitive explanations of policy (Robert Hoppe, Pierre Muller, Yves Surel). It has stimulated research by a large number of young scholars, some of whom will hopefully continue to work on it for years to come. In short, the ACF thus far appears to be a "progressive research program" (Lakatos, 1978), that is, one that stimulates interest and generates improvements.

Generalizability

The ACF was originally developed with a largely American context in mind, and most of the initial applications were to energy and environmental policy in the United States. Since the late 1980s, it has been applied to a fairly wide variety of policy areas in European and Commonwealth countries. But its generalizability is still unclear in a number of areas.

First, although it seems to work well in OECD countries, a couple of clarifications are called for when one is dealing with parliamentary systems (Sabatier, 1998a, pp. 120–122):

A. What constitutes a "change in the systemic governing coalition"? Does it require a complete change in the parties in government—in which case, it virtually never happens—or does it require simply a change in the most important party or even a change in the minor parties?

B. Policy documents in parliamentary systems often take the form of white papers or reports, whose legal status is much more ambiguous than that of the changes in statute that are the usual indicator of policy core change in separation-of-power systems (Moe, 1990; Wellstead, 1996; Loeber and Grin, 1999). In addition, the less frequent elections in many parliamentary systems (compared to the frequency of elections in the United States)

provide governing coalitions with the time to dribble out major reforms over a period of years: first a white paper, then a framework law, and finally more detailed implementing laws or decrees (Casey et al., 1997).

This tendency of parliamentary systems to dribble out reforms is not a problem peculiar to the ACF, of course; it affects any theory attempting to distinguish major from minor policy change.

Second, its applicability to Eastern Europe and to developing countries is currently being explored. The minimal condition for the ACF to apply is that some degree of coordinated dissent from the policies of the dominant coalition must be possible—although not necessarily legal. Dissertations currently being written by Magnus Andersson (Free University of Amsterdam) on Polish environmental policy since 1980 and by Chris Elliot (Swiss Technical University) on Indonesian forestry policy suggest that the ACF can be applied without difficulty in these countries, but we'll have to see the complete results from these studies.

Third, several people have wondered whether the ACF applies to policy domains—such as abortion, gun control, human rights, gay rights, school prayer, and gender politics—in which technical issues are completely dominated by normative and identity concerns.[29] Our own perception is that it should work very well. These subsystems seem to be characterized by well-defined coalitions driven by belief-driven conflict, which resort to a wide variety of guidance instruments at multiple levels of government. In fact, the perceptual distortions in the ACF's model of the individual contributing to the "devil shift" should be particularly strong in such policy arenas. Thus far, there have been three case studies over which we have had no control—Mawhinney's (1993) analysis of linguistic conflict in Ontario education, Shannon's (1997) study of gender discrimination in wages in Australia and Ireland, and Kuebler's (1999) study of drug policy in Swiss cities—where the authors found the ACF applied quite well. But a more definite judgment will have to wait additional cases.

Directions for Future Research

What are the critical areas in need of elaboration, refinement, and testing? Most are a continuation of themes addressed in the previous section.

First, and most important, we need empirical research that systematically relates ACF variables to actual policy changes. Almost all the systematic, quantitative analysis thus far has dealt with coalition beliefs and coordination and has neglected the impact of these variables on actual policy changes. Since the ACF is a theory of policy change, we need to start addressing the principal dependent variable.[30] Within this general rubric, at least two specific areas come to mind:

A. The conditions conducive to successful professional and stakeholder forums, building upon the work of Kuebler (1999) and Sabatier and Zafonte (1997)

B. The role of coalitions in diffusing policy innovations and ideas among units of government, building upon the work of Berry and Berry (cf. Chapter 7) and Mintrom and Vergari (1996, 1998).

A second general topic involves the seriousness of collective action and coordination problems within coalitions and the conditions under which they can be overcome. This topic would be an excellent opportunity to develop, and test, competing hypotheses generated from IAD, ACF, and other approaches. It would also be very interesting to know if there are differences in coalition composition across countries. For example, the ACF assumes that legislators are members of coalitions only if they have considerable expertise in a specific policy area. This assumption might suggest that they would less frequently be members in countries with weak legislative committees at the national and regional levels. Another, and perhaps more important, area of study would be to look at variation across countries in the extent to which agency officials and researchers are members of coalitions.

A third area involves the scenarios of, and the factors affecting, subsystem development over time. Of particular interest is the role of watershed events in the transition from nascent to mature subsystems.

Fourth, there is still lots of work to be done on the belief systems of coalitions. In particular, most of the research to date has involved cross-sectional surveys. We need longitudinal and panel surveys to examine the factors affecting elite belief change over time. These surveys would also be a means of testing Hypothesis 3, that policy core beliefs are more stable than secondary aspects. Finally, Pierre Muller and Yves Surel (1998) have urged more attention to the processes by which belief system are constructed over time. In particular, to what extent can the development of a belief system be traced to an individual or small group of individuals—what Muller (1995) terms a "mediateur"?

Finally, on a conceptual level, the role of institutions in the ACF needs greater attention. And the implications of the ACF for various stages of the policy process—particularly implementation—need to be developed.[31]

Core Aspects of the ACF

A scientific theory or framework needs to be internally coherent. In responding to case studies that suggest various revisions in the ACF, we must resist the temptation of adding amendments that, although plausible, would be inconsistent with its fundamental principles. Our strategy should be to develop a relatively coherent theory that will explain 70 percent of policy change over periods of a decade or more rather than to add a hodgepodge of amendments in a misleading effort to explain 100 percent.

This requires that we identify those fundamental principles, or what Lakatos (1978) termed the "core" of a scientific research program. Following is our first attempt at such a list:[32]

1. *Reliance upon the policy subsystem as the principal aggregate unit of analysis:* Not only is such a reliance justified by multiple pressures for policy specialization, but subsystem scope has become critical to the ACF's conception of the structure of belief systems, the difference between major and minor policy change, and the factors affecting such change.

2. *A model of the individual based upon (a) the possibility of complex goal structures and (b) information-processing capabilities that are limited and, most important, involve perceptual filters:* This model is critical for understanding coalition stability and conflict, as well as for policy-oriented learning.

3. *Concern with policy-oriented learning as an important source of policy change, particularly in the secondary aspects.*

4. *The concept of advocacy coalitions as a means of aggregating large numbers of actors from different institutions at multiple levels of government into a manageable number of units:* This concept is both the defining characteristic of the ACF and one of its most innovative features.

5. *Conceptualizing both belief systems and public policies as sets of goals, perceptions of problems and their causes, and policy preferences that are organized in multiple tiers:* Mapping beliefs and policies on the same canvas facilitates analysis of the role of scientific and other information in policy. Providing a tiered and rather detailed concept of belief system structure encourages falsification.

6. *Coalitions that seek to manipulate governmental and other institutions to alter people's behavior and problem conditions in an effort to realize the coalition's belief system:* Coalitions seek to accomplish this kind of manipulation in an instrumentally rational fashion by moving among multiple venues in an intergovernmental system.

Once these core elements of the ACF have been identified, it becomes clear that the Schlager coordination hypotheses—although very plausible—should probably not be included in the ACF because they are based on an alternative model of the individual.

Framework or Theory?

The introductory and concluding chapters of this book borrow Elinor Ostrom's distinctions among frameworks, theories, and models. In our view, the ACF started as a framework (with a set of hypotheses) and is developing into the more integrated and denser set of relationships characteristic of a theory. Clearly, its model of the individual is much clearer now than in 1987 and much more integrated with other aspects of the theory, particularly coalition dynamics and belief change. The concept of a subsystem is much more clearly defined and much bet-

ter integrated with belief system structure and policy change. The problems of achieving coordinated behavior among actors with similar beliefs are now explicitly acknowledged, and several relevant hypotheses have been proposed. Coalition strategies are much better developed. The factors affecting learning across coalitions—particularly the characteristics of professional forums—have been further elaborated. And at least a beginning has been made with respect to the processes underlying major policy change. If the ACF is not yet a theory, it is fairly close to becoming one.

NOTES

1. The year at Bielefeld (in the German Federal Republic) was notable for (1) the exposure it afforded Sabatier to two of the more committed and articulate bottom-uppers, Benny Hjern and Ken Hanf; (2) the opportunity to interact extensively with Lin Ostrom, a proponent of institutional rational choice who also served as a model of how to develop a coherent research program; (3) a walk in the woods with Martin Shubik, who convinced him that critics of rational choice would fail unless they developed an alternative theoretical framework; and (4) exposure to Heclo's (1974) classic work on social policy in Britain and Sweden, which, as much as anything, served as the basic inspiration for the ACF.

2. The ACF assumes that deep core and policy core beliefs will generally—but not always—be congruent. The deep core provides a very general set of principles—a heuristic—to guide political behavior on a very wide variety of topics. Policy core beliefs pertain within the subsystem, that is, the person's area of expertise. When the two conflict, the policy core will dominate because that is the area that is most salient to the person and in which she or he has thought the most deeply. In the United States, for example, conservatives are strong proponents of the market allocation of resources. But in the area of environmental policy, some conservatives recognize market limitations—such as externalities—and are willing to support a greater role for governmental intervention. For legislatures with strong committee systems, the ACF predicts that deep core beliefs would best predict floor votes, and policy core beliefs would best predict votes of specialists in committee.

3. For example, for an environmentalist who has a policy core belief that air quality poses a serious health problem throughout most of the United States, evidence that this is not the case in, for example, Boston poses no serious challenge. She or he simply changes a secondary aspect regarding problem seriousness for Boston. Information that air quality is no longer a hazard in a second locale will also pose no serious problem to the *policy core* belief; the analyst will simply change a specific secondary aspect for this second locale. But it will take very persuasive evidence from a high percentage of sites to produce a change in the policy core belief because the policy core is much broader in scope (the U.S. air pollution subsystem).

4. In their ongoing study of drug policy in a dozen European cities, Daniel Kuebler and his colleagues at the University of Lausanne have found very few cases of "neutral" brokers. Instead, most of the successful negotiations have been led by moderate members of the various coalitions (personal communication, November 1998; also Kuebler, 1999).

5. As originally conceived, "policy-oriented learning" focused largely on what might be termed substantive rather than political learning. It dealt with the severity of the policy

12. Although environmental groups tended to specialize a little, most were involved in at least two (and sometimes all three) of the major functional areas. The 1992 Bay/Delta questionnaire contained two indicators of coordinated behavior: (1) "Who do you rely upon for information and advice concerning Bay/Delta water policy issues?" and (2) "Who do you regard as allies/opponents?"

13. This hypothesis is "new" only with respect to the 1988 version of the framework. It was in the 1993 version (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 213).

14. One possibility is that studies using testimony at public hearings will support the moderation hypothesis, whereas those based on (confidential) surveys are more likely to reveal relatively extreme views. The evidence to date, however, does not consistently support this argument.

15. Since (a) was in the text (but not the table) in the 1993 version and (c) was in the 1988 version, there is less change over time in the list of policy core topics than would first appear. For analyses of the importance of causal perceptions, see Sabatier and Hunter (1989) and Sabatier and Zafonte (1995, 1999).

The discerning reader will notice that "sociocultural identity" (e.g., ethnicity, religion, gender; identity) has been added to the *deep core* because it can obviously have a significant impact across a wide variety of policy areas (Schmidt, 1996). For the moment, we have decided not to add it to the policy core because the second normative precept (identification of groups whose welfare is critical) would seem to cover it. But we are impressed by Pierre Muller's (Jobert and Muller, 1987, pp. 80–100) argument that in a specific policy sector, groups can construct a new identity—for example, the image of "the young farmer, dynamic and moderniser"—that helped transform French agricultural policy in the 1960s.

16. This section is based largely upon conversations with (1) Gerald Thomas, John Grin, Anne Loeber, Tom Leschine, and Matt Zafonte at the 1996 Western Political Science Association meetings and (2) Grin and Rob Hoppe in Amsterdam in February 1997. See also the papers by Thomas (1996) and Grin and Hoppe (1997).

17. The problem cases include: (1) Is landsat a subsystem separate from the broader science and technology subsystem in the United States (Thomas, 1998)? (2) Is eutrophication a subsystem separate from the broader water quality subsystem in the Netherlands (Loeber and Grin, 1999)? (3) Is automotive pollution control a subsystem separate form the air pollution subsystem in the United States (Sabatier, Zafonte, and Gjerde, 1999)?

18. At Tahoe, those watershed events were approval of a fairly stringent regional plan in 1972 (opposed by many property owners) and the approval of several casinos in 1973–1974, which emasculated support for the agency by environmental groups and resource agencies (Sabatier and Pelkey, 1990). In air pollution control, the watershed event was the debate over the very stringent amendments to the Clean Air Act in 1970 (Ingram, 1978).

19. Interestingly, Haas (1992) made precisely the same mistake with respect to epistemic communities.

20. As Baumgartner and Leech (1998, ch. 7) observed, the literature on lobbying strategies consists of a series of case studies, and often, little effort is made to link case studies to existing theories or to accumulate evidence on specific topics. From our perspective, the most interesting work includes Hojnacki's (1997) analysis of the factors responsible for American interest groups' decisions to act alone or in concert in lobbying Congress. She found that groups are more likely to work together (1) on broad, rather than narrow, is-

problem, its causes, and the probable impacts of alternative solutions on policy objectives rather than on the efficient political means of achieving those substantive objectives. We remain convinced of the general utility of distinguishing substantive from political learning, and of focusing policy-oriented learning on the former. For other discussions of policy learning, see May (1992), Bennett and Howlett (1992), Hall (1993), Goldstein and Keohane (1993), Radaelli (1995), and Lebovic (1995). For a discussion of the methodological difficulties in ascertaining whether learning has occurred, see King et al. (1994, pp. 191–192).

6. In fact, Hypothesis 2 is partially true by definition, as a coalition is defined as people who agree on policy core items. Thus, it is highly likely, although not logically required, that they will agree more on the policy core than on secondary aspects.

7. This listing of hypotheses follows the 1993, rather than the 1988, version of the framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 217) because we have not included intergovernmental relations as a major category of framework development in this paper.

8. The middle set involves authors with established expertise in a particular policy domain, but no vested interest in supporting the ACF (i.e., none involved our students or colleagues). The vast majority of the thirty-four cases involve either journal articles or book chapters, although a few involve Ph.D. dissertations. All of them apply the ACF in a relatively serious and critical—not cursory—fashion.

9. There have also been a number of essays discussing the ACF, often comparing it with other approaches. These include Bennett and Howlett (1992), Lindquist (1992), deLeon (1994), Zahariadis (1995), Dowding (1995), Radaelli (1995b), Peterson (1995), Capano (1996), Parsons (1995), John (1998), and Bergeron, Surel, and Valluy (1998). Finally, there have been several papers (e.g., Radaelli, 1995a), that apply the ACF to a case(s) in a more cursory fashion than those listed in Table 6.1.

10. The situation is more complex than suggested here. On the one hand, the entire literature on iron triangles, closed subsystems, and corporatism suggests that many political scientists view administrative agency officials as active policy participants. And there has been some work on journalists as political actors (Rothman and Lichter, 1987; Iyengar, 1991). On the other hand, there is substantial evidence that many political scientists are reluctant to see agency officials, scientists, and journalists as potential members of advocacy coalitions. The following are three examples: (1) A number of people, including Meier and Garman (1995), tend to view advocacy coalitions as virtually synonymous with interest groups. Although recognizing that agencies have policy goals, they are reluctant to see that agency officials often form active coalitions with sympathetic interest groups. They also neglect journalists and researchers as potential members of coalitions. (2) Most of the literature on principal agent models—particularly the work of Wood and Waterman (1991, 1994)—views agency officials as passive blanks who respond to stimuli from principals. (3) In his influential article on the change in British macroeconomic policy from Keynesianism to monetarism in the 1980s, Hall (1993) recognized the roles played by journalists and economists in popularizing monetarism but never admitted that they may have been active allies of the Thatcherites (rather than "neutral" chroniclers of the debate). For variations across countries in the extent to which agencies are expected to be neutral or policy-indifferent, see Aberbach et al. (1981).

11. Although neither of Jenkins-Smith's surveys contain measures of coordinated behavior—and thus are subject to Schlager's (1995) criticism that they have assumed that common beliefs lead to coordinated behavior—Duffy (1997, chs. 2, 3) provided evidence that national lab and UCS scientists were active members of opposing coalitions.

sues, (2) when some organization is perceived as pivotal to success, or (3) when the groups perceive a strong organized opposition. In addition, niche theory suggests that one way to minimize competition for credit is to specialize, that is, to occupy a narrow niche (Gray and Lowery, 1996).

21. We have modified Schlager's "minimal levels of cooperation" hypothesis because it deals only with beliefs (i.e., agreement upon a definition of the problem and the content of policies used to address it) and does not involve any actual *behavior* (such as the development of a coordinated lobbying strategy). Schlager developed these criteria from Ostrom's (1990, p. 221) analysis of the conditions necessary for the formation of institutions to manage common property resources.

22. It was temporarily incorporated into the ACF in Sabatier (1998, p. 116), but this was before the incongruity in the two models of the individual became apparent.

23. Lack of data keeps us from addressing the second and fourth principles. Note that Figure 6.3 applies only to the federal and state levels and thus doesn't even try to list a multitude of local initiatives.

24. In their study of OCS leasing during the Reagan and Bush administrations, Freudenburg and Gramling (1997) found that the Department of Interior was so convinced of the evidence concerning the negligible environmental impacts of expanded drilling that they convinced President Bush to turn the issue over to the National Academy of Sciences for a judgment. Imagine their surprise when the academy ruled that the evidence was very mixed concerning the environmental risks of drilling.

25. On the other hand, we are not yet prepared to say whether a change in only one of the eleven topics in the policy core (see Table 6.2) would constitute "major" change, or whether it might require changes in several topics.

26. Baumgartner and Jones's punctuated-equilibrium framework (see Chapter 5) does no better than the ACF on this point. Just as the ACF points to exogenous shocks, they point to changes in "public image" and "venue" as precursors of major change, but both theories treat these precursors as exogenous to the phenomena being explained.

27. The 1993 revised version of the ACF attempted to revise Hypothesis 5 to deal with these criticisms, but it did so in a manner that made it virtually nonfalsifiable. This version is much better.

28. These include (1) Nigel Boyle, Claremont Graduate School, British labor market policy; (2) Rinie van Est, University of Amsterdam, wind energy policy in Denmark, the Netherlands, and California; (3) Laura Sims, University of Maryland, U.S. nutrition policy; (4) someone who recently submitted a paper to the *Journal of Politics* applying the ACF to welfare reform in the United States; (5) Mark Lubell and John Scholz, State University of New York at Stony Brook, coastal watershed partnerships in the United States; (6) Dorothy Daley, University of California at Davis, Superfund implementation; and (7) several colleagues at the University of California at Davis who are presently applying the ACF to 100 watershed partnerships in California and Washington. In addition, Larry Susskind (MIT) and John Power (University of Melbourne) have groups of students applying the ACF in graduate seminars (Casey et al., 1997).

29. We would like to thank Neil Pelkey for raising this issue particularly forcefully.

30. The ongoing study of 100 watershed partnerships at the University of California at Davis promises to do precisely this, and the ongoing study of European drug policy by Kuebler et al. should also produce some interesting conclusions on this subject.

31. Edella Schlager and Jim Lester are only two of the colleagues who have criticized the ACF for neglecting institutions and implementation. A first try at a response was made in presentations by Sabatier at several European universities in November 1998, but more work clearly needs to be done.

32. We are indebted to Chris Hood for reminding us to value internal coherence and to resist the temptation to synthesize a wide variety of approaches into a single "theory."

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PART IV

Frameworks Comparing Policies Across a Large Number of Political Systems