

## The Advocacy Coalition Framework

### **What is an Advocacy Coalition:**

Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is a policymaking framework developed to deal with intense public policy problems (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1988, 1993, 1999). It is best served as a lens to understand and explain belief and policy change when there is goal disagreement and technical disputes involved multiple actors from several levels of government, interest groups, research. The ACF has proven to be one of the more useful public policy frameworks (Schlager, 1995, Schlager and Blomquist 1996; John 2003).

### **Structure**

Policymaking occurs in a policy subsystem, which is a policy area that is geographically bounded and encompasses policy participants from all levels of government, multiple interest's groups, research institution and the media. **See Figure below.**

In a policy subsystem, policy participants coordinate their behavior with allies in advocacy coalitions to influence policy.

The policy subsystem is set within, are affected by, and sometime affect, a broader societal context. The ACF groups the broad societal context into two categories: relatively stable parameters and external events.

### **Relatively Stable Parameters**

The relatively stable parameters are stable over long periods of time, approximately 100 years or more. They are important because they structure the nature of the problem constrain the resources available to policy participants, establish the rules and procedures for changing policy and reaching collaborative decision, and broadly frame the values that inform policy makings.

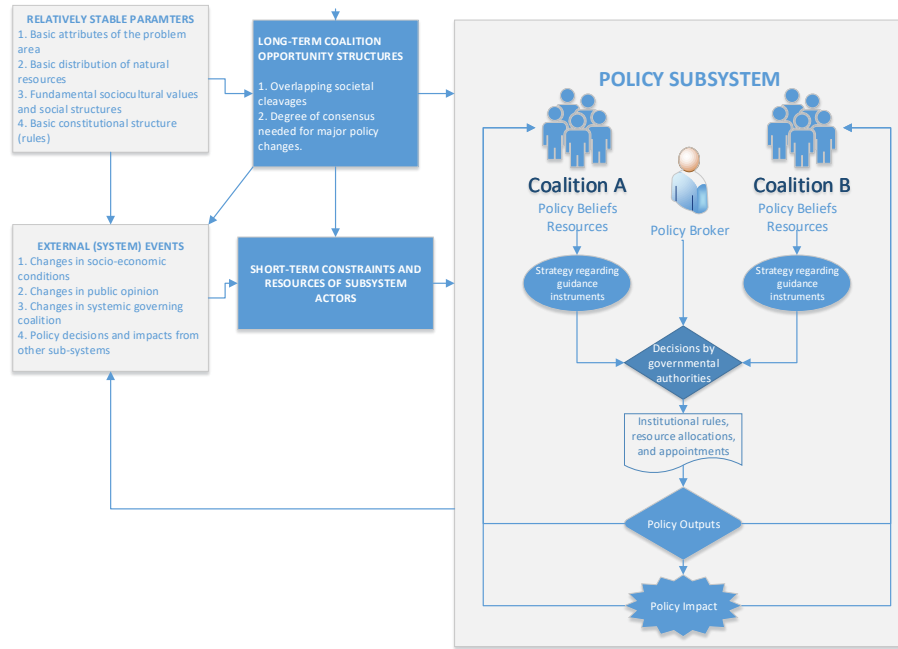
Due to their resistance to change, the relatively stable parameters are usually not strategically targeted by policy participants.

### **Model of the individual**

ACF individuals filter perceptions through their belief system (Lor, Ross, and Lepper 1979); Scholz and Pinney 1995). They tend to filter or ignore information that challenges their belief and readily accept information that bolsters their beliefs. The ACF model of the individual motivates policy participants to seek out like-minded allies and form advocacy coalitions.

The ACF assumes that individuals have a three-tiered hierarchical belief system.

1. **Deep core beliefs:** (top) are normative fundamental belief that span multiple policy subsystems and are very resistant to change.
2. **Policy core beliefs:** (middle) are normative/empirical beliefs that span an entire policy subsystem.
3. **Secondary beliefs** (lowest): empirical beliefs and policy preferences that relate to a subcomponent (either substantively or territorially) of a policy subsystem.



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