

A Review of Applications of the Advocacy Coalition Framework in Swedish Policy Processes

Daniel Nohrstedt

Department of Government, Uppsala University, Sweden

Kristin Olofsson

School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado, USA

The full article is available for free on the website of the Policy Studies Organization

<http://www.ipsonet.org/publications/open-access/epa/epa-volume-2-number-2-winter-2016>

Abstract

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest among public policy scholars to explore the applicability of policy process frameworks across political systems. One popular framework simplifying the complexity of public policy is the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). Prior research suggests that the ACF is useful for identifying variables and relationships influencing the policy process but also that questions remain regarding its applicability in different political systems. This paper addresses some of these questions by conducting a review of empirical ACF applications in Sweden—a country where the ACF has received growing attention. We code 25 of the most complete applications across themes associated with advocacy coalitions, learning, and policy change. We also examine what research methods are employed, what comparisons are made between the ACF and other frameworks, and what modifications are suggested by scholars. The conclusion identifies strengths and limitations of the ACF in the context of the Swedish policy process and suggests directions for future research in Sweden and beyond.

doi: 10.18278/epa.2.2.3

References

- Atkinson, M. and W. Coleman. 1989. "Strong States and Weak States: Sectoral Policy Networks in Advanced Capitalist Economies." *British Journal of Political Science* 19 (1): 47–67.
- Berggren, R. 1998. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Its Applicability to a Swedish Land-Use Conflict." In *Social Sustainability of Forestry in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. M. Hytönen. Helsinki: The Finnish Forest Research Institute.
- Blom-Hansen, J. 2000. "Still Corporatism in Scandinavia? A Survey of Recent Empirical Findings." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 23 (2): 157–81.
- Carter, N. 2001. *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eberg, J. 1997. *Waste Policy and Learning. Policy Dynamics of Waste Management and Waste Incineration in the Netherlands and Bavaria*. Delft: Eburon.
- Elliot, C., and R. Schlaepfer. 2001a. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Application to the Policy Process for the Development of Forest Certification in Sweden." *Journal of European Public Policy* 8 (4): 642–61.
- Elliot, C., and R. Schlaepfer. 2001b. "Understanding Forest Certification Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework." *Forest Policy and Economics* 2: 257–66.
- Eriksson, J., M. Karlsson, and M. Reuter. 2010. "Technocracy, Politicization, and Noninvolvement: Politics of Expertise in the European Regulation of Chemicals." *Review of Policy Research* 27 (2): 167–85.
- Henry, A. 2011. "Ideology, Power, and the Structure of Policy Networks." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (3): 361–83.
- Hogl, K. 2000. "The Austrian Domestic Forest Policy Community in Change? Impacts of the Globalisation and Europeanisation of Forest Politics." *Forest Policy and Economics* 1 (1): 3–13.

- Howlett, M., and M. Ramesh. 1998. "Policy Subsystem Configurations and Policy Change: Operationalizing the Postpositivist Analysis of the Politics of the Policy Process." *Policy Studies Journal* 26 (3): 466–81.
- Hysing, E., and J. Olsson. 2008. "Contextualising the Advocacy Coalition Framework: Theorising Change in Swedish Forest Policy." *Environmental Politics* 17 (5): 730–48.
- Immergut, E. 1992. "The Rules of the Game: The Logic of Health Policy-Making in France, Switzerland, and Sweden." In *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective*, eds. K. Thelen and S. Steinmo. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ingold, K. 2011. "Network Structures Within Policy Processes: Coalitions, Power, and Brokerages in Swiss Climate Policy." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (3): 435–59.
- Irondele, B. 2003. "Europeanization Without the European Union? French Military Reforms 1991–96." *Journal of European Public Policy* 10 (2): 208–26.
- Jang, S., C. Weible, and K. Park. 2016. "Policy Processes in South Korea Through the Lens of the Advocacy Coalition Framework." *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 9 (3): 274–90.
- Jenkins-Smith, H., D. Nohrstedt, C. Weible, and P. Sabatier. 2014. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework." In *Theories of the Policy Process*. 3rd ed., eds. P. Sabatier and C. Weible. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- John, P. 1998. *Analysing Public Policy*. London: Pinter.
- Jones, M., H. Peterson, J. Pierce, N. Herweg, A. Bernal, H. Raney, and N. Zahariadis. 2015. "A River Runs Through It: A Multiple Streams Meta-Review." *Policy Studies Journal* 44 (1): 13–36.
- Larsen, J., K. Vrangbaek, and J. Traulsen. 2006. "Advocacy Coalitions and Pharmacy Policy in Denmark: Solid Cores with Fuzzy Edges." *Social Science and Medicine* 63 (1): 212–24.

- Lehmbruch, G. 1984. "Concertation and the Structure of Corporatist Networks." In *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism*, ed. J. Goldthorpe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 60–80.
- Lewin, L. 1994. "The Rise and Decline of Corporatism: The Case of Sweden." *European Journal of Political Research* 26 (1): 59–79.
- Lijphart, A. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Form and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lindvall, J., and B. Rothstein. 2006. "Sweden: The Fall of the Strong State." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 29 (1): 47–63.
- Matti, S., and A. Sandström. 2011. "The Rationale Determining Advocacy Coalitions: Examining Coordination Networks and Corresponding Beliefs." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (3): 385–410.
- Matti, S., and A. Sandström. 2013. "The Defining Elements of Advocacy Coalitions: Continuing the Search for Explanations for Coordination and Coalition Structures." *Review of Policy Research* 30 (2): 240–57. *European Public Policy* 12 (6): 1041-1059.
- Matti, S., and A. Sandström. 2013. "The Defining Elements of Advocacy Coalitions: Continuing the Search for Explanations for Coordination and Coalition Structures." *Review of Policy Research* 30 (2): 240–57.
- Nohrstedt, D. 2005. External Shocks and Policy Change: Three Mile Island and Swedish Nuclear Energy Policy'. *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (6): 1041-1059.
- Nohrstedt, D. 2007. *Crisis and Policy Reformcraft: Advocacy Coalitions and Crisis-induced Change in Swedish Nuclear Energy Policy*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Nohrstedt, D. 2009. "Do Advocacy Coalitions Matter? Crisis and Change in Swedish Nuclear Energy Policy." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 20: 309–33.

- Nohrstedt, D. 2011. "Shifting Resources and Venues Producing Policy Change in Contested Subsystems: A Case Study of Swedish Signals Intelligence Policy." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (3): 461–84.
- Nohrstedt, D. and K. Olofsson. 2016. "Advocacy Coalition Politics and Strategies on Hydraulic Fracturing in Sweden." In *Policy Debates on Hydraulic Fracturing: Comparing Coalition Politics in North America and Europe*, eds. C. Weible, T. Heikkila, K. Ingold and M. Fischer. New York: Palgrave.
- Nohrstedt, D. and C. Weible. 2010. "The Logic of Policy Change After Crisis: Proximity and Subsystem Interaction." *Risks, Hazards and Crisis in Public Policy* 1 (2): 1-23.
- Öberg, P., T. Svensson, T. Christiansen, A. Nørgaard, H. Rommetvedt, and G. Thesen. 2011. "Disrupted Exchange and Declining Corporatism: Government Authority and Interest Group Capability in Scandinavia." *Government & Opposition* 46 (3): 365–91.
- Olsson, J. 2009. "The Power of the Inside Activist: Understanding Policy Change by Empowering the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)." *Planning Theory & Practice* 10 (2): 167–87.
- Olsson, J., and E. Hysing. 2012. "Theorizing Inside Activism: Understanding Policy-making and Policy Change from Below." *Planning Theory & Practice* 13 (2): 257–73.
- Parsons, W. 1995. *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Pontusson, J. 1995. "From Comparative Public Policy to Political Economy: Putting Institutions in Their Place and Taking Interests Seriously." *Comparative Political Studies* 28 (1): 117–47.
- Princen, S. 2007. "Advocacy Coalitions and the Internationalization of Public Health Policies." *Journal of Public Policy* 27 (1): 13–33.
- Rommetvedt, H., G. Thesen, P. Christiansen, and A. Norgaard. 2013. "Coping with Corporatism in Decline and the Revival of Parliament: Interest Group Lobbyism in Denmark and Norway, 1980–2005." *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (4): 457–85.

- Rossegger, U. and R. Ramin. 2013. "Explaining the Ending of Sweden's Nuclear Phase-out Policy: A New Approach by Referring to the Advocacy Coalition Framework Theory." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 26 (4): 323-343.
- Sabatier, P. 1986. "Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research: A Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis." *Journal of Public Policy* 6 (1): 21-48.
- Sabatier, P. 1988. "An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein." *Policy Sciences* 21 (2-3): 129-68.
- Sabatier, P. 1998. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Revisions and Relevance for Europe." *Journal of European Public Policy* 5 (1): 98-130.
- Sabatier, P., and H. Jenkins-Smith. 1993. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P., and H. Jenkins-Smith. 1999. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Assessment." In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. P. Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P., and C. Weible. 2007. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Classifications." In *Theories of the Policy Process*. 2nd ed., ed. P. Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Schlager, E. 1995. "Policy Making and Collective Action: Defining Coalitions Within the Advocacy Coalition Framework." *Policy Sciences* 28 (3): 243-70.
- Sotirov, M., and M. Memmler. 2012. "The Advocacy Coalition Framework in Natural Resource Policy Studies – Recent Experiences and Future Prospects." *Forest Politics and Economics* 16: 51-64.
- Storbjörk, J. 2014. "Stakeholders' Arguments for and Against Moving Swedish Substance Abuse Treatment to the Health Care System: How a Fat Reform Proposal Became a Thin Government Bill." *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 31: 81-110.

Svallfors, S. 2016. "Politics as Organized Combat: New Players and New Rules of the Game in Sweden." *New Political Economy* 21 (6): 505–19.

Ullmanen, J., Å. Swartling, and O. Wallgren. 2015. "Climate Adaptation in Swedish Forestry: Exploring the Debate and Policy Process, 1990–2012." *Forests* 6: 708–33.

Valman, M. 2014. *Three Faces of HELCOM – Institution, Organization, Policy Producer*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Weible, C., and D. Nohrstedt. 2012. "Coalitions, Learning, and Policy Change." In *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*, eds. E. Araral, Jr., S. Fritzen, M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, and X. Wu. New York City, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Weible, C., P. Sabatier, H. Jenkins-Smith, D. Nohrstedt, A. Henry, and P. DeLeon. 2011. "A Quarter Century of the Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Introduction to the Special Issue." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (3): 349–60.

Weible, C., P. Sabatier, and K. McQueen. 2009. "Themes and Variations: Taking Stock of the Advocacy Coalition Framework." *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (1): 121–40.

Wilson, F. 1983. "Interest Groups and Politics in Western Europe: The Neo-Corporatist Approach." *Comparative Politics* 16 (1): 105–23.