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INTRODUCTION

In this essay, we review a highly selective number of key concepts in the broad field of “knowledge to policy”. The topic has been defined from a range of angles, with various authors from wide-ranging disciplines and research traditions having studied the role of knowledge in the policy-making process.

In the interest of being as succinct as possible we introduce various concepts and discuss their practical implications, after which we refer the interested reader to key texts in the field for their reference.

The review of the literature is organised around the following themes:

- A brief history of the field of the policy approach
- A meta-analysis of the knowledge-to-policy field
- Tensions between researchers, policy analysts and politicians
- New approaches to agenda analysis and policy formation.

Keywords: Knowledge-to-policy, policy analysis, policy-learning, knowledge utilisation, political science, knowledge networks

A brief history of the development of the policy approach

The initial development of natural science provided a framework for the development of the study of society and public administration, which would evolve during the 19th and 20th centuries. This was during the era of the “Enlightenment”, which proposed that the world consists of puzzles and problems that can be solved through applying reason and knowledge. During the age of Bacon, Newton and the French Enlightenment it was believed that through uncovering “facts” that can be studied empirically one can view the world objectively and then potentially change it (Parsons 1995).

The positivist foundation of social policy research was founded on the beliefs of social reformers such as Mayhew, Chadwick, Nightingale, Hill Beatrice and Sydney Webb that the application of knowledge generated through empirical analysis could be “the engine of improvement” for social problems such as child labour, health and poverty (Parsons, 1995).

Parsons (1995: 68) explains the positivist approach: “Positivism has its roots in the earlier work of Bacon but also Comte that the application of scientific methods can be used to study social issues. This was very much influential in the social sciences in the 19th and 20th century.”

Parsons, (1995) and Harris (1990) are however sceptical about how many of the positivistic practices were actually implemented in the development of policy. Harris states that much of the social science research work done at that stage was mostly taxonomic and not effective in providing explanations for social problems.

Nevertheless, this approach would be the building block for a tradition in social research that would focus the analysis on problems and how to address them, most notably also leading to the social survey tradition. In Britain, these surveys were often funded by philanthropists such as Booth a ship-owner who among others, published a volume on a survey on “Life and Labour of the People in London”, which analysed the causes of poverty and their consequences and which was used as a basis for a campaign for policy and law reform.

This trend was not only seen in the United States and Britain but also in continental Europe and formed the basis of Bismarck’s social welfare legislation in Germany. Booth’s work also was influential in the establishment of the Chicago School of Sociology – the key inspiration to social surveys in the 19th and earlier 20th century.

It was in the 1930s that social scientists such as Keynes (1926; 2006) maintained that government would have a much better chance of dealing with social issues if there was a more informed theory-based approach towards government. Keynes said that it should rather be ideas than political interest that must influence decision-making. It was then later in the 20th century that social science started to establish a new

relationship with government and politics.

During the 1950s and early 1960s more policy-focused forms of inquiry emerged from fields such as sociology, psychology, political science, social administration, management and natural sciences. Lasswell, a preeminent scholar in policy studies, published extensively on the topic over between 1930 and 1970s.

According to Parsons (1995), policy analysis became widely used during the Second World War with the emergence of Operational Research (OR) and techniques for economic analysis. The approach of the Kennedy-Johnson presidencies with the “New Frontier” or the “Great Society” increasingly viewed government as a problem-solver, and its role to identify problems and develop theories on how they could be solved.

The real growth of policy studies as a field of enquiry started towards the late 1960s. The policy studies field stretched over many social science disciplines and became a possible area for developing a unified and integrative area of enquiry within the social sciences. However, many social scientists were sceptical about policy studies’ ability to play this role – especially in universities, which were still operating in silos, and the structure of social science traditions where there was not much evidence that subject boundaries were being broken down.

Key points debated in the 1960s were the equality or lack thereof of inputs into developing policy, as well as the extent to which government has the ability to act rationally. This can be termed the “decision/input paradigm” (Parsons 1995) where the key issues were about who has power, what power is, who is involved in decision-making and who is excluded?

Towards the 1970s, the focus shifted towards the “implementation/with input paradigm”. Parsons argued that this was a problem-solving paradigm for government to uncover how actors behave, why implementation fails and how it could be improved (Parsons 1995).

This was to a certain extent taking place outside academia, however. The 1970s and 1980s also saw a growth in think tanks and research institutes in the developed world, where interdisciplinary approaches to policy were booming. Researchers also remained stuck within their research agendas versus the policy agendas.

In the 1980s and 1990s the public policy field expanded to other countries outside the United States. Geographically, the field of policy analysis was also expanding to countries outside the UK and the USA.

Meta-analysis: Research traditions and models of the policy process

In order to illustrate to the reader the vastness of the policy analysis field, we provide a short summary of the range of theories and concepts organised by a number of authors. Outlined below is a list the range of topics covered in Parson’s text, but to keep it succinct we focus on the range of studies that deal with the policy process, paradigms of inquiry, various research traditions and theory, key ideas and models for policy analysis.

Note to the interested reader

The field is too vast to develop a full review of the meta-level here.

In his first chapter, Parsons outlined of a range of topics around a meta-analysis:

- Kinds of policy analysts and policy analysis
- Varieties of analytical frameworks
- Philosophical frameworks
- Analysis and the policy process
- Models, maps and metaphors
- Stages and cycles- various references to mapping the policy process.

Analysis and the policy process

According to (Nowlin 2011), as Lasswell suggested the policy sciences could be defined as:

“Policy scholarship is divided between knowledge in the policy process and knowledge of the policy process” (Nowlin, 2011: 41).

- Knowledge in the policy process refers to knowledge produced through analysis and evaluation;
- Knowledge of the policy process is focused on the “how and why” of policy making.

Cloete and de Coning (2011) also provide insight into the range of studies for public policy and state that there are three objectives for such studies:

1. To gain better academic knowledge of and insight into policy in order to take a more scientific approach towards it, developing descriptive studies of the policy or to explain or predict outcomes;
2. To improve the process through which policy is made, the content of the policy and the outcomes; and
3. To influence or control policy processes and content in order to ensure desired outcomes are achieved.

As stated by Parsons (1995), analysis of policy may have a range of objectives. Building on Lasswell (1971), he suggests that analysis may be divided into three categories: knowledge in the policy process, knowledge for the policy process, and knowledge about the policy process. (Gordon et al. 1977) proposed that these varieties of policy analysis could be presented as a continuum:

Analysis of policy

Policy determination: This is the analysis of “how policy is made, why, when and for whom”. What is intended here is that the focus is on better understanding the policy system - here it is often concerned with developing models of the system and understanding how the policies are made.

Policy content: Here the focus of analysis is on the origin, intention and operation of policies. Such studies are often more focused on academic advancement and could be on how to do “value analysis”, or looking at how policy is institutionalising social theories.

Monitoring and evaluation

The analysis for a monitoring study is to track how a policy is performing against the stated goals, while evaluation studies often evaluate what the impact of a policy is on solving a specific problem.

Analysis for policy

- **Policy advocacy:** Here Gordon et al. (1977) refer to any research that is conducted to influence the policy agenda. This may refer to the advocacy of a single or range of policies and through a range of relationships by researchers with the policy community.
- **Information for policy:** The researcher’s task here is to provide decision-makers or policy-makers with information or advice to support their decision-making or policy-making activities. The nature of the information may be the provision of useful data, an analysis or research that supports causal links or explores policy options.

To summarise then, the policy analysis field is concerned with a range of aspects of the policy-making process, including having a better understanding of how policy is made, how to influence these processes and also what needs to be considered when providing appropriate support to decision-makers. Next we consider various paradigms of inquiry through which attempts have been made to answer these questions.

Paradigms of inquiry

Guba (1990) argues that there has been a strong emphasis historically on the quantification of science. Subjects like mathematics, physics and chemistry are referred to as “hard sciences”, where less quantifiable subjects like biology or the social sciences are referred to as “soft sciences”. Guba states that the positivist outlook (attempts to verify) and the post-positivist outlook (to falsify) were aimed at developing mathematical (quantitative) statements, most preferably in the form of expressing functional relationships.

Guba (1990) contrasts four paradigms that consider ontology (what the nature of reality can be seen as), epistemology (the relationship between the knowledge and the scientist) and methodology (how the process should be approached to discover knowledge):

Table 1: Four paradigms of inquiry adapted from (Guba, 1990)

Paradigm	Ontology (Nature of reality)	Epistemology (relationship between researcher and object under study)	Methodology
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Naive realism” • Reality exists and we can explain it through laws and causal effects which we can uncover through research • Through research we can uncover the true state of affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivist – we can conduct research and be objective, meaning that we are free of value • The investigator and the object being researched are independent • We attempt to reduce or eliminate any influence from any direction between the researchers and the object that is being studied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can verify hypotheses and empirically test it – mostly through quantifying it • Propositions are stated in propositional form • Confounding conditions to be carefully controlled or prevented
Post-positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Critical realism” – we do believe that reality does exist but it cannot be understood or explained fully as we cannot account for all factors that shape it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dualism / Objectivity remains an ideal but is dependent on critical traditions and a critical community • If we can replicate findings, they may be true but they are also subject to falsification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Critical multiplism” which is a refurbished form of triangulation can be used to falsify hypotheses • Address criticisms of experimentalism through emphasising qualitative research and discovery in natural settings and grounded theory
Critical theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Historical realism” – a wide range of historical causes and effects shape reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurs the traditional separation between ontology and epistemology due to link that exists • The investigator and the object investigated are linked at least through the value of the investigator – leading to value mediated findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry through dialogue to transform historically mediated structures to eliminate false consciousness • Transformational leadership
Constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Relativism” • Realities can be understood through multiple mental constructs that are relevant to the individual and their context • Theoretical constructs are not “true” or “false” but could be more or less sophisticated or informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears as findings are developed as one progresses with the investigation • Findings are resulting from the interactions between the investigator and the object investigated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hermeneutic and dialectical” • In order to develop a consensus structure we compare and describe various constructions through hermeneutical techniques

Implications of these paradigms of inquiry for policy studies

“Positivist methodologies continue to dominate in policy analysis despite the fact that their intellectual foundations were undermined at least a decade ago” (Amy quoted in Heineman et al., 1990)

Popper (1945) argued that theories are in many senses ideologies leading scientists to become “prisoners of their frameworks”, and that this could only be changed through a revolution that would “set them free”. This thinking proved to be extremely influential in policy sciences and many scientists were moved to think critically about whether their theories or models could exist in a variety of contexts or coexist in multiple paradigms. Scholars asked questions around whether they really are facts or theories, or whether are they just different versions of reality.

It was then the work of Popper (1945) and Kuhn (1962), who ushered in the post-positivist era, asked serious questions about the certainty of facts and theories. Various views characterise this era (Parsons, 1995):

Popper’s idea that policy making should be accomplished through experimentation rather than unscientific or non-falsifiable theories was further developed by Campbell’s metaphor of the “experimenting society” (Campbell, 1998).

4. Critical theory scholars influenced by Kuhn emphasised that reality needs to be conceptualised through a range of competing paradigms.
5. Another view was the constructivist approach that argued that reality was socially constructed and the implication of this was that policy and politics were seen as “modes of discourse” that create reality.

One may ask where these views on knowledge leave us in terms of social or other problems. Parsons referred to Lincoln (1990) who suggested that we needed to abandon the view that knowledge about social problems is made up of “building blocks”. She argued that the goal should be to link up various “clumps of knowledge” or “knowledge that exists in non-hierarchical organization”.

Parsons argued that contemporary views of scientific theories that derive from Popper are very different from the initial thinking from the Baconian era. He suggested that policy studies is a “bootstrapping” activity, which means that one needs to understand that there are too many perspectives and paradigms within and between scientific enclaves to have a one-size-fits-all explanation of the world. This requires the policy analyst to bear the following in mind:

- Considering the various approaches to policy analysis, one must be aware of the knowledge paradigm in which it is based. For example, cost-benefit analysis is more positivistic compared to policy advocacy, and it is important to be aware of the distinction between these approaches.
- The analyst must appreciate the wide network of ideas, frameworks, concepts, models, etc. that contribute to explanations of the world.
- Accept the pluralistic nature of investigation. This relates to interdisciplinary quality of investigation, as well as tolerating hermeneutic diversity.

Having drawn these general conclusions about the implications of paradigms of inquiry for the approach towards policy analysis, a more in-depth review of paradigms of policy approaches now follows. Here we attempt to link the paradigm of inquiry to the practical implications for policy analysis, and to show how the changing paradigms changed policy approaches.

Paradigms of policy approaches “Rational decision-making”

“Policy-making must be understood as a political process as much as an analytical or problem solving one. The policy-making process is by no means the rational activity that it is often held up to be in much of the standard literature. Indeed, the metaphors that have guided policy research over recent years suggest that it is actually rather messy, with outcomes occurring as a result of complicated political, social and institutional processes which are best described as ‘evolutionary’, Juma and Clark, (1995) in Sutton (1999)

The significance of the influence of welfare economic theory on the policy analysis field was that it uses welfare economic frameworks which are concerned about improving efficiency and rationality of decision-making. This approaches policy analysis as a “rational technique”.

This approach and paradigm is very much seated in the positivistic paradigm of inquiry and as such has been criticised as having certain limitations typical of approaches from this view point. Key objections raised are that it is too data-heavy, and that decision-makers use reports and data to explain their decisions rather than to inform them. Furthermore, the concept that any analysis of data can be neutral is widely recognised to be impossible. Furthermore, the analyst is widely acknowledged to be without a powerbase or any constituents to please, implying that the person may be out of sync with political and bureaucratic issues.

Rosenhead (1989) provided a very insightful and useful analysis for contrasting and comparing the paradigms of rational analysis with those of an alternative paradigm. It is able to provide for the messiness and unstructured nature of decision making, which in turn allows for a process that will enrich the decision-making process, rather than seeing it as a process through which one will arrive at an optimal decision (Parson, 1995).

Table 2: Rational analysis versus alternative paradigms (Rosenhead (1989) in Parsons (1995))

Dominant paradigm of rational analysis	Alternative paradigm of rational analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem formulation in terms of a single objective of optimization. If multiple objectives are recognised it is seen as an issue of trade-offs; • Very heavy data demands subject to distortion and data availability; • Scientific process and drive to depoliticise; • Individual seen as passive objects; • Attempts to reduce future uncertainty; • Assumes single decision-maker that can deduce concrete steps for implementation through a hierarchical chain of command. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not have an optimization focus- looks at acceptable solutions on a range of dimensions not considering trade-offs • Lower demand for data and focus on integration and synthesised quantitative and qualitative information subject to judgement • Seeks simplicity and transparency to be clear on terms of conflict • People are acknowledged as being actively engaged in the process • Planning also planned from bottom up • Uncertainty as seen as part of the process and future options available to change

Parsons lists key techniques of the rational analysis approach (see Parsons, 1995: 399 - 432):

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Economic forecasting
- Financial planning
- Operational research and systems analysis
- Social indicators
- Impact assessment.

A very practical and accessible text for comparing the “rational decision-maker” paradigm with those of a political decision-maker can be found in the book entitled “The Policy Paradox” by Deborah Stone (2001). She explains to the policy analyst or researcher that the policy making process cannot be “cleansed” from the often messy real-life environment in which policy is made, or the world in which the politician has to operate. The following table provides a comparison of the differences in terms of approach towards decision-making.

Table 3: Market model and the Polis model (Stone 2001)

	<i>Market model (Individual)</i>	<i>Polis model (Community)</i>
Unit of analysis	Individual	Community
Motivations	Self-interest	Public interest
Chief conflict	Self-interest vs self-interest	Self-interest vs public-interest
Nature of collective activity	Competition	Co-operation and competition
Criteria for individual decision-making	Maximising self-interest, minimising cost	Loyalty, maximise self-interest, promote public interest
Building blocks of social action	Individuals	Groups or communities
Nature of information	Accurate, complete, fully available	Ambiguous, interpretive, incomplete, strategically manipulated
How things work	Laws of matter (Things get used up)	Laws of passion (Channels of political influence and political influence grow by being used)
Sources of change	Material exchange Quest to maximise own welfare	Pursuit of power, pursuit of own welfare, pursuit of public interest
Nature of information	Accurate, complete, fully available	Ambiguous, interpretive, incomplete, strategically manipulated

Stone said that the approach towards analysis and findings and deciding on alternatives for implementation is also fundamentally different if one compares the ideal type for the “rational decision” and the decision-maker in the Polis:

Table 20: Rational decision making versus decision-making in the Polis

	Rational decision-making	Decision-making in the Polis
Goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State goals explicitly and precisely Adhere to the same goal throughout the analysis and decision-making process Try to imagine and consider as many alternatives as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State goals ambiguously and vaguely, keep some goals secret or hidden Be prepared to shift or change goals as political situation dictates Keep undesirable alternatives off the agenda by not mentioning them Make preferred alternative appear as only one to consider Focus on one part of causal chain and ignore others that may lead to political difficulty
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define each alternative clearly as course of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use rhetorical devices to blend alternatives; do not appear to make a strong decision which will trigger strong opposition

Cost-benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the costs and benefits of each course of action as accurately and as completely as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select from the infinite range of cost and benefits only those that will make your alternative look best
Selecting actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose course of action that will maximise total welfare as defined by objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose course of action that will hurt powerful constituents the least, but portray decision as creating maximum social benefit

Critical rationalists

The critical rationalists took the criticisms of the rational approach on-board and attempted to find a middle path by rejecting incrementalism. Authors from this paradigm put forward alternatives to the rational approach.

Etzioni's work entitled *The Active Society* is, according to Parsons, the best introduction to this approach, and its key contribution is the view that community and society should contribute actively to analysis and should not be excluded. The suggestion here is that intellectuals, experts and politicians need to engage society in their work towards developing policy alternatives.

Dror (1967) argues that through tacit knowledge and personal experience, additional information may be available on which to base decisions. Proposing a more complex model than the more simplistic approach used by the rationalist approach, he puts forward a model of stages that attempts to include the role of values and perceptions in decision-making.

Political realists

Lindblom, Wildavsky and Hogwood and Gunn (date) view policy analysis as part of the political process and say aim should be to support political argumentation rather than to replace it. Policy analysis here is viewed as a mechanism through which the level of the debate can be raised (Parsons, 1995).

Lindblom's book entitled *Inquiry of Change* (1990) proposes that opposed to the "textbook approach" to policy analysis which is mostly scientifically guided, an alternative would be a self-guided society (see Box below for characteristics) in contrast with the scientific method, which is a radical departure from the Baconian era, but in line with the Enlightenment:

Lindblom's self-guided society

- Knowledge is inconclusive.
- Social science plays a supporting role not an alternative role to normal inquiry.
- Learning takes place at all levels and between ordinary citizens.
- There are not right and wrong solutions but "well-probed" ones.
- Learning also incorporates feedback from learning experiences from a range of actors.
- Elites should not dominate the process so much.
- There needs to be a distribution of power if policies will be imposed.
- Democratic institutions and participation from all levels are needed for finding appropriate solutions.
- Room must be left in the problem-solving process, rather than a rigid design of advisory structures.
- There are not universal solutions; all solutions are context specific.
- There is limited faith in reason and holistic theories.

The role for knowledge and analysis is therefore to open up communications by:

- Broadening the agenda – putting new solutions on the agenda;
- Bringing new issues and more depth to debates;
- Not having unreal “neutrality”, but being aware of one’s preferred solutions or partisanship;
- Developing a framework from which to view uncertainties and also to ensure flexibility is planned for;
- Encouraging learning through experience;
- Develop citizens’ thinking in order to foster critical thinking in the populace.

Critical theorists

The critical theorists advocate that policy-making as a shift in decision-making processes means improving the way that decision-makers use information towards empowering citizens to contribute to debates. Dunn argues that knowledge which is about propositions and still being negotiated should be open to input and criticism from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Parsons cites two influential models from this school of thought:

Firstly, Lasswell’s (1960) concept of the decision seminar arose from his view that decision-making is subject to distortion. The goal of policy sciences is to support the development of a less distorted, more rational process for arriving at decisions. The suggestion is that mechanisms such as seminars could create an environment for thinking creatively and foster open communications.

Secondly, Dryzek (1987) suggests that alternatives to rationality may be “communicative rationality”. The communicative approach is aimed at stimulating public discourse. He argues that in order to effectively address problems in an increasingly complex world there needs to be “reasoned discourse” between informed and competent actors through social interactions.

Managerialists

Set against the Kennedy-Johnson era, there was a growing influence of management techniques in government during the 1960s. This led scholars to derive their views from the approaches used by managers in private-sector organisations. Although the rational model was not completely abandoned, the attempts made here were to use the practical and useful models drawn from the world of business in policy analysis.

The focus in the 1970s fast became one of “public management”, where the management approach offered an alternative to the public administration tradition. There was increased recognition of the management approach in the 1980s and 1990s, concerned with improving efficiencies and effectiveness through the application of private / profit sector techniques.

Parsons (1995) suggests Peters and Waterman (1982) as the key source for this approach. Here there is a shift to the “excellence” of private firms, against Weberian “public interest” and towards a greater market-driven approach towards public management.

The above sections provided a broad overview of various approaches and alternatives to the rational decision-making paradigm. We now proceed with a more focused discussion of a range of selected approaches to policy analysis.

Key heuristics, metaphors, theories and frameworks

As argued by Lindquist (2001) the array of ideas and number of frameworks to guide the development of policy in its formative phases are quite “bewildering”, not only to the student of policy analysis but also to the professional analyst. Recent attempts have focused on developing models and frameworks that are more comprehensive. We review the following:

- Drawing on the “Two-communities metaphor”, we consider the tensions between researchers, policy analysts as well as that between policy-makers and politicians;
- The Stages Heuristic;
- Policy networks and policy communities metaphor;
- Institutional analysis and development framework (Ostrom 2011);
- Multiple streams model of agenda-setting (Kingdon 1984);

- Advocacy Coalition Framework (Weible et al. 2011; Weible et al. 2009);
- Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory (Jones & Baumgartner 2012).

Definitions of key terms

Before unpacking a variety of approaches to policy analysis and analysts of policy, it is useful to distinguish between the terms 'concept', 'heuristic', 'metaphor', 'model', 'theory', 'framework' and 'paradigm':

Concept: "A concept is an abstract idea that serves as a thinking tool to describe specific attributes of intangible phenomena" (e.g. policy, strategy) (Cloete, F., de Coning 2011).

Heuristics: A heuristic provides an aid to learn, discover or approach a problem usually based on experiential learning which is not theoretically justified (e.g. the stages heuristic) (Carlsson 2000)(Ostrom et al. 1994).

Metaphors: Metaphors are figures of speech through which a concept or action is explained by applying a phrase or word which it is not literally applicable. This may be especially effective for explaining an unfamiliar concept if it is likened to a familiar one e.g. the policy networks metaphor (Carlsson 2000)(Ostrom et al. 1994).

Theories can be described as deductive systems of hypotheses or propositions (Ostrom et al. 1994).

Models are theories through which precise assumptions regarding relationships between variables and their causal effects are set out e.g. Multiple Streams (Carlsson 2000)(Ostrom et al. 1994).

A **framework** is a broad conceptualisation of an issue which is useful for organising one's thinking about an investigation. It may outline a range of variables that may be regarded as important to support developing questions that will be addressed in such a study (Carlsson 2000)(Ostrom et al. 1994).

Paradigm: A paradigm is a classification of a collection or pattern of commonly held assumptions, concepts and models and/or theories that makes up a general intellectual framework or approach to a scientific area (e.g. liberalism, Marxism) (Cloete, F., de Coning 2011).

Two communities: Researchers and policy-makers

The often uneasy relationship between policy-makers and researchers has been discussed in a number of texts. Stone refers to the "rational decision-maker" versus the decision-maker in the policy, while Edwards (2005) also provides a discussion describing the expectations and divergent goals of these two communities.

"There is often an uneasy relationship between researchers and policy practitioners. Each looks at the world through different coloured lenses. Each has different perspectives on what the problem is, and unrealistic expectations" (Edwards 2005).

Discussed in a previous essay in this document, Caplan (1979) coined the "two-communities" metaphor to describe and explain the cultural divide between researchers or policy analysts as well as policy-makers. Edwards (2005) provides a very useful analysis on the mismatch between the nature of the questions to be addressed and academic structures. She concludes that research questions are often defined by those outside academia and that these questions also very seldom fall into a specific discipline. In the following table we summarise the various issues in terms of these categories in the research-policy nexus.

Table 4: The divide between researchers / policy analysts and policy-makers (Summarised from Edwards (2005))

Perspective of researchers about policy-makers	Perspective of policy-makers about researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of government interest in research • Lack of knowledge of researchers whose work is relevant • Difficulties in getting hold of data due to bureaucracies • No effort by government to publicise policy issues and priorities • Anti-intellectual approach followed by government • Risk-averse nature and unwillingness to accept information that may put decision-makers in bad light • Wariness of critical analyses • Short time frames in which government operates • Lack of incentive to do policy-relevant research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers often speak naively about issues • Researchers demonstrate little awareness of policy issues • Researchers are sometimes overly technical • What researchers write sometimes needs dramatic editing to make it readable to policy-makers • The time scales of policy-makers and researchers are very different • Researchers deal with issues that are on the agenda and are important • Researcher's work is often done with an agenda setting out to prove something other than to truly evaluate or interpret impact

Livny, Mehendale and Vanags (2006) and Edwards (2005) approach the categorisation of various gaps through a typology of gaps towards a practical and manageable framework. This draws heavily on Stone et al. (2001) where they identified ten conceptualisations of the research-policy dynamic:

- Supply failure or gap refers to a situation where there is insufficient research available – characterised as a “public goods problem”.
- An information / communication gap failure: This may include:
 - A lack of access to research / data and analysis for both the researcher as well as the policy-maker;
 - Poor comprehension of researchers towards the problem or how the policy process works, as well as how knowledge may be used or be relevant;
 - Ineffective communication by researchers; and
 - Lack of awareness by politicians of existence of research or how it may be useful.
- Demand failure or gap may exist when:
 - Absorptive capacity may be lacking as the policy-makers are not responsive, dismissive or incapable of using the research.
- Governance failure or gap refers to a situation where knowledge utilisation may be manipulated by powerful actors. This may also lead to a situation where issues cannot be openly debated.

Edwards also builds on Stone et al. (2001) and integrates the issues she highlighted into three categories, namely issues on the supply-side, demand-side and social-cultural factors for developing a framework with potential actions to bridge the barriers towards a closer researcher-policy relationship. The following table provides a synthesis framework from these authors:

Table 5: Synthesis summary of barriers towards closer researcher-policy relationships

Supply - Researchers	Information / communication gap	Demand: Policy-makers
<p><i>Public goods problem:</i> an inadequate supply of policy-relevant research through lack of government funding (Stone, 2001).</p> <p><i>Co-option:</i> Researchers may feel the pressure to show that a policy works (Parkinson).</p> <p><i>Collusion:</i> trying to find out 'what works' could lead researchers to worry about their role in 'naming and shaming of places and people' (Parkinson).</p>	<p>A lack of access to research / data and analysis for both the researcher and policy-maker (Stone, 2001).</p> <p>Poor comprehension of researchers towards the problem, or of how the policy process works, as well as how knowledge may be used or be relevant (Stone, 2001).</p> <p>Ineffective communication by researchers - do academics get the right evidence in the right way to the right people at the right time in the right places? (Parkinson, date) (Stone, 2001).</p> <p>Lack of awareness by politicians of existence of research or how it may be useful (Stone, 2001).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-intellectualism in government: The policy process is driven by an ethos that militates against the use of research in policy-making – a fear of the critical power of ideas. • Absorptive capacity may be lacking as the policy-makers are not responsive, dismissive or incapable of using the research. • Politicisation of issues. • Constraints: Policy-makers want research that brings good news and do not know how to handle other types of news (Parkinson, date). • Concentration: Ministers have short attention spans and once commissioned research is handed over, they could be on to the next problem (Parkinson).
<p>Socio-cultural factors and Governance issues</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Time:</i> A tension between long-term academic research and the short-term needs of policy-makers (Parkinson). • <i>Changes in priorities:</i> Researchers sometimes address problems of yesterday, especially a problem when governments change (Parkinson). • <i>Cultural differences:</i> Policy-makers are mainly interested in action and researchers tend to be more reflective (Parkinson). <p><i>Societal disconnection:</i> Of both researchers and decision-makers from each other and from those whom the research is about (Edwards 2005).</p> <p><i>Domains of research relevance:</i> The relationship between research and policy and the status of 'science' in society is constantly evolving – research may have only an indirect impact on broad social, economic and cultural patterns (Edwards 2005).</p> <p><i>Contested validity of knowledge:</i> Raising issues of censorship, control and ideology and the relationship between knowledge and power (Edwards 2005).</p> <p><i>Validity of research:</i> Different epistemologies and 'ways of knowing' with particular reference to different cultural interpretations of knowledge (Edwards, 2005).</p>		

Additional reading for the interested reader

Bhorat, H. (2001). Labour markets and poverty: the link between research and policy-making in South Africa. All Africa Day Conference. School for Advanced International Studies. Johns Hopkins University. April 2001. Washington D.C.

Juma, C. and Clark, N. (1995). Policy research in Sub-Saharan Africa: an exploration. African Centre for Technology Studies, 16 p.

Livny, E., Mehendale, A. and A. Vanags. (2006). Bridging the research policy gaps in developing and transition countries: analytical lessons and Proposals for action. A synthesis of findings from the Global Development Network's Bridging Research and Policy Project, 59 p.

Martin, M. and G. Ngola. (1995). Forging links: economic research and policy making in sub-Saharan Africa. Report of the 1995 senior policy seminar, African Economic Research Consortium. Nairobi: African Economic Research Consortium, 72 p.

Mortimore, M. and M. Tiffen. (2004). Introducing research into policy: lessons from district studies of dryland development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development Policy Review*, 22 (3): 259-285 (May 2004).

Young, J. and J. Court. (2003). Research policy linkages in policies for food security in Southern Africa. Paper presented at the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, June 2003, 6 p.

Young, J. (2005). Research, policy and practice: why developing countries are different. *Journal of International Development*, Chichester: Aug 2005. Vol. 17, Iss. 6; p. 727 (8 p.).

The Stages Heuristic

As noted by Parsons (1995) and Sabatier (2007) the textbook approaches in the policy analysis field in the 1960s were derived by combining the "stages approach" and the political system models. Lasswell's paper (1951) entitled "The Policy Orientation" was the first formal reference to the policy sciences concept. The focus was very much on policy as a process, outlining stages that the policy goes through from being conceptualised to being evaluated at the end of its life. Lasswell proposed seven stages to the policy process:

- Intelligence
- Promotion
- Prescription
- Invocation
- Application
- Termination
- Appraisal.

Sabatier (2007) states a range of useful areas of the stages heuristic:

1. The stages heuristic has diffused through the literature for authors to make distinctions between stages of problem identification, agenda-setting, adoption, implementation and policy evaluation. This is cast in a wider framework of the characteristics of the broader political environment. (See Jones, 1977: "Study of public policy"; Anderson, 1979: "Public Policy Making").
2. The stages heuristic introduces the concept of a process of policy-making, which is in stark contrast to the political sciences' traditional institutional approach towards politics. By focusing on the process, stream analysis was encouraged that looks much further than the institutions that are involved in policy-making.
3. The stages approach also allowed for a more manageable analysis of segments of the policy process. Considering it in various separate stages is useful for conducting focused research e.g. research looking solely at the agenda-setting or policy implementation stages.

However, despite the conceptual strength of this approach it has attracted some criticism, especially by Sabatier (2007) and Weible et al. (2009):

1. The stages approach is not a causal theory that explains how and why activity is generated within each stage e.g. no theory of what or how linkages, drives and influences affect the outcomes.

2. As the heuristics does not include any causal mechanisms, it does not provide a basis for empirical hypothesis-testing.
3. The stages heuristics has a linear process and therefore suffers from “descriptive inaccuracy”. There are feedback loops from one stage to another and this process may be initiated by, for instance, an evaluation that could affect the agenda-setting phase.
4. The above-mentioned ties in with a criticism that the stage heuristic does not make provision for the process of policy-oriented learning as it only provides the evaluation stages towards the end of the process. Analysis is done post-hoc and does not feed back into earlier stages or run parallel with other policy processes.
5. The temporal emphasis is also considered to be inappropriate as policy-making in reality goes through various cycles and phases.
6. The stages heuristic implies a top-down approach and restricts analysis to a specific piece of legislation. It does not acknowledge that policy may be the result of a wide-ranging number of constituencies and different processes and cycles.

Policy networks and communities

The network metaphor has been used in the social sciences context since the 1950 and 1960s to map and analyse interrelationships, dependencies and linkages between individuals. This concept became useful to political scientists as it assisted in capturing the fluidity of the interactions between people at various levels (Parson, 1995).

From a policy perspective, this concept is useful as it highlights the mechanism through which people and organisations interact in a political setting.

“The strength of the network approach is that it provides a metaphor for the complexity which fits with the technological and sociological changes in modern society.” (Parson, 1995:185)

The network metaphor focuses on patterns of formal and informal contacts and relationships that influence how policy agendas and decision-making are shaped. Network analysis is therefore based on the idea that there are relationships and interdependencies that shape policy.

The earliest application of this concept in political science was the concept of “issue networks” (Heclo, 1978). Rhodes (1986) applied resource dependency in networks to study relations on networks defining the networks in terms of “a complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies” (Parson, 1995).

The concept was then later on expanded to ‘policy communities’, which specifically focused on different policy-styles (Richardson et al., 1982):

1. An anticipatory style, which is a tendency to anticipate problems, versus a reactionary style, which refers to a tendency to react to problems; and
2. A consensus seeking style (a tendency make decisions on based on agreement) versus a style that imposes solutions on participants.

Benson (1982) approached the network by defining the various structural interests of groups within networks. These may include support groups, demand groups or coordination groups. Sutton (1999) noted that there are discrepancies in the key terminology of the policy network literature. We draw on (Carlsson, 2000) here to outline the “Flora and Fauna” of policy networks:

Key network concepts by Carlsson (2000) - Policy Networks as Collective Action.

Carlsson (2000) made a very useful contribution which helps to disentangle the various terms used to refer to groups and collections of individuals or organisations within the policy network literature.

Network: Carlsson states that a network can be described by its actors, the nature and existence of linkages between them as well as the boundary of the network:

- Linkages can be described as channels of communication through which information, knowledge, expertise, trust and policy resources can be exchanged.
- The boundary is dependent on a process of mutual recognition, which depends on functional relevance and the embeddedness of structures.

Policy networks should be seen as integrated hybrid structures of political governance.

Issue networks are "... shared knowledge group[s] having to do with some aspect (or, as defined by the network, some problem) of public policy".

Sub-governments are "small groups of political actors, both governmental and non-governmental that specialise in specific issue areas".

Iron triangles refer to "a closed and stable relationship between an interest group(s), a governmental agency and a US congressional committee. All participants have compatible goals and their activities are mutually supportive".

Community serves as a label for "shared experience, common specialist language, staff interchange, and frequency and mode of communication".

A **policy community** is "a special type of stable network which has advantages in encouraging bargaining in policy resolution. In this language the policy network is a statement of shared interests in a policy problem: a policy community exists where there is an effective shared 'community' of views on the problem".

Epistemic communities are "network[s] of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area".

Implementation structure is understood as "a group of actors trying to solve a common policy problem. This unit of analysis is not understood by reference to political administrative logic. An implementation structure is defined by its participants".

Advocacy coalitions are important units of analysis in understanding policy change over time. These coalitions consist of people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system-that is, a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions-and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time.

More relevant to the purpose of the researcher and its role in networks is a literature review by Perkin and Court (2005) on behalf of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) where they argue that networks also have a role to play as a bridge between research, practice and policy.

Perkin and Court show that networks can be useful as communicators or bridges between research, practice and policy. For instance, they found that networks can help researchers influence policy processes in several ways. They can:

- "Marshal evidence to enhance the credibility of the argument";
- "Foster links between researchers, civil society organisations (CSOs) and policy-makers";
- "Amplify good quality, representative evidence";
- "Collaborate with policy-makers";
- "Bypass formal barriers to consensus";

- “Enhance the sustainability and reach of the policy”;
- “Act as dynamic ‘platforms for action’”;
- “Provide good quality, representative evidence”;
- “Link policy-makers to policy end-users”;
- “Foster communication”;
- “Provide support and encouragement”; and
- “Coordinate member evaluations” (2005: 28-9).

By making use of the stages heuristic, they develop practical suggestions for how networks can play a role in influencing policy:

Table 6: Networks, CSOs and Policy Influence (Copied from Perkin & Court (2005:6))

Stages of the policy process	Key objectives for actors aiming to influence policy	How networks can help
Agenda setting	Convince policy-makers that the issue does indeed require attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshall evidence to enhance the credibility of the argument • Extend an advocacy campaign • Foster links among researchers, CSOs and policy-makers
Formulation	Inform policy-makers of the options and build a consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate good-quality representative evidence and act as a ‘resource bank’ • Channel international resources and expertise into the policy process • Build long-term collaborative relationships with policy-makers • Bypass formal barriers to consensus
Implementation	Complement government capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the sustainability and reach of the policy • Act as dynamic ‘platforms for action’
Evaluation	Collate quality evidence and channel it into the policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide good-quality representative evidence and feedback • Link policy-makers to policy end-users
Underlying	Capacity building for CSOs aiming to influence policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a dynamic environment for communication and collaborative action • Provide support and encouragement • Provide a means of political representation

Institutional Analysis and Development framework

According to Carlsson (2000), the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework is a very distinguished and tested policy analysis framework. The framework is also found to be sufficiently broad so as to accommodate and incorporate various theories such as collective action theory, transaction cost theory, game theory, and constitutional choice theory.

The IAD framework aims at identifying the various types of structural variables that exist within institutional arrangements in order to understand how these variables differ from one situation to another. The IAD framework has a specific policy arena as its unit of analysis and outlines action arenas and views individual actions into (Ostrom et al. 1994; Ostrom 2011):

- An action situation that describes the decision situation and
- Variables describing the actors involved in the process.

The framework is problem-oriented and the focus is on explaining how actors organise themselves in order to solve the problem. The goal is to identify patterns of interaction where activities may generate specific outcomes, which will then be assessed through evaluation criteria.

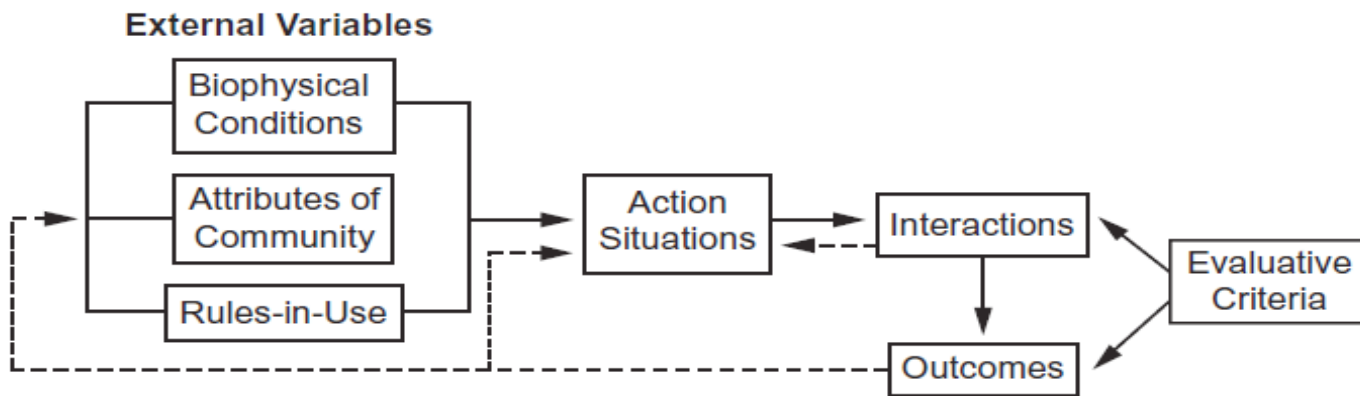


Figure 1: Institutional Analysis and Development framework

The implication for adopting this framework is that when a proposition is made participants in a policy network's "patterns of action" are affected by a range of incentives that will then drive action. Note that the actions are affected by the actor's biophysical situation and the institutional attributes, rules and norms.

Ostrom (2011) stresses that a key feature of the framework is to allow for problems on either the operational level, the policy level or constitutional level. This is why the first step towards applying the framework is to identify and define the conceptual unit –referred to as the "action situation"–in this framework.

Ostrom (2011) explains that the action situation can be defined as the "social spaces where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight".

After the definition of the situation and motivation of the actors, two additional steps can be taken according to Ostrom (2011):

- A more comprehensive understanding of the factors that make up the structure of the situation;
- How the action situation may change over time and dependence on earlier outcomes and actions.

The following figure outlines a general range of variables to describe the structure of an action situation:

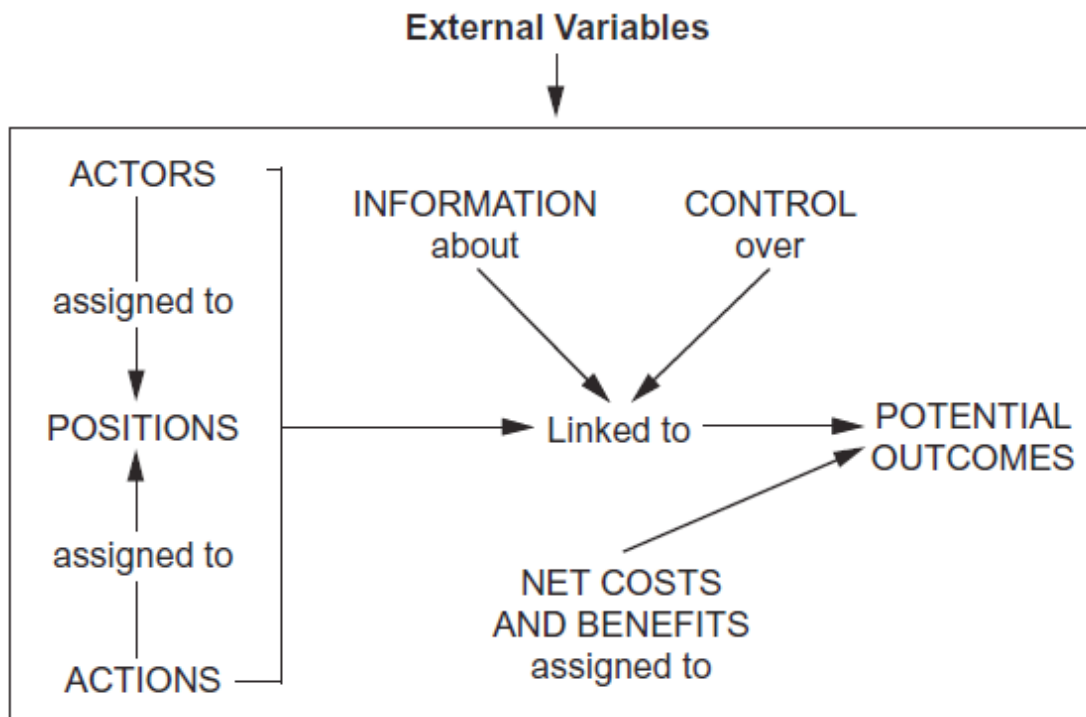


Figure 2: The internal structure of an Action Situation (Copied from Ostrom (2011))

The set of actors includes the groups and number of individuals who are taking part in the process. Here the analyst needs to make certain assumptions regarding what and how participants value something, the

resources available, belief systems and the availability and mechanisms for processing information.

An underlying method for conceptualising action situations is also the set of rules that determine what actions are required, allowed or not permitted. Such a set of rules are implicit or explicit efforts to create order. These rules are included in the action situation as the set of allowable actions within the assigned roles of individuals and also within the wider environment. Here, the IAD acknowledges a range of rules such as formal laws, fluid decision-making arrangements and also working rules. Ostrom highlights the importance of a common understanding of the rules, the precise use of language as a key area of study¹.

Positions refer to the roles that exist and have been taken up by the various actors. The potential outcomes are viewed as possible outcomes of a chain of events that could provide understanding of how participants' actions lead to events and eventually outcomes. Key factors to be considered here include the information available to participants, how they perceive the costs and benefits of the particular issue at hand. The framework also includes the control over choice and the nature of influence, as well as the measure of autonomy with which decisions can be made.

Multiple streams / Policy windows – a model of agenda-setting

Limitations to bringing issues to the policy agenda are policy bottlenecks in the sense that people and the system can in practice only consider a number of issues at a time. All issues cannot receive equal consideration or priority. This means that there some issues are constantly moving up and down the policy agenda as actors compete for space and drive issues. One may attempt to explain this process through the Multiple Streams approach.

A very widely used model for agenda-setting was developed by Kingdon (1984). The model acknowledges both internal and external influences on policy networks (Lindquist, 2001). This model explains that research knowledge will not be able influence the policy-making process unless it is attached to an issue that has risen up the agenda.

Kingdon (1984) identified three streams of activity that operate independently from each other through which issues move up the policy agenda:

- The problem stream: This includes activities of individuals, groups or wider society to raise awareness of a problem and to recognise the issue i.e. to raise awareness of the issue. These may include known problems that are already being monitored but that have worsened, which may have raised concern in the media or by deaths, scandal or policy failures. Such problems can be defined in terms of values (with an orientation such as conservative or liberal), comparisons (between two markets or countries), categories (assigning a specific problem to a category, for instance, framing a public transit problem as “transportation” or “civil rights”).
- The political stream: This includes the governmental agenda i.e. issues that need to be resolved by government. The primary participants here are the visible cluster of public individuals or policy actors (e.g. president's staff, political leaders and media). These publicly visible policy-makers are continuously debating and being informed regarding policy alternatives. These individuals are continuously looking for issues to champion, and may also depend on the stage of the election cycle and life of the government. When a policy-making opportunity arises, such as external events that demand a new plan of action, it may create an opportunity for accepting a particular stance. If a senior person decides to take a particular issue on, it may very quickly move such an issue up on the agenda.
- The policy stream: This is the list of the various policy options that policy-makers can choose from to solve a problem. Here intellectual and policy entrepreneurs may play an important role. Major participants here are referred to by Kingdon as the hidden cluster of policy actors, such as public servants or interest groups.

The key assumptions that Kingdon proposed are that each of the streams as outlined above operate independently. The strategic alignment of two or more of these streams may lead to the opening of a window of opportunity or what Kingdon calls the “policy window”. In the case of all three streams becoming aligned, the chance of placing the issue on the agenda is higher.

¹ Boundary rules: Rules that affect the number of participants, attributes resources, and conditions for joining or leaving the environment; Position rules: Rules are made to establish positions and the actions that individuals in certain positions could take; Scope rules: To delimit the outcomes that can be achieved; Choice rules: How actors make decisions and choices; Aggregation rules: The level of control of participants; Information rules: The dependence on knowledge for various participants; Payoff rules: The costs and benefits attached to a particular combination of actions.

For the interested reader

- Kingdon, J. W. (1995). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies (2nd edition)* New York: Harper Collins.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1994). Agendas, ideas, and policy change. In L. Dodd and C. Jillson (Eds.), *New Perspectives on American Politics* (pp. 215-299). Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1984). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)

In line with Sabatier’s key criticisms of the stages heuristic published in 1986, he and Jenkins-Smith (1990) proposed a framework that would allow for explaining policy change:

Table 7: The Advocacy Coalition Framework’s core assumptions (Weible et al., 2009)(Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999, pp. 118–20)

Needs the ACF addresses	Core assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They suggested a framework that would consider a longer time frame to understand and analyse policy change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A time perspective of 10 years or more to understand policy change.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suggestion was made that such a framework needs to acknowledge a complex view of the various policy subsystems incorporating relations between government and scientists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Policy subsystems as the primary unit of analysis”. • “A broad set of subsystem actors that not only include more than the traditional iron triangles’ members, but also officials from all levels of government, consultants, scientists, and members of the media”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need to synthesise top-down and bottom-up approaches towards policy studies. Of specific interest here is the focus on policy-oriented learning and the inclusion of scientific and technical information in the policy process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A central role of scientific and technical information in policy processes”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of psychological concepts where the beliefs of the role players are also considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A perspective that policies and programs are best thought of as translations of beliefs”.

Sabatier’s focus on the policy process is on the policy problem rather than on the policy program (Fischer et al., date). The ACF is a system-based approach that aims to integrate stages of policy cycles, but also attempts to integrate the literature on knowledge utilisation and policy change with the key unit of analysis focused on policy-makers, influencers, implementers etc.

Weible et al. (2011, 2009) state that from reviews of the application of the ACF over a 25 year period, the framework has been used to answer a range of questions:

- How do people mobilise, maintain, and act in advocacy coalitions?
- To what extent do people learn, especially from allies and from opponents?
- What is the role of scientists and scientific and technical information in policy-making?
- What factors influence both minor and major policy change?

The key proposition of the ACF is that actors are aggregated together in groups called advocacy coalitions.

These coalitions are working towards a common goal of producing a policy programme. The model explains the formation of groups through three-tiers that describe a belief system.

The policy belief system can be unpacked as follows:

- **Deep core beliefs:** These are basic ontological and normative convictions shared across policy domains and this represents a coalition. These are broad and stable beliefs across a range of subsystems, for instance, concern for the welfare of the present generation versus future generations.
- **Policy core beliefs:** This is of moderate scope and may only include substantive and geographic aspects of the policy subsystem. The specific definition of what these policy beliefs are makes this level of aggregation an ideal candidate for forming coalitions. The beliefs on this level are resistant to change but could be adjusted if more information were available, or if beliefs are tested after considering new information that becomes available.
- **Secondary beliefs:** The lower-level belief system is more focused on specific details of policies and may also be more focused on specific geographies. This is the most likely to change over time.

The diagram below as shown in Figure 7 makes a specific distinction between the policy subsystem and the broader political environment. The major unit of analysis here is the subsystem, as the political system contains many topic or policy issues across a wide range of geographies which eventually forces an individual to specialise in a specific topic if they are to comprehend the complexities of issues and learn how to effectively bring about change.

It is also important to note that the framework acknowledges that the subsystems do not operate independently from each other. The subsystems are also situated within a wider political environment, which is defined by certain relatively stable parameters as well as events in the external environment.

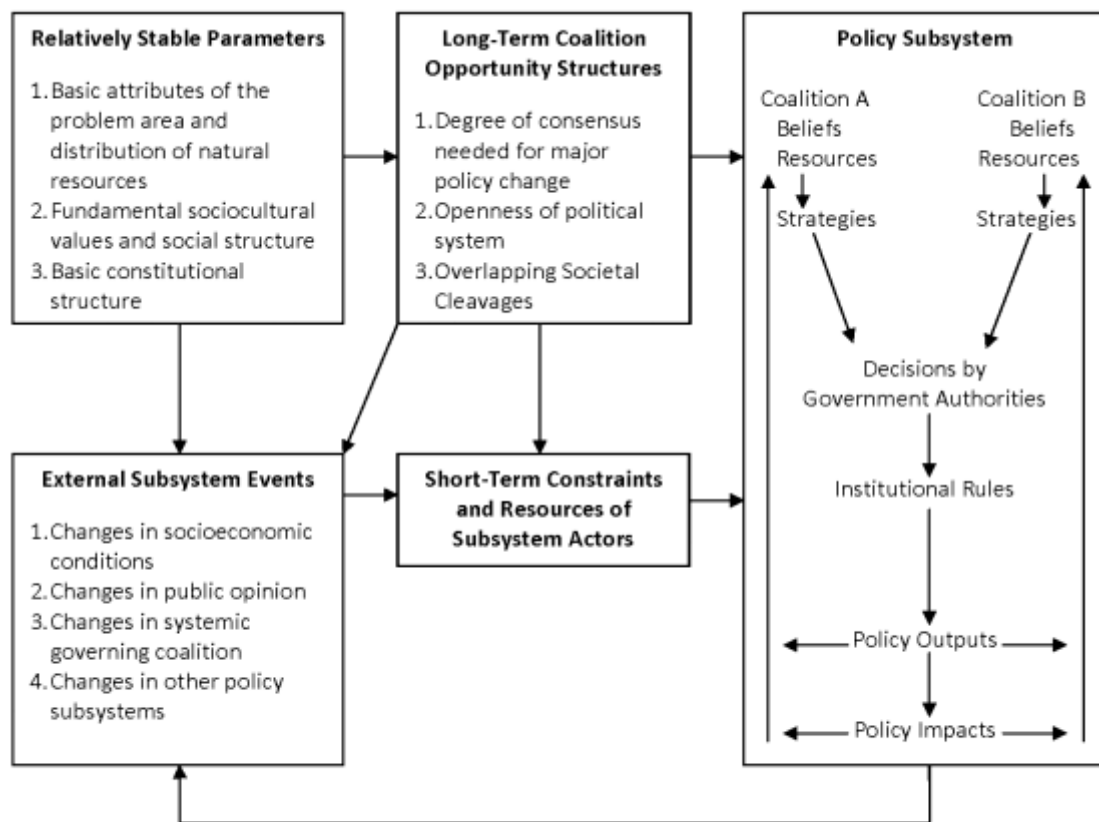


Figure 1. Flow Diagram of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, Circa 2007.

Figure 3: Flow Diagram of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (2007)

Four pathways to policy change are identified:

1. Events in the external subsystem such as external shocks may tip the power of coalitions as they may change belief systems. These include changes in socioeconomic conditions, public opinion or other policy subsystems;
2. Policy-oriented learning which includes changes in thought or behaviour through experience or new informa-

tion that becomes available. However, this mostly effects secondary beliefs as deep core beliefs are more rigid. This is related to developing a better understanding of how to achieve a belief system. Sabatier says policy-oriented learning includes (i) an improved understanding what factors are important to realise one's belief system (ii) improving one's understands of logical and causal assumptions towards realising your belief system (iii) identifying and responding to challenges related to your belief system.

3. Internal subsystem events which are usually centred on events that highlight failures in current practices.
4. Negotiated agreements may arise involving two or more coalitions and these have implications for cross-coalition learning. Here, professional forums may provide an opportunity negotiation, agreement and implementation. Nine conditions for policy change fall under this pathway, namely: a hurting stalemate, effective leadership, consensus-based decision rules, diverse funding, duration of process and commitment of members, a focus on empirical issues, an emphasis on building trust, and a lack of alternative venues (Weible et al. 2009; Wilensky et al. 2011).

Punctuated equilibrium theory

The focus of the Punctuated Equilibrium Thesis (PET) is one of the temporal dimension of shifts in policy change. Here we consider long periods of stasis and periods of massive policy change. Originally introduced by Jones and Baumgartner(2012), it has been applied in the areas of information processing, attention and policy.

The micro-foundations of PET rest on bounded rationality (discussed above) which rejects the possibility that humans are able to choose the best action from an exhaustive cost-benefit analysis. Instead, decisions are affected by the limited attention spans of decision-makers, with emotions also playing a mayor role (Jones & Baumgartner 2012).

'Agenda' is defined as the range of the issues brought to the organisation's attention. There are similarities between the PET and ACF framework. Although the ACF acknowledges the cognitive and emotional components, PET is focuses more on the allocation of attention.

PE is a theory of the dynamic process of policy change. A key assumption is that the tendency of government is to have a disproportionate amount of attention on a specific issue at a time, and so the policy-making process appears to be stable and unchanging. If policy change then takes place, it appears to be taking place in a disjointed manner or driven through exogenous forces. For example, issues may be "festering" and an event such as a scandal may then result in policy attention and change takes place very quickly.

The notion of stick-slip dynamics from the natural world is well recognised with earthquakes. Although the earth's tectonic plates are held in place by resistance to movement, when the forces become strong enough, the plates slip violently rather than incrementally.

This metaphor has also been used to describe the changes in a political system. In this case, resistance to change may result from standard operating procedures or institutional rules. This impedes the smooth transition for change in the policy environment.

The PE thesis has therefore developed into a full-blown model of policy choice, featuring information as "signals" from the external environment, and the process of information processing as "collecting, assembling, interpreting and prioritising" such signals. When the information signals exceed a certain threshold, a sudden change may take place, after which a period of stability is experienced, also referred to as "equilibrium" (Jones & Baumgartner 2012).

Conclusion: Towards synthesis theories of policy change?

This in-depth analysis of existing models of knowledge utilisation highlighted the importance of understanding the paradigms within which KU models have been developed, as well as the underlying assumptions of these models. Capano (2009) suggests that when applying theories of policy change, policy-makers and researchers make choices based on their own subconscious epistemological and theoretical biases. This is supported by Carden (2008) who cautions that most of the literature on policy-making has been developed in industrialised countries, and assumes conditions that may not exist in the contexts of developing countries².

A wide-ranging conclusion to various literature reviews on the policy process suggests that scholars should work towards synthesised theories of policy change. Real-Dato (2009), for instance, argues that existing

² For instance, these models may assume reasonably stable and predictable institutional arrangements or an array of lively and critical intermediate organisations/third community organisations (academic, journalistic and think tank communities). Blindly applying these models in a developing country context may therefore not be appropriate.

theories and frameworks such as Multiple Streams, Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, and the ACF could be synthesised in a single “synthetic explanatory framework”. He adds that the IAD could then be used as a theoretical “baseline” through which the synthesis framework could be developed, and then embed the importance of institutions in a structure that incorporate various levels of analysis.

In order to understand how knowledge producers can better support the policy-making process, we propose that one needs to understand the process of policy development and change, which in turn makes it essential to have robust theories of policy change. Furthermore, the change of policy does not necessarily translate into the effective implementation of such policies, an issue which also needs to be considered in the policy-making process.

	Unit of analysis	Limitations	Why is it useful as a policy-tool?
The stages heuristic	The policy process and separate stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not causal theory with causal mechanisms • Linear process • Descriptive inaccuracy • Does not allow for policy oriented learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can guide analysis on specific stages of the policy process e.g. problem identification, agenda setting etc.
Policy network and communities metaphor	Nature of actors, the nature and existence of linkages between them as well as the boundary of the network, policy resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short comings as explanatory tools • Lack of understanding and focus on interrelationships of actors • Not a mechanisms through which policy change is driven – i.e. link between networks and change not well understood • Defining structure of the network problematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map and analyse interrelationships, dependencies and linkages between individuals • Highlights the mechanism through which people and organisations interact in a political setting and how policy agendas and decision making are shaped • Bridge between research, practice and policy.
Multiple streams theory	Model of agenda setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some unrealistic assumptions e.g. questions whether all three streams are really independent • Limited attention to institutional arrangements • Lack of acknowledgement of contextual factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges internal and external influences on policy networks
Punctuated Equilibrium Theory	Temporal dimension in shifts in policy change – a dynamic theory of policy change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to focus on studies that have a systematic view and large scale quantitative applications to map change and stability in policy across multiple issues rather than just focus on case studies; • The definition of what constitutes policy change (or large scale policy change) needs to be clearer • Further exploration of this theory is required to understand if it is a general theory of policy change or rather a focus on specific types of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes changes in political systems and attempt to explain why policy-monopolies resist influence from outside groups • Plays an important role to understand policy attention to an issue • Why large scale change happens quickly after extended periods of no change • Focuses on the balance of power in policy and the effect of exogenous shocks (e.g. heightened public attention)
Institutional Analysis and Development Framework	A specific policy arena and outlines action arenas and views individual actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current descriptive nature of evolution of action situations - Future need to study evolution of action situations – i.e. the dynamic changes that take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assit in understanding the factors and social spaces that make up the “action situation” • Assist in understanding the wide variety of institutional arrangements • Assit to acknowledge contextual factors and transaction costs, coordination costs, strategic costs • Assess performance of institutional arrangements by considering efficiency, equity, accountability, and adaptability
Advocacy Coalition Framework	System-based approach with focus on the policy problem rather than program;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited explanation of conditions that lead to change e.g. lack of integration of political opportunities in framework • Many issues span subsystem boundaries, which requires in-depth analysis of subsystem structures and interdependence • The framework needs to consider causal mechanisms that link external events, policy change cross-coalition learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies beliefs as the causal driver for political behaviour • Acknowledges policy-oriented learning • Insight in coalition membership and conditions of defection • The use of scientific learning in cross-coalition learning

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