Policy making and collective action: Defining coalitions within the advocacy coalition framework

EDELLA SCHLAGER

School of Public Administration and Policy, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, U.S.A.

Abstract. Research on policy communities, policy networks, and advocacy coalitions represents the most recent effort by policy scholars in North America and Europe to meaningfully describe and explain the complex, dynamic policy making processes of modern societies. While work in this tradition has been extraordinarily productive, issues of collective action have not been carefully addressed. Focusing on the advocacy coalitions (AC) framework developed by Sabatier (1988) and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) as an example of a productive research program within the policy network tradition, this article (1) examines the potential of the AC framework, with its emphasis on beliefs, policy learning, and preference formation, to provide richer explanations of policy making processes than frameworks grounded exclusively in instrumental rationality; (2) suggests that paradoxically, however, the AC framework can more fully realize its potential by admitting the explanations of collective action from frameworks based on instrumental rationality; (3) incorporates within the AC framework accounts of how coalitions form and maintain themselves over time and of the types of strategies coalitions are likely to adopt to pursue their policy goals; and (4) derives falsifiable collective action hypotheses that can be empirically tested to determine whether incorporating theories of collective action within the AC framework represents a positive, rather than a degenerative, expansion of the AC framework.

I. Introduction

Research on policy communities, policy networks, and advocacy coalitions represents the most recent effort by policy scholars in North America and Europe to meaningfully describe and explain the complex, dynamic policy making processes of modern societies. Work emerging from these traditions convincingly challenges the single organization and/or single program analyses so common in mainstream political science and demonstrates the utility of a multiple organization, program, and governmental level approach to understanding policy making and implementation. Numerous conceptual, empirical, and case studies have questioned the usefulness of subgovernments, or iron triangles, for explaining most policy domains (Browne, 1988); have cast doubt on pluralism by demonstrating the highly fragmented nature of policy domains and the absence of any central actor integrating the demands of various organized interests (Laumann and Knoke, 1987; Browne, 1990; Heinz, Laumann, Nelson, and Salisbury, 1993); and have replaced a focus on the nation-state with a meso level of analysis by examining and comparing differently structured sectoral policy networks (Atkinson and Coleman, 1989; Coleman and Skogstad, 1990b; Marin and Mayntz, 1991; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992).

While work on policy communities, policy networks and advocacy coalitions has been extraordinarily productive, what it has generally ignored is how and whether actors address collective action problems, establish and maintain relatively stable relationships, and agree upon common strategies to pursue shared goals. Also neglected are the consequences of differently structured communities, networks, or coalitions for policy decisions and implementation (Schlager, 1994).[1] A productive next step in the development of this tradition, therefore, is to take collective action seriously by (1) incorporating theories of it within existing well-defined policy network frameworks, (2) deriving falsifiable hypotheses, and (3) empirically testing such hypotheses.

This article addresses the first two steps by focusing on the advocacy coalitions (AC) framework developed by Sabatier (1988) and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993). The AC framework is selected because it represents a productive research program in which basic theoretical assumptions have been carefully developed, testable hypotheses have been derived, and substantial amounts of empirical work conducted. The AC framework provides a relatively sophisticated explanation of the role that beliefs, information, and policy learning play in affecting policy choices, but it lacks an adequate explanation of collective action. It does not explain why actors holding similar beliefs form coalitions to collectively press their policy goals, how coalitions maintain themselves over time, or the strategies coalitions adopt to pursue policy goals.

Fortunately, other research programs and work within political science address just these issues, and thus can enrich the AC framework – in particular, the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework, created by Elinor Ostrom and colleagues, and Terry Moe's theory of structural choice. Both, grounded in collective action, can help to develop the AC framework more completely. The IAD framework explains the emergence, maintenance, and dissolution of voluntary coalitions of actors, and the theory of structural choice explains the strategies coalitions are likely to pursue in realizing their policy goals. By incorporating the insights of each approach, and deriving falsifiable hypotheses from them, the AC framework can admit and explain collective action.

In Section II the three policy frameworks are briefly discussed with attention being paid to explaining collective action. In Section III the strengths of the AC framework are explored, the critical insights from the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice are incorporated within it, and testable hypotheses derived. Section IV concludes by demonstrating the advantages of incorporating collective action within the AC framework.

II. Approaches to policy processes

Advocacy coalitions

Within the AC framework policy formation and change is a function of competing advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem. A policy subsystem consists of actors from 'public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem' (Sabatier, 1988: p. 131). The actors within a policy subsystem are grouped into a number of advocacy coalitions that consist of individuals

> who share a particular belief system – i.e., a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions – *and who show a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time* (Sabatier, 1988: p. 139, emphasis added).

Advocacy coalitions attempt to realize a set of shared policy beliefs 'by influencing the behavior of multiple governmental institutions over time' (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993a: p. 212). Although the definition includes a notion of coordinated activity, almost exclusive attention has been devoted to explaining the structure, content, stability and evolution of belief systems (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993b).[2] In particular, practitioners of the AC framework devote considerable attention to understanding how beliefs change over time as a result of policy learning.[3] Policy oriented learning can take place in relation to a variety of factors, such as testing and refining one's belief system or responding to challenges to one's beliefs (Sabatier, 1988: pp. 150–151). It almost always involves experimenting with different policy mechanisms, understanding their performance, updating one's belief system on the basis of that understanding, and experimenting with additional mechanisms. However, learning from experience is rarely a straightforward process because performance is difficult to measure, few controlled experiments are possible, and opponents of programs attempt to obfuscate results (Sabatier, 1988: p. 151).

Knowledge acquired through policy learning is used to press for policy change, although whether change occurs depends on a variety of factors external to the subsystem that provide advocacy coalitions with opportunities to realize their goals. Perhaps a sudden change in socioeconomic conditions presents an opportunity for an advocacy coalition to have its policies accepted by public officials. Or, a substantial change in a governing coalition may signal a new willingness on the part of public officials to work with an advocacy coalition. In other words, it is unlikely that new information, in and of itself, produces policy change. Rather there are a variety of hurdles that must be overcome, from hostile and competing advocacy coalitions, to institutional structures and veto points, before newly acquired knowledge is incorporated within policy.

For a framework significantly oriented to individual behavior, AC raises, but does not satisfactorily address, many behavioral issues.[4] For instance, there is no attempt to account for how actors with similar belief systems overcome collective action problems and cooperate to pursue common strategies and common goals. Even if such coalitions manage to form, the structure that different coalitions are likely to take (i.e., a loose structure with minimal coordination versus a well-defined structure with high levels of coordination), their stability and longevity, are paid little attention. While belief systems are assumed to be stable, it is not known whether that translates into stable advocacy coalitions. Finally, the AC framework gives little sense of the strategies that coalitions are likely to pursue in pressing for preferred policies, and confounding undesirable policies.

The failure to explicitly consider collective action problems is clearly seen in the hypotheses that Sabatier deduces from the AC framework (see Table 1). Hypotheses 1–3 and 10 and 11 refer to the structure and stability of belief systems. Belief systems are stable over time, and individuals are more willing to make changes at the margins of their beliefs rather than changes at the core, although members of material groups and government officials, according to hypothesis 10 and 11, will be somewhat more variable in their expressed beliefs. Hypotheses 6–9 and 12 address policy oriented learning within a belief system and across belief systems. Policy oriented learning is a function of the level of conflict between coalitions, the types of problems and quality of data involved, and the forums available for coalitions to interact and exchange information. Only hypotheses 4 and 5 more nearly suggest some notion of, or indeed some need for, collective action on the part of members of an advocacy coalition in order to bring about policy changes. For instance, hypothesis 5 requires skillful exploitation of changing circumstances by members of an advocacy coalition in order to effect policy change, which would require some coordination among coalition members.

The AC hypotheses are rich in explaining the structure and stability of belief systems and the process of policy learning. It is certainly the case that beliefs and their structure, how individuals update and change their beliefs, and how information is used and manipulated, affect the choice of policies. The hypotheses are, however, poor in explaining how beliefs and learning are actually translated into policy. This is demonstrated in an empirical test of these hypotheses.

In a study of offshore oil leasing in the U.S., from 1969–1986, Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair (1993) demonstrate that two stable and diametrically opposed coalitions existed, one composed of environmental groups, the other of oil companies. These coalitions were based on shared expressed beliefs concerning leasing, environmental regulations, and the appropriate role of coastal state governments. Federal agencies were located between these two coalitions in terms of expressed beliefs. In addition, the position of the agencies changed over time, with expressed beliefs sometimes being closer to those of the environmental coalition, and sometimes closer to that of the oil

Table 1. Advocacy coalition framework hypotheses

Hypothesis one
On major controversies within a policy subsystem when core beliefs are in dispute, the lineup of allies and opponents tends to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so.

Hypothesis two
Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects.

Hypothesis three
An actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of a belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core.

Hypothesis four
The policy core (basic attributes) of a governmental program is unlikely to be significantly revised as long as the subsystem advocacy coalition that instituted the program remains in power (within that jurisdiction – except when the change is imposed by a hierarchically superior jurisdiction).

Hypothesis five
Changing the policy core attributes of a government action program requires both (1) significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g., changes in socioeconomic conditions, system-wide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems) and (2) skillful exploitation of those opportunities by the (previously) minority coalition within the subsystem.

Hypothesis six
Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there is an intermediate level of informed conflict between the two. In such a situation, it is likely that: (1) each coalition has the technical resources to engage in such a debate; and (2) the conflict be between secondary aspects of one belief system and core

elements of the other or, alternatively, between important secondary aspects of the two belief systems.

Hypothesis seven
Problems for which accepted quantitative data and theory exist are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those in which data and theory are generally qualitative, quite subjective, or altogether lacking.

Hypothesis eight
Problems involving natural systems are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those involving purely social or political systems because in the former many of the critical variables are *not* themselves active strategists and controlled experimentation is more feasible.

Hypothesis nine
Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there exists a forum that is: (1) prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate; and (2) dominated by professional norms.

Hypothesis ten
Elites of purposive groups are more constrained in their expression of beliefs and policy positions than elites from material groups.

Hypothesis eleven
Within a coalition, administrative agencies will usually advocate more centrist positions than their interest-group allies.

Hypothesis twelve
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 governmental officials.

Source: Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993).

companies. Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair (1993) demonstrate that the changes in the policy positions of the federal agencies coincided with major changes external to the subsystem, such as the election of President Carter, and the oil crises of 1973–1974 and 1979–1980.

The two scholars find substantial support for key hypotheses of the AC framework, and thus, in and of itself, it is an important piece of work. What is missing, though, is a sense of action, and a sense of the importance of the coalitions. The coalitions that Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair describe are coalitions because their members express similar policy beliefs, not because their members have engaged in collective action to realize policy goals. In fact, policy change, i.e., a change in a stated position by a federal agency, is not even accounted for by action of coalitions, but rather by oil shocks and presidential administrations. For coalitions to take their rightful place in the policy process requires an explanation of action. Fortunately for the AC framework, theories that can account for collective action, the formation and maintenance of coalitions and the strategies likely to be pursued have been developed and are being refined, such as the IAD framework.

Institutional analysis and development

The IAD framework focuses upon the emergence, maintenance, successes and failures of local-level, self-governing, voluntary organizations. Thus, the IAD framework and the AC framework are similar in that both concentrate on voluntarily created associations or coalitions. In the IAD framework, however, policy change results from *actions* by rational individuals seeking to improve their circumstances by designing and adopting changes in institutional arrangements (see Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker, 1994). For Ostrom (1990), very little need be known about the individual. Rather, care must be taken in carefully describing situations in which individuals find themselves. This represents a significant departure from the AC framework. Whereas, Ostrom is willing to make assumptions about the interests of individuals, Sabatier is not. The crux of the AC framework is to force the analyst to empirically define individuals' belief systems.[5]

In emphasizing the structure of the situation in which individuals find themselves attention is paid to three constructs. First, rules, or institutional arrangements, define what actions are permitted, required, or forbidden (Ostrom, 1990). Second are the attributes of the state of the world being acted upon, such as the nature of the good being provided. Third are the characteristics of the community within which action is proceeding. Of the three categories rules are the most well-developed and defined, and receive much of the attention. In part, this is because actors cannot readily change the characteristics of the community or the relevant attributes of the world. Thus, Ostrom (1990) argues, most efforts of individuals to realize their preferences and improve their situations are directed at changing institutional arrangements.

In describing action as occurring within a decision situation shaped partly by rules, IAD relies significantly on the concept of levels of action. Actors operate within a given set of rules, but may also operate at a different level of action to establish and modify those same rules. There are three levels of action, each of which may be considered a decision situation: (1) operational, having to do with the direct actions of individuals in relating to each other and the physical world; (2) collective-choice, the level at which individuals establish the rules that govern their operational-level actions; and (3) constitutional-choice, the level at which the rules and procedures for taking authoritative collective decisions are established.

Much of the time, actors will seek their best outcomes within a given set of rules. At other times, actors will attempt to change the rules in ways that they anticipate will make their preferred outcomes more likely. Actions at the collective-choice and constitutional-choice levels to change institutional arrangements are what AID conceives of as policy change. 'All rules are nested in another set of rules that define how the first set of rules can be changed,' and this is essential to understanding 'institutional change, as contrasted to action within institutional constraints' (Ostrom, 1991: p. 8).

Using this framework, Ostrom attempts to explain the emergence and maintenance of voluntary, self-governing organizations. The emergence of cooperation must be explained, not assumed, because collective action is considered problematic – self-interested individuals face few incentives to cooperate, even if in cooperating they would make themselves better off. Ostrom (1990: p. 211) suggests a set of conditions that are supportive of individuals forming coalitions and devising rules to govern their behavior (see Table 2). While these conditions were derived in the context of common-pool resources, they may be applicable to a wide variety of settings.

The initial condition for coalition formation is that individuals believe that by acting collectively to change policy they will be made better off. It is only an initial condition, and once met, a number of other factors come into play. These are characteristics of the situation and of individuals that are mutually supportive and that promote stable relationships. Situations in which organizing costs are relatively low – that is, where the number of individuals

Table 2. IAD Framework Conditions for Emergence of Coalitions

---

1. Most individuals 'share a common judgement that they will be harmed if they do not adopt an alternative rule.'
2. Most individuals 'will be affected in similar ways by the proposed rule changes.'
3. Most individuals value a continued flow of benefits from the collective good they are providing themselves; 'in other words, they have low discount rates.'
4. Individuals face 'relatively low information, transformation, and enforcement costs.'
5. Most individuals 'share generalized norms of reciprocity and trust that can be used as initial social capital.'
6. The number of individuals involved is 'relatively small and stable.'

Source: Ostrom (1990: p. 211).

involved is relatively small and stable, and information, collective decision making and enforcement costs are relatively low – are conducive to individuals forming coalitions to coordinate their activities in order to realize shared goals. This is particularly so if individuals involved share norms of reciprocity, and believe that they will repeatedly interact with each other. Norms of reciprocity and repeated interaction support individuals in experimenting with cooperation and coordination. Reciprocity promotes trust, and repeated interaction permits individuals to better learn about their situation, and each other, providing opportunities to sanction unacceptable behavior and reward cooperation.

Ostrom (1990) also suggests a set of conditions that support the stability and longevity of coalitions (see Table 3). These conditions center on fairly allocating benefits and costs of collective action, and monitoring and enforcing agreed upon behavior. In order for a coalition to maintain itself over a period of time it must be able to capture the benefits that it produces, and it must allocate the benefits and their production costs in a fair manner. That is, the benefits particular members receive must relate to the costs that those members bear. In addition, the behavior of group members must be monitored and actions that violate agreed upon standards must be sanctioned. Monitoring and sanctioning are critical because in the context of the IAD framework, individuals continually face incentives to defect, to pursue their own self-interest at group expense. If members can cheat on each other at will, cooperation will quickly disappear.

Thus, according to the IAD framework, coalitions are more than collections of individuals who share similar belief systems. In fact, little attention is paid to beliefs. Rather, coalitions in the IAD framework are coalitions because their members exhibit a 'non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time' (Sabatier, 1988: p. 139).

The politics of structural choice

While Ostrom accounts for relations among coalition members, Moe accounts for strategies coalitions use, in the context of democratic political structures, to achieve desirable policies. Paying close attention to strategies is important for understanding when, how, and why coalitions skillfully exploit opportunities to promote their positions. Moe primarily explores the effects of political uncertainty and political opposition on actions of coalitions in a separation of powers governance structure characteristic of the U.S. Political institutions emerge from processes in which groups struggle to gain control of public offices and public authority in order to impose their preferred arrangements and policies on others. Those who gain control of public authority face the task of designing or selecting institutional arrangements that ensure that their policies are carried out, but these institutional design decisions are made in an environment of political uncertainty. In the context of regular elections,

Table 3. IAD Framework Conditions for the Long-term Maintenance of Coalitions

1. Those individuals who benefit from the collective goods provided by the coalition are clearly identified.
2. The benefits individuals receive from the collective good are related to the contributions individuals make for the provision of the good.
3. Individuals most affected by the rules can participate in changing the rules.
4. Monitors who actively audit coalition members' behavior are accountable to the members or are members themselves.
5. Members of a coalition who violate rules are likely to be assessed graduated sanctions by other members or officials accountable to the coalition.
6. Coalition members have rapid access to low-cost local arenas to resolve conflicts among members or between members and officials.
7. The rights of individuals to form coalitions and to devise policy are not challenged by external governmental authorities.

Source: Ostrom (1990: p. 90).

and single member districts, today's winners know that they may be tomorrow's losers unable to exercise public authority (Moe, 1990b: p. 227).

Political uncertainty can be anticipated by current winners insulating their creations from the exercise of public authority. They may specify in detail how an agency shall conduct its business, leaving as little discretion as possible to bureaucrats or future political officeholders. They may oppose provisions that enhance political oversight, such as sunset provisions that require agency or policy reauthorization. These and numerous other tools protect an agency and policy from political interference in the event that the dominant group loses power. Moe argues that these constraints are quite effective because of their staying power. Even if a new coalition later comes to power, it is unlikely that it will be particularly successful in overturning these legislatively mandated constraints, because of the difficulty of gaining the consensus of each of the veto points within a separation of powers system.[6]

While a separation of powers is effective in protecting a coalition's creations, those creations are fundamentally defined by political compromise. A single-minded group is almost never powerful enough to establish its desired policy. Often, to gain even a portion of what it wants, a strong coalition must engage in compromise, even with adversaries. Adversaries who gain a say in institutional design are likely to impose conditions that undermine, if not cripple, institutions and policies that are designed to impose costs on them (Moe, 1990a: p. 127). Opposing groups that have a say in institutional design are also likely to pursue rules that open up agencies and policies to more direct political control, in anticipation of a future return to political power. The realities of political uncertainty and political compromise in the U.S. mean that odd and unwieldy structures may be created.[7]

Strategies pursued by coalitions are substantially different in alternative constitutional structures. An alternative that Moe (1990b) explores is that of a parliamentary system with two strong and viable parties. When one of the

parties gains a majority of seats in parliament, through party discipline, it can pass its own programs, with little attention being paid to the opposition. Compromise, at least at the stage of legislative enactment, is not of much importance. What is of substantial importance, however, is political uncertainty. If the other party comes to power, it can pass its own legislative program, virtually uninhibited. Consequently, 'formal structure does not work as a protective strategy' (Moe, 1990b: p. 240, emphasis in the original). Any legislated constraints placed on public agencies can easily be revoked if the other party gains power.

Two substantial commitment problems arise from the central role political uncertainty plays in a parliamentary system. First, a ruling party cannot commit future governments to its programs. Second, groups supportive of the ruling party experience problems in preventing the party from reneging on agreements, since the party is, to a certain degree, autonomous of social groups. In order to solve these commitment problems, constraints must be placed on the ability of current and future rulers to change existing public agencies and programs. These constraints, Moe argues, are likely to be informal, that is, 'are not themselves backed by force of law' because of the relative ease by which formal legislation can be changed (Moe, 1990b: p. 243).

Moe discusses multiple informal mechanisms groups might pursue to reduce commitment problems, but three that he considers of particular importance are cooptation strategies. First, groups can become a formal part of public agencies and participate in decision making and implementation, thereby protecting favored agencies and programs from political interference by current and future ruling parties (Moe, 1990b: p. 244). Second, 'groups can demand to be incorporated into the party itself' (Moe, 1990b: p. 245). As party insiders who actively participate in political decision making, groups are more likely to prevent any party reneging. Third, to protect public agencies and programs from substantial political interference if the other party gains power, supporters of the other party can be incorporated within these agencies, thus, to a certain degree, 'guaranteeing the programmatic and structural continuity that political uncertainty so threatens' (Moe, 1990b: p. 247). These strategies are informal in the sense that they are not written into law; however, their effect will be to protect public agencies and programs from the vicissitudes of political uncertainty.[8]

Structural choice, with its emphasis on strategies pursued by coalitions, and the IAD framework, with its emphasis on the emergence and maintenance of voluntary coalitions, appear to provide the missing piece to the AC framework – how beliefs are translated into action, and how that action affects policy decisions and outcomes. In other words, by incorporating the insights of structural choice and of the IAD framework into the AC framework, the AC framework can admit and address three crucial questions central to understanding collective action on the part of coalitions: (1) what situational and individual characteristics promote the emergence and longev-

ity of advocacy coalitions; (2) what situational and individual characteristics deter the emergence of cooperation and coordination among actors who share common policy goals; and (3) how do situational factors affect the strategies that coalitions are likely to adopt to achieve shared policy goals.?[9]

III. A critical integration of the three approaches

Having suggested the utility of further developing the AC framework using the arguments of the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice, the next step is to do so, and in doing so examine what is gained, in terms both of strengthening the AC framework and of providing more complete explanations of policy processes. In other words, why incorporate findings from the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice into the AC framework, instead of, for instance, further developing the IAD framework with insights from the AC framework and the theory of structural choice?

The AC framework as an alternative to instrumental rationality

In one sense, the answer is deceptively simple: the AC framework easily admits the findings from the other two approaches. Within the structure of the AC framework a place has been reserved for examining the effects of stable system parameters on the formation and actions of advocacy coalitions, which is exactly what Moe attempts to explain in his theory of structural choice. In addition, the factors that the IAD framework point to as affecting the formation and longevity of coalitions more completely characterize policy subsystems within which, Sabatier argues, advocacy coalitions emerge. In one sense then, the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice more completely explore and develop concepts and factors that the AC framework admit are important, but which have been slighted as other aspects of the framework have been focused upon.

In another sense though, the answer is more complex. By accepting the AC framework and more fully developing it, the sparse model of the instrumentally rational individual that underlies the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice is set aside in favor of a model of human behavior that is much more complex (Simon, 1985).[10] The AC framework defines a model of the individual directly at odds with instrumental rationality. In instrumental rationality, individuals are assumed to act exclusively on the basis of their preferences, whereas in the AC framework, individuals act on the basis of their preferences, but also on the basis of their beliefs, which include moral values. In addition, the preferences of instrumentally rational individuals are assumed to be fixed and exogenously determined; however, in the AC framework, preferences may change and are endogenously determined. Finally, in Sabatier's model, information is filtered through belief systems and cognitive

processes, as an individual decides what information to accept, reject, or re-interpret, whereas in instrumental rationality, no cognitive filtering occurs. Rational individuals accept and act on information made available to them.

Accepting the model of the individual being developed within the AC framework does not represent a rejection of instrumental rationality. Rather the individual within the AC framework provides an additional tool that allows for more complete and satisfactory explanations of some aspects of policy making and implementation processes that instrumental rationality simply cannot provide. This is best demonstrated by examining areas that are problematic for instrumental rationality and briefly discussing suggested solutions that are compatible with the individual of the AC framework. In particular, such a model holds the promise of better explaining some types of human behavior, the design and transformation of institutions, and the role of learning in changing preferences, beliefs, and ultimately policy.

The parsimonious assumptions of instrumental rationality – fixed and exogenously defined preferences as the sole force motivating individuals to act, and the objective use of information – limit explanations of human behavior.[11] With the assumption that only preferences motivate individuals to act, and that those preferences are fixed, critical aspects of human behavior cannot be explained. For instance, an enduring puzzle emerging from experimental economics is the extent of cooperative behavior exhibited by subjects in social dilemma settings. Subjects consistently contribute more to public goods and take less from common pool resources and from division games than is theoretically predicted (Issac and Walker, 1988; Ostrom, Walker, and Gardner, 1992; Guth and Tietz, 1990). In other words, subjects do not act as narrowly self-interested as economic theory predicts they should. Even more puzzling is that such 'unusual' cooperative behavior is amplified if subjects are allowed to engage in face-to-face communication. Such behavior, within the context of instrumental rationality, is puzzling because communication does not change the structure of outcomes and, therefore, it should not affect individual behavior (Hackett, Schlager and Walker, 1994).

How should levels of cooperation greater than predicted be accounted for? Etzioni (1988) argues that cooperation should not be accounted for by including other regarding behavior as part of an individual's preference function. This approach to resolving the 'cooperation problem,' is, according to Etzioni (1988), ethically questionable and methodologically weak. It denies the existence of moral behavior by equating a 'taste' for self-sacrifice with a 'taste' for Pepsi (Etzioni, 1988: p. 27). In addition, it turns the notion of utility into a tautology. As Etzioni (1988: p. 28) argues, 'once the satisfaction of one's own needs, and self-sacrifice, as well as service to others and to the community – once all these become 'satisfaction' the explanatory hypothesis of the concept is diluted to the point where it becomes quite meaningless.'

The AC framework would admit of two different solutions to the 'cooperation problem.' First, such behavior could be accounted for through cognitive limitations of individuals. Individuals possess limited information processing

capabilities. Consequently, instead of searching for an optimal solution (either from an individual or a group standpoint) to a shared problem, individuals rely upon heuristics as relatively simple and cost effective devices for guiding behavior (Messick, 1992; Messick and Schell, 1992). Messick finds substantial support for an equal division heuristic in social dilemma settings. Instead of taking as much as possible or contributing as little as possible, subjects often allocate resources equally along some dimension. An equal division heuristic would produce greater contributions to resolving a collective dilemma than would pure self-interest.[12]

Second, human behavior is motivated by more than preferences. Individuals also act on the basis of beliefs. As Etzioni (1988: p. 83) argues, 'people do not seek to maximize their pleasure, but to balance the service to two major purposes – to advance their well being *and* to act morally.' Thus, individuals acting on the basis of their values, as opposed to their preferences, can account for cooperative behavior. For instance, Orbell, van de Kragt and Dawes (1988: p. 812) account for the role that communication plays in supporting cooperative behavior by providing experimental evidence that 'is consistent in important ways with ethical arguments about when promises should be kept.' In a one-shot social dilemma with defection as the dominant strategy, groups in which all subjects promised to cooperate exhibited substantially higher levels of contributions to a collective good than did groups in which promise making was not universal.[13] Thus, discussion works to promote cooperation to the extent that it creates an environment whereby promises to cooperate become ethically binding.

Examples of individuals acting on the basis of something other than narrow self-interest are legion. Consequently, it is futile to attempt to impose a single explanation – individuals act only on the basis of fixed preferences – on most human behavior, particularly political behavior. A general theory of policy making and implementation that is to provide reasonable accounts of decision making needs to recognize that, depending upon the particular set of circumstances, individuals' motivation to act may have different causes. In some cases, preferences may be the overriding factor, in other cases individuals attempt to do 'the right thing,' in still others, individuals find themselves in circumstances wholly new for them in which it is not obvious what a 'good' decision is, and therefore rely upon decision heuristics. Relevant and relatively accurate explanations of policy making and implementation require the recognition of multiple causes of human motivation, something that AC framework, which is not grounded in instrumental rationality, is capable of providing.

Exogenously determined, fixed preferences also pose problems for explaining the structure of an institution at a particular point in time, and for institutional change. For instance, some institutional explanations grounded in instrumental rationality assume that institutions are designed to address adverse selection and moral hazard problems so that principals and agents can better realize their preferences. Examples of this type of explanation

include accounts of the structure of the U.S. Congress. The structure of Congress is explained as promoting the re-election chances of incumbents by resolving principal-agents problems thereby allowing members to better serve the particularistic interests of their constitutents (Weingast and Marshall, 1988; Shepsle and Weingast, 1987).

Moe (1990b) points out two problems with such an approach. First, these explanations begin from a state of nature, awkwardly ignoring that existing institutions shape the preferences and constrain the behavior of individuals attempting to design new ones (Atkinson and Coleman, 1989). Thus, explanations of the structure of the Congress in 1970 begin with considerations of the problems Congressional members would face if that structure did not exist. In other words, it is supposed that the structure of the U.S. Congress of the mid to late 20th century did not emerge from, and was not defined by, the Congress of the 19th century. Second, such explanations of Congress cannot readily account for change. The few attempts there are to account for the significant changes that occurred in the 1970s, whereby Congressional leadership was strengthened, the position of committees and committee chairs was weakened, and sub-committees blossomed, once again begin from a state of nature. The institution of Congress is created anew to address a different set of moral hazard problems.

Not all explanations account for institutional change by assuming away institutional histories, but they nevertheless stumble over fixed and exogenously defined preferences. These institutional explanations focus on conditions external to a situation that change the benefit-cost calculus of individuals. Under the new set of circumstances, individuals can make themselves better off, i.e., better realize their fixed preferences, by changing the institutions governing their behavior. Problems emerge when factors cannot be identified that change the benefit-cost calculus of individuals, or when other factors appear to overwhelm the effects of any changes in the calculus of benefits and costs.

The explanation of institutional change by Hammond and Knott (1988), and its critique by Quirk (1988), highlight this problem. Hammond and Knott attempt to explain the deregulation of major U.S. industries, in particular the banking industry, by changes in economic, technical, and legal factors within the external environment. Such changes promote the emergence of competitors to established firms, and new economic opportunities that established firms can exploit only if regulations are changed. Thus, for new firms to compete against existing firms, and for existing firms to better meet the challenges presented by the newcomers, and to exploit new opportunities, 'self-interested political pressures for some deregulation were ... generated within and outside the regulated industries' (Hammond and Knott, 1988: p. 7).

As Quirk (1988) points out, however, the flaw in this argument is that in at least two major industries, airlines and trucking, there was no active support, either within or outside of the industries, for deregulation by major economic groups. In relation to other major industries, changes in economic, technical

and legal factors did produce pressure for deregulation by major economic groups, but this pressure was not decisive. What was decisive, for instance, in the telecommunications industry, was a willingness on the part of public officials, backed by Congressional allies, 'to override organized opposition from the telephone companies' and promote competition (Quirk, 1988: p. 37). Why the willingness on the part of public officials to stand up to organized opposition? Quirk (1988: p. 40) attributes deregulation to the 'politics of ideas,' or, in other words, changing preferences and beliefs about the proper relationship between government and industries. Over a period of more than a decade numerous policy elites became convinced of the salutary effects of competition. As those elites came to occupy critical government positions, regulatory policies were reconsidered. Thus, according to Quirk (1988), changes in economic, technical, and legal factors are important explanatory variables, but they are not always necessary, and they are never sufficient to account for changes in policy.

The above explanations of institutional structure and change are not problematic because they claim that individuals structure their relationships and change that structure in order to make themselves better off. What is problematic about the above institutional explanations is that they claim to do something that, in the context of instrumental rationality, they cannot do – that is, account for *specific* institutional arrangements. Often there are multiple institutional solutions to particular problems. Within the context of instrumental rationality, however, there are no criteria by which an individual can select a particular institutional solution. As Heap (1989: pp. 75–76) explains:

> In the final analysis, a specific institution, like a particular set of property rights here, can only be explained by reference to some other institutions or rule which governs learning or admissible beliefs. All that instrumental rationality together with repeated play of the game generates is the prediction of some 'spontaneous order' and not the precise nature of that.[14]

Furthermore, as Quirk (1988: p. 38) points out, there are multiple paths to a specific institutional arrangement.

> The expectation of generality implies that sufficiently similar circumstances should produce similar outcomes – but not also the reverse, that similar outcomes should only result from similar circumstances. It is no more a scandal that there are multiple conditions for deregulation than that there are many ways to start a fire or to kill an organism.

In order to account for specific institutions, or for specific institutional change, individuals must be situated within their historical and social context (Heap, 1988).[15] That context defines the structure and content of individuals' beliefs, values, and preferences, effects their change, and establishes the constraints under which individuals attempt to realize their beliefs. In order to

understand why a particular arrangement was chosen and not another, and the conditions that promoted such a selection, the formation of preferences must be made endogenous to the explanation, something that is possible with the AC framework.

Finally, in order to better understand institutional change, attention must be paid to information, how it is used, and how individuals learn. Information and learning are important factors in accounting for changes in beliefs, and consequently, changes in policy. Information and learning play active and central roles in frameworks in which the structure and content of beliefs and preferences are endogenous to the explanation, as opposed to frameworks in which preferences are exogenous and fixed. In the latter type of framework, which is grounded in instrumental rationality, individuals are remarkably limited in information use and learning. An instrumentally rational individual presumably acquires information to the point where its marginal benefits equal its marginal costs.[16] Some attention may be paid to the quality of information. Information may be discounted if an individual believes that its source is acting opportunistically; however, no cognitive filtering occurs.

Given such an individual, the information that she possesses is used in two ways. An individual may selectively share information with others. She may be opportunistic in order to improve her chances of achieving her goals. Also, if an individual possesses incomplete information about a situation, additional information will be used to update her strategies in order to improve her chances of achieving her goals. Learning is narrowly defined. It is simply a matter of understanding a static situation and devising strategies to best achieve an individual's fixed preferences. Learning equals updating strategies.

The role of information and learning are quite different once beliefs and how they change must be explained. Feedback loops between individuals or coalitions and their environment are much more complex. First, information does not consist of 'objective' facts about the situation external to the individual. Rather all information is filtered through individuals' belief systems. As Etzioni (1988: p. 94) states, 'normative-affective factors shape to a significant extent the information that is gathered, the ways it is processed, the inferences that are drawn, the options that are being considered, and the options that are finally chosen.' Information is sometimes accepted, rejected, or reinterpreted, depending upon whether it supports or challenges core beliefs, policy beliefs, or secondary beliefs. Thus, under the AC framework with its emphasis on 'core beliefs' it may be possible to explain why some information is more readily incorporated into policy change while other information is ignored or resisted.[17]

Within the AC framework, information is still used to improve strategies, or what Sabatier (1993) would call secondary aspects of belief systems, for achieving relatively stable policy goals. But, information may also result in changes in policy goals, and even core beliefs of members of coalitions. Changes in goals and beliefs do not occur as easily or as often as do changes in strategies, but such change is possible under certain circumstances. Those

circumstances are just beginning to be defined and explored by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993b), but they suggest that if conflict is not severe, if the information is more technical in nature and difficult to refute, and if there exist professional forums in which such information is exchanged and debated, then such information may indeed produce changes in the policy core of members of a coalition.

The AC framework belongs to a developing family of policy theories that are not grounded in instrumental rationality. Alternative notions of rationality raise and encourage scholars to address questions that are of vital concern for understanding policy making and implementation, but are outside of the purview of instrumental rationality. Some of these questions revolve around accounting for and understanding a wide and rich array of motivations for human action beyond simply preferences, the source of these motivations, how they change over time, and the consequences of these motivations for policy making and design, and implementation.[18] Other questions revolve around understanding how existing institutional arrangements and policies shape individuals' beliefs and preferences and constrain behavior, foreclosing vast areas of policy space, and confining policy exploration and experimentation to particular areas.[19]

The AC framework is defined broadly enough to encompass both types of questions. As such, it promises to develop into a general theory of policy, which as Quirk (1988: p. 38) explains, should provide 'an accurate and reasonably parsimonious general analysis of policy-making.... Depending on the variation in circumstances, such an analysis can provide any number of distinct explanations for particular cases.' Before the AC framework meets Quirk's criteria, however, it must relate beliefs to action and action to the larger institutional environment in which it occurs. It is in accounting for action that the AC framework falters. It is in speaking to action that the IAD framework and the theory of structural choice have something to offer the AC framework. These lessons do not depend on a particular model of the individual; hence they can be incorporated within the AC framework.

Collective action within the AC framework

If the AC framework is to better account for action, the institutional structure and characteristics of the situation in which coalitions form and act need to be better specified. The institutional setting which both constraints and promotes action must be further developed.

Within the AC framework, Sabatier (1993) distinguishes between stable and dynamic factors external to a policy subsystem. Stable factors, such as the basic distribution of natural resources across a society or societies, or the constitutional structure, present the set of constraints within which actors attempt to realize their policy goals. As Sabatier (1993: p. 20) explains, 'the difficulty of changing these factors discourages actors from making them the

object of strategizing behavior.' Instead, these factors affect the formation of advocacy coalitions and the strategies such coalitions adopt in pressing for their goals. Explicit connections between these stable system parameters and the formation and activities of advocacy coalitions have not been developed by the creators of the AC framework, except for how they affect learning. However, Moe's theory of structural choice can substantially flesh out this aspect of the AC framework, and produce additional hypotheses that incorporate collective action within the AC framework.[20]

According to Moe, once a coalition gains control of public authority, its intent is to design and implement public agencies and policies that will effectively achieve its policy goals. A coalition's emphasis on effectiveness is conditioned by the constitutional environment in which it operates. In a separation of powers system, effectiveness may substantially be thwarted as a coalition legislates a variety of constraints designed to protect its policy creations, with additional constraints added by its opponents. Both coalitions press for constraints, but for different reasons. A winning coalition desires to protect its creation from future political interference, whereas the losing coalition desires to limit or cripple the agency or policy. The consequence, in either case, is to compromise the effectiveness of the policy.

In a two party parliamentary system, the ruling party exercises sufficient authority to design agencies and policies that will effectively achieve its desires without having to engage in political compromise. Thus, effectiveness is not as severely undermined as it potentially can be in a separation of powers system. The problem of political uncertainty is acute, however, as the ruling party cannot legislatively commit future governments, or even itself, to the maintenance of public agencies and policies that it has created and implemented on behalf of its supportive coalition. Political uncertainty is not addressed legislatively, but informally, after the creation of public agencies and policies through the utilization of cooptation mechanisms, which provide both supporters and opponents of the ruling party with a voice in the operation of public agencies.

In light of the above considerations, the following hypotheses are suggested:

Hypothesis A. In a separation of powers system, coalitions (both winning and losing) press for legislatively imposed structures that insulate and constrain the operation of a public agency, paying less attention to ensuring the effectiveness of a public agency and the policies it implements.

Hypothesis B. In a two party parliamentary system, the ruling party legislates public agencies and policies that effectively promotes its policy desires, insulating its creations through informal mechanisms of cooptation.

The above two hypotheses imply that U.S. bureaucracies will be 'encumbered by a complex array of structural mechanisms that limit the discretion of agencies and their personnel' (Moe, 1990b: p. 239).[21] On the other hand, bureaucracies in western parliamentary democracies will be 'granted more discretion to pursue their policy missions as they see fit' (Moe, 1990b: p. 239).[22]

Stable system parameters, such as the constitutional setting, establish the context within which advocacy coalitions form and engage in collective action to realize common goals. Whether coalitions form and are long lasting, depend not only on stable system parameters, but also on characteristics of the policy domain, and, perhaps characteristics of the issue in question and the actors involved in the issue. As Coleman and Skogstad (1990: pp. 29–30) suggest in a discussion of policy networks, 'Several types of networks may emerge because different issues will affect the interests of members of the community to varying degrees shaping, in turn, the particular constellation of actors involved in resolving the issue.'

The characteristics of an issue or problem situation that are paid any attention within the AC framework are the structure of belief systems of advocacy coalitions, and factors that promote policy learning, such as the level of conflict, the analytical tractability of the problem, and the nature of the forum in which policy debates occur (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993b: p. 50). If collective action is to be incorporated within the AC framework, characteristics that *in addition to shared beliefs* promote the formation and longevity of advocacy coalitions need to be considered.

It is important to consider characteristics supportive of cooperation because of the many obstacles to cooperation. For instance, even though members of a potential coalition may agree that each would be better off if they coordinated their actions, they face serious bargaining problems that, if not overcome, can prevent the formation of a coalition. First, members of a potential coalition must share a common understanding of the problem that they face. Second, members must agree upon the content and structure of policies to be pursued. This may be extraordinarily difficult since alternative policy structures affect the distribution of benefits across members. Thus, depending upon the policies agreed upon, some members of a coalition will be made better off than others.[23]

Agreeing upon a common definition of a shared problem and the policies to address that problem represents a minimal level of cooperation and coordination. After all, actors have not agreed to shared strategies by which to pursue acceptable policies, they have not agreed to monitor each other's behavior for freeriding, and so forth. Yet, even achieving a minimal level of coordination can be overwhelmed simply by distributional issues.

If greater levels of coordination are to be achieved, additional and related collective action problems must be resolved. Strategies a coalition will use to coordinate the actions and activities of its members must be agreed upon and adopted. Some strategies are more costly than others to pursue. For instance, forming a peak association that addresses and integrates the interests of its

members, engages in policy research and development, and monitors the actions of its members, is a much more costly strategy for pursuing shared policy goals, than is simply agreeing upon a lobbying strategy to influence government decision makers. More complex and involved strategies represent greater costs, but also greater levels of coordination. Thus, agreeing upon acceptable strategies to pursue shared goals means that members of a coalition have addressed a number of collective action problems, such as distributional issues centering on allocating the costs of pursuing a shared strategy, and enforcement issues centering on ensuring that members carry out promises of support and do not act to undermine the coalition.

Actors' success in resolving these problems affects the level of coordination they achieve, the level of influence they exert on policy decisions, and their ability to realize desirable (from their perspective) policy outcomes. Presumably the more structured the coordination, the greater the influence coalitions have on policy decisions (Coleman and Skogstad, 1990a: p. 22). While shared belief systems certainly promote cooperation, there are additional characteristics of the situation that affect the degree and longevity of cooperation. These characteristics have been systematically explored and explicated within the IAD framework (see Tables 2 and 3), suggesting the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis C.* Actors who share beliefs are more likely to engage in at least minimal levels of collective action (i.e., agree upon a definition of the problem and the content and structure of policies to address the problem) if they interact repeatedly, experience relatively low information costs, and believe that there are policies that, while not affecting each actor in similar ways, at least treats each fairly.[24]

Repeated interaction and relatively low information costs promote communication among potential coalition partners and the acquisition of information about the situation and about each other. Individuals can more easily identify who would make valuable coalition partners, and the types of policies that would best promote their individual and common interests. Repeated interaction not only supports the acquisition of information, but it also provides a context in which individuals can change or shape each other's preferences. Shaping preferences so that individuals' goals are congruent supports the emergence of cooperation. In addition, repeated interaction permits the changing and shaping of preferences of important decision makers and their constituents. Repeated interaction in conjunction with the possibility of changing preferences promotes shared understandings of the problem and acceptable policies for its resolution among potential coalition members and critical public officials.

Being treated fairly, rather than similarly, by policies endorsed by a coalition, raises a critical distinction. To put it prosaically, a policy can treat actors similarly, only if in fact the actors are similar, i.e., homogeneous. One can,

therefore, read into Ostrom's criterion of similar treatment that cooperation is supported if actors are homogeneous. In other words, heterogeneity presents an obstacle to cooperation. Yet, the role that heterogeneity plays in affecting cooperation is mixed.[25] In some cases, heterogeneity promotes cooperation, particularly if an actor, or a small number of actors, sufficiently values the outcome of cooperation that the actor bears much, if not all, of the costs of coordination – a privileged group in Olson's (1965) terms. Heterogeneities among actors may be important for other reasons. For instance, the institutional resources members bring to a coalition affect its strength and its success. The Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives is a more important coalition member than a junior representative, even if they share similar beliefs, because of the institutional resources the Speaker can bring to bear.[26]

While the resources and authority that a particular institutional position provides may be supportive of coalitional success, such institutional heterogeneities can also introduce conflict and stress among members of a coalition. Different institutional positions mean that potential members of a coalition have widely varying organizational and constituency demands placed upon them. The institutional differences among a legislator, a journalist, a director of a material interest group, and an academic, may very well limit their ability, and their willingness, to cooperate with one another, even if they share similar beliefs. Heterogeneities are pervasive among actors, and they matter. Under some conditions, heterogeneities leverage cooperation; under other circumstances, heterogeneities stymie cooperation. Heterogeneities among actors cannot be dismissed. This is recognized by redefining Ostrom's criterion of similar treatment to fair treatment.

Additional conditions beyond repeated interaction, low information costs, and the existence of policies that actors believe will treat them fairly, are supportive of coalitions developing more structured and longer term relationships. These conditions are supportive of coalitions not only agreeing on the definition of the problem and satisfactory policies to address it, but also agreeing upon shared strategies for achieving the formal adoption and implementation of the policies. For this to occur, coalition members must be able to capture the benefits produced by closer coordination. Coalition members are unlikely to bear the additional costs of greater coordination if most of the benefits produced flow to other coalitions or society in general.

Even if the coalition can capture the benefits generated by closer coordination, intra-coalition allocations of benefits and costs become critical. An acceptable balance between the costs born and the benefits gained must be found among coalition members if greater coordination is to develop. Not only must an acceptable balance between costs and benefits be struck, but members must be assured that agreements struck will be kept. Commitment to the coalition can be supported by monitoring the actions of coalition members to ensure that they are doing what they have committed themselves to.

Repeated interaction and low information costs support monitoring and

enforcement of coordination agreements. Repeated interaction allows for the development of norms of reciprocity and trust which provide the basis for cooperation. As individuals interact and perhaps exchange items of value, such as information or contacts, individuals learn who is trustworthy. At the same time, repeated interaction allows for individuals to sanction those who attempt to take advantage.

The above considerations lead to the final hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis D.* Coalitions are more likely to persist if (1) the major benefi-
> ciaries of the benefits that a coalition produces are clearly identified and
> are members of the coalition, (2) the benefits received by coalition mem-
> bers are related to the costs that such members bear in maintaining the
> coalition, and (3) coalition members monitor each others' actions to ensure
> compliance with agreed upon strategies, resource contributions, and co-
> operative and supportive activities.

The conditions that the AC framework and the IAD framework point to as promoting coalition formation and maintenance are mutually supportive. Shared belief systems alone fail to account for heterogenous actors over-coming collective action problems and agreeing to coordinate their actions to achieve shared goals. Propitious circumstances, or characteristics of the issue situation, are also necessary if collective action problems are to be overcome. On the other hand, collective action problems are not nearly as daunting, and circumstances need not be as propitious if actors share beliefs.

The preceding four hypotheses represent additions to the twelve hypo-theses that Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) have already derived (see Table 1). They are not replacements for the existing hypotheses, but rather additions that incorporate considerations of collective action within the AC framework. In addition, both sets of hypotheses are mutually supportive. For instance, in situations in which hypothesis one is confirmed, hypothesis D is also likely to be confirmed. That is, coalitions are more likely to persist if core beliefs are in dispute (hypothesis one) and coalitions capture most of the benefits of their collective behavior, have settled distributional issues, and generally monitor each other for continued commitment to the coalition (hypothesis D). Or, in situations in which hypothesis C is confirmed, hypo-thesis two is also likely to be confirmed. That is, in situations in which coali-tions form and become active, members of the coalitions are likely to show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core.

IV. Conclusion

What does the AC framework gain by admitting the insights and lessons of collective action theories? The AC framework can better account for who got what and why in policy making processes. In other words, coalitions become

active players in influencing and, perhaps, even creating and implementing policies. This can best be demonstrated by revisiting the offshore oil leasing case study by Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair (1993).

Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair (1993), in addition to examining the belief systems of environmental groups and oil companies and associations, also attempt to explain changes in policy stands by federal agencies, specifically the Department of Interior. They find that changes in the policy position of the Department of Interior are significantly correlated with the energy crises of 1973–1974 and 1979–1980 and the Carter presidency. Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair believe that these external events explain the changes in policy positions of a major federal agency. 'These findings reveal a remarkable level of bureaucratic responsiveness to large-scale economic events exogenous to the policy subsystem' (Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair 1993: p. 170).

Government agencies respond to economic shocks. The more interesting question is, however, in what manner and why do they respond as they do? In other words, how does coalitional activity affect the response of government agencies to external shocks? This question can better be answered by exploring the extent and type of interaction among organizations and individuals that share beliefs, the degree of coordination that exists among them, the strategies, if any, they adopt to attempt to realize their shared beliefs, how and whether those strategies change under different presidential administrations or as a result of economic shocks, and the effectiveness of the strategies of coalitions. These are all important and interesting issues that the AC framework sans a theory of collective action simply cannot address. By admitting the lessons of collective action, however, active coalitions will become as much a part of the explanation of policy outcomes as are beliefs and policy learning within the advocacy coalition framework.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Yet see Coleman and Skogstad (1990b) for interesting attempts to account for institutional and cultural factors that affect the ability of interests to organize themselves.
2. A belief system consists of three structural elements, a deep core, a policy core, and secondary aspects, with the deep core least subject and the secondary aspects most subject to change (Sabatier, 1988: p. 144). The deep core contains 'fundamental normative and ontological axioms which define a person's underlying personal philosophy,' such as the emphasis an individual places on the importance of efficiency versus equality (Sabatier, 1988: pp. 144, 146). The policy core consists of 'basic strategies and policy positions for

achieving deep core beliefs,' such as policy instruments based on coercion versus those based on inducements (Sabatier, 1988: p. 146). Secondary aspects involve a 'multitude of instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement the policy core...,' such as the budget that should be devoted toward implementing a policy instrument (Sabatier, 1988: p. 146).

3. As Sabatier (1988: p. 133) explains 'policy-oriented learning refers to relatively enduring alterations of thought or behavioral intentions which result from experience and which are concerned with the attainment (or revision) of policy objectives.'

4. A reasonable interpretation, and one that I take, is that the AC framework is largely individualistic in nature. For instance, Sabatier (1993: p. 25) explains advocacy coalitions as follows: 'I have concluded that the most useful means of aggregating actors in order to understand policy change over fairly long periods of time is by "advocacy coalitions." These are people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system... .' In addition, Sabatier (1993: p. 30) adopts a particular model of the individual: 'rationality is limited rather than perfect. Thus the framework relies heavily upon the work of March and Simon..., Nisbett and Ross..., Kahneman et al. ..., and many others in terms of satisficing, placing cognitive limits on rationality, carrying out limited search processes, etc.' Sabatier's explanations and applications of the AC framework, however, are sufficiently ambivalent so as to admit a structuralist interpretation. For instance, Sabatier (1993: p. 25) includes organizations and individuals as the major actors within policy subsystems. Also, empirical work conducted by Sabatier and his colleagues reflect this ambivalence. Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair (1991) analyze advocacy coalitions consisting of organizations. Sabatier and Brasher (1993) analyze individual and organization-level behavior.

5. As Sabatier (1993: p. 28) states, 'I personally have great difficulty in specifying a priori a clear and falsifiable set of interests for most actors in policy conflicts. Instead, it seems preferable to allow actors to indicate their belief systems... .'

6. As Moe (1990b: p. 240) states: 'One of the most important things to know about a separation-of-powers system is that it makes accomplishing anything through new laws – changing the legal status quo – very difficult. Conversely, when new laws are indeed achieved, the same system that made victory so difficult now works to protect these achievements from subsequent reversal. They become part of the legal status quo. As political actors struggle to harness public authority in pursuit of their own ends, therefore, they have strong incentives to embed their achievements securely in the law – to formalize through legislation.'

7. See Woods and West (1993) for difficulties in operationalizing some of Moe's concepts and for an initial empirical test of them.

8. See Heclo (1974) for a comparative study of a two party (Britain) versus a multi-party (Sweden) parliamentary system.

9. Of course, there are additional questions that must be addressed at some point; however, these three are among the most basic issues within collective action. Additional questions would include some that even theorists within the rational choice tradition have largely neglected. For instance, little attention has been paid to the structure and form that coalitions are likely to take, and the factors, both situational and individual, that affect such structure and form. At least since Lowi's (1964) seminal piece, political scientists and policy scholars have suspected that policy affects politics. While Lowi's categorization of policies has been strongly criticized in some cases, and reworked in others, even by Lowi (1972) himself, his basic insight nevertheless remains: 'a political relationship is determined by the type of policy at stake, so that for every type of policy there is likely to be a distinctive type of political relationship' (Lowi, 1964: p. 688). There has been a general lack of attempts to develop such an argument theoretically, and to test it empirically. The one exception is the attention paid by formal political theorists to distributive policy and the legislative coalitions that form around such policy. This literature suggests that univer-

salistic, or near universalistic, legislative coalitions form around distributive policy. For an excellent review of this literature, see Collie (1988). Recent empirical work, however, casts doubts on such conclusions (Stein and Bickers, 1994).

10. Instrumentally rational policy actors are self-interested individuals, who actively search for outcome enhancing strategies. Attention is paid to individuals' goals and the characteristics of the situation. No attention is paid to the internal belief systems of individuals, or how they process or synthesize information. Such a model of the individual is under increasng scrutiny in some quarters (Heap, 1989), and outright attack in others (Etzioni, 1988; Dryzek, 1990). The critique can be broken down into two general, overlapping categories. On the one hand, the strict rational choice model of the individual is logically inconsistent. Theoreticians rely upon constructs or concepts to explain particular outcomes, which cannot themselves be accounted for from within the theory (Moe, 1979; Heap, 1989). On the other hand, the model is too sparse. It fails to capture factors that strongly influence human choice. Consequently, the model provides an inadequate explanation of human behavior (Etzioni, 1988).

11. What follows is not an exhaustive critique of instrumental rationality. Rather, attention is paid to those shortcomings that the AC framework best addresses. For more complete critiques, see Etzioni (1988) and the literature he cites.

12. See Orbell and Dawes (1991) for a discussion of a heuristic that advantages cooperators over defectors in a prisoners dilemma setting, thereby promoting cooperation.

13. Orbell, van de Kragt, and Dawes (1988: p. 816) state, 'Promising had a highly significant effect, with a mean of 84% contributing to the other group in the all-promise conditions and 58% when not all promised.'

14. Also see Binger and Hoffman (1989).

15. As Heap (1989: p. 145) argues social outcomes cannot be reduced 'to the participating individuals and their intentions.'

16. Although see Heap (1989: ch. 4) for problems with this supposition.

17. See Bennett and Howlett (1992) for a discussion and comparison of policy learning across four policy frameworks, including the AC framework.

18. A recent example is that of Schneider and Ingram (1993). They argue that the social construction of target populations is a critical variable that supplements and enriches existing explanations of political phenomena. They define the social construction of target populations to be 'the cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy. These characterizations are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors, and stories' (Schneider and Ingram, 1993: p. 334). Social constructions can hardly be considered instrumentally rational.

19. For instance see Atkinson and Coleman (1991) and their explanation of the industrial policy of Canada.

20. Note that Moe's theory of structural choice elaborates the effects of stable system parameters on the strategies existing coalitions pursue in attempting to achieve their policy goals. Moe does not pay attention to effects of stable system parameters on coalition formation. Coleman and Skogstad (1990) in passing make reference to the importance of stable system parameters. As they argue, 'What is not always recognized is that these characteristic of the state may, in turn, shape the organization of interests. For example, decentralized state structures that vest responsibility in sub-national governments may discourage organizational development by strengthening strong and autonomous regional associations' (Coleman and Skogstad, 1990: p. 24).

21. See Woods and West (1993) for an empirical test of Moe's theory.

22. See Heclo (1974) for an alternative explanation of policy making in a two party parliamentary system.

23. For instance, conflict often erupts among fishermen over what would constitute a fair allocation of individual quotas of fish. While fishermen may believe that they would be

better off if they limited their catch, agreeing upon an initial allocation of quota is often difficult to achieve, because different allocation rules favor different groups. Quotas could be allocated on the basis of historical catch, favoring long time fishermen over newcomers. Or, quotas could be allocated on the basis of vessel size, favoring those fishermen who have invested more heavily in the fishery (McCay, Apostle, Creed, Finlayson, Mikalsen, 1994).

24. There are, of course, other factors not accounted for by either the IAD or the AC frameworks that quite plausibly would affect the formation of coalitions. For example, crises are likely to promote rapid coalition formation, while coalition formation around slower developing problems may occur in fits and starts with no coalition forming, or only forming after multiple attempts.

25. For a more extended discussion of the effects of heterogeneities on distributional issues and on the emergence of cooperation, see Hackett, Schlager, and Walker (1994) and Komesar (1994).

26. For instance, see Rosenbaum (1991) for an account of the role Tom Foley, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, played in protecting the interests of the National Rifle Association.

References

Atkinson, Michael and William Coleman (1989). *The State, Business, and Industrial Change In Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bennett, Colin and Michael Howlett (1992). 'The lessons of learning: reconciling, theories of policy learning and policy change.' *Policy Sciences* 25: 275–295.

Binger, Brian and Elizabeth Hoffman (1989). 'Institutional persistence and change: the question of efficiency.' *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 145: 67–84.

Browne, William (1988). *Private Interests, Public Policy, and American Agriculture*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Browne, William (1990). 'Organized interests and their issue niches: a search for pluralism in a policy domain.' *Journal of Politics* 52: 477–509.

Coleman, William and Grace Skogstad (1990a). 'Policy communities and policy networks: a structural approach,' in William Coleman and Grace Skogstad, eds. *Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach*. Missessauga, ON: Copp Clark Pitman, pp. 14–33.

Coleman, William and Grace Skogstad, eds. (1990b). *Policy Communities and Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach*. Mississauga, ON: Copp Clark Pitman.

Collie, Melissa (1988). 'The legislature and distributive policy making in formal perspective.' *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13 (4): 427–458.

Dryzek, John (1990). *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy, and Political Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Etzioni, Amitai (1988). *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics*. New York: The Free Press.

Guth, Werner and Reinhard Tietz (1990). 'Ultimatum bargaining behavior: A survey and comparison of experimental results.' *Journal of Economic Psychology* 11: 417–449.

Hackett, Steven, Edella Schlager, Jamer Walker (1994). 'The role of communication in resolving commons dilemmas: experimental evidence with heterogeneous appropriators.' *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 27: 99–126.

Hammond, Thomas and Jack Knott (1988). 'The deregulatory snowball: explaining deregulation in the financial industry.' *Journal of Politics* 50: 3–30.

Heap, Shaun Hargreaves (1989). *Rationality in Economics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Heclo, Hugh (1974). *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Heinz, John, Edward Laumann, Robert Nelson, and Robert Salisbury (1993). *The Hollow Core: Private Interests in National Policy Making.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Issac, Mark and James Walker (1988). 'Communication and free-riding behavior: the voluntary contribution mechanism.' *Economic Inquiry* 26: 585–608.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank, et al. (1991). 'Explaining change in policy subsystems: analysis of coalition stability and defection over time.' *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (4): 851–872.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank and Paul Sabatier (1993a). 'The study of public policy processes,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 1–9.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank and Paul Sabatier (1993b). 'The dynamics of policy-oriented learning,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 41–58.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank and Gilbert St. Clair (1993). 'The politics of offshore energy: empirically testing the advocacy coalition framework,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 149–176.

Jones, Bryan (1994). Book Review of *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach,* edited by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith. *Policy Currents* 4 (1): 10.

Keohane, Robert (1984). *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Keohane, Robert (1986). 'Reciprocity in international relations.' *International Organization* 40: 1–27.

Komesar, Neil (1994). *Imperfect alternatives: Choosing institutions in law, economics, and public policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laumann, Edward and David Knoke (1987). *The Organizational State.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Lowi, Theodore (1964). 'American business, public policy, case studies, and political theory.' *World Politics* 15: 677–715.

Lowi, Theodore (1972). 'Four systems of policy, politics, and choice.' *Public Administration Review* 32 (4): 298–310.

Marin, Bernd and Renate Mayntz, eds. (1991). *Policy Networks: Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Considerations.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Marsh, David and R. A. W. Rhodes, eds. (1992). *Policy Networks in British Government.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McCay, Bonnie, Richard Apostle, Carolyn Creed, Alan Finlayson, and Knut Mikalsen (1994). 'Privatization in fisheries: Lessons from experiences in the U.S., Canada, and Norway,' a paper presented at the Symposium of the Ocean Governance Study Group, 'Moving ahead on ocean governance: Practical applications guided by long-range vision,' Lewes, Delaware, April 9–13.

Messick, David (1992). 'Equality as a decision heuristic.' Working Paper No. 85. The Dispute Resolution Research Center, J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Messick, David and Terry Schell (1992). 'Evidence for an equality heuristic in social decision making.' Working Paper No. 83. The Dispute Resolution Research Center, J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Moe, Terry (1979). 'On the scientific status of rational models.' *American Journal of Political Science* 23: 215–243.

Moe, Terry (1984). 'The new economics of organization.' *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (4): 739.

Moe, Terry (1990a). 'The politics of structural choice: toward a theory of public bureaucracy,' in Oliver Williamson, ed. *Organization Theory: From Chester Barnard to the Present and Beyond.* New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 116–153.

Moe, Terry (1990b). 'Political institutions: the neglected side of the story.' *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 6: 213–253.

Olson, Mancur (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Orbell, John and Robyn Dawes (1991). 'A cognitive miser' theory of cooperators' advantage.' *American Political Science Review* 85 (2): 515–528.

Orbell, John, Alphons van de Kragt, and Robyn Dawes (1988). 'Explaining discussion-induced cooperation.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54 (5): 811–819.

Ostrom, Elinor (1990). *Governing the Commons.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, Elinor (1991). 'A framework for institutional analysis.' Working Paper, Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

Ostrom, Elinor, Roy Gardner, and James Walker (1994). *Rules, Games and Common Pool Resources.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ostrom, Elinor, James Walker, and Roy Gardner (1992). 'Covenants with and without the sword: self-governance is possible.' *American Political Science Review* 86: 404–417.

Quirk, Paul (1988). 'In defense of the politics of ideas.' *Journal of Politics* 50: 31–41.

Rosenbaum, Ron (1991). 'The brady offensive.' *Vanity Fair* (January): 66–72, 115–118.

Sabatier, Paul (1988). 'An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein.' *Policy Sciences* 21: 129–168.

Sabatier, Paul (1991). 'Toward better theories of the policy process.' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24 (2): 147–156.

Sabatier, Paul (1993). 'Policy change over a decade or more,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 13–39.

Sabatier, Paul and Anne Brasher (1993). 'From vague consensus to clearly differentiated coalitions: environmental policy at Lake Tahoe, 1964–1985,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 177–210.

Sabatier, Paul and Hank Jenkins-Smith (1993a). 'The advocacy coalition framework: assessment, revisions, and implications for scholars and practitioners,' in Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 211–235.

Sabatier, Paul and Hank Jenkins-Smith, eds. (1993b). *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Sabatier, Paul and Matthew Zafonte (1994a). 'Who do policy elites look to for advice and information? Policy networks in San Francisco Bay/Delta Water Policy,' a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, Sept. 1–4.

Sabatier, Paul and Matthew Zafonte (1994b). 'Are bureaucrats and scientists neutral? Two models applied to San Francisco Bay/Delta Water Policy,' a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Political Science Association, Berlin, Germany, August 23–26.

Schlager, Edella (1994). 'Collective action and coalition formation among organized interests, a paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, The New York Hilton, September 1–4.

Schlager, Edella and Elinor Ostrom (1992). 'Common property and natural resources: a conceptual analysis.' *Land Economics* 68 (3): 249–252.

Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram (1993). 'Social construction of target populations: implications for politics and policy.' *American Political Science Review* 87: 334–347.

Shepsle, Kenneth and Barry Weingast (1987). 'The institutional foundations of committee power.' *American Political Science Review* 81: 85–104.

Simon, Herbert (1985). 'Human nature in politics: the dialogue of psychology with political science.' *American Political Science Review* 79 (2): 293–304.

Stein, Robert and Kenneth Bickers (1994). 'Universalism and the electoral connection: a test and some doubts.' *Political Research Quarterly* 47 (2): 295–318.

Weingast, Barry and William Marshall (1988). 'The industrial organization of congress.' *Journal of Political Economy* 96: 132–163.

Woods, B. Dan and William West (1993). 'The politics of administrative design: legislative coalitions and the bureaucracy,' a paper prepared for the American Political Science Meeting, Washington, D.C. September 1–4.