

Plus ça Change, Plus C'est La Même Chose? A review of Paul Sabatier's "An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein"

Adam Wellstead¹

Published online: 15 November 2017

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2017

Abstract Paul Sabatier's 1988 *Policy Sciences* paper, "An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein" (21:129–168), introduced the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) to the policy discipline. Over the past 30 years, the ACF has become a generalizable theory of policy change. Another feature is the ongoing critical self-assessment and revisions of the framework's theoretical and empirical assumptions. As a result, there have been many reviews of the ACF. However, the popularity of Sabatier's contribution and the most cited article in this journal is its wider significance beyond the ACF. A bibliometric analysis of 737 peer-reviewed publications citing this paper is undertaken. This is followed by a summary chronicling ACF reviews and scholarship comparing the ACF with other policy process theories and frameworks.

Keywords Advocacy coalition framework · Bibliometric method · Causality · Policy change · Policy learning · Sabatier

Introduction

Recently, while sorting through a pile of assorted papers that had been collecting dust in the corner of my office and were destined for the recycling bin, I came across a yellowing seven-page single-spaced letter dated January 17, 1997, from the late Paul Sabatier. In great detail, he provided a chapter-by-chapter review of my M.Sc. thesis "The role of the advocacy coalition framework in understanding forest policy change: Alberta and Ontario." Like a growing number graduate students during the mid-1990s, the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) was starting to come into vogue. At this time, controversies surrounding old-growth logging and the long-term horizon of policy change in British

✉ Adam Wellstead
awellste@mtu.edu

¹ Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI, USA

Columbia's forest sector made for fertile ground that also advanced policy process scholarship (Wilson 1987; Cashore et al. 2001; Rayner et al. 2001) including debating the applicability of the ACF (Lertzman et al. 1996a, b; Hoberg 1996). My comparative study examined the shift from sustained yield timber forestry to sustainable forest ecosystem-based management in two provinces with large public forests, but had received far less academic attention (Wellstead 1996). Sabatier's review began by highlighting its positive contributions to ACF scholarship, but more importantly most of the comments were dedicated to critically assessing the application of concepts, areas of disagreement, the need to consider quantitative methods and revised causal path diagram. Many of these suggestions were explored in a subsequent ACF application (Wellstead and Stedman 2007).

This personal vignette is important because it illustrates, in a small way, how the ACF came to be and continues to be a dominant approach in the policy process theory literature. It is safe to assume that if Sabatier painstakingly reviewed a modest Master's thesis, he also learned from many other applications. Sabatier and other ACF scholars are committed to a "Lakatosian" research program whereby the core attributes of the ACF outlined in his 1988 *Policy Sciences* paper, "An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein" (herein referred to as the "1988 Paper"), remain intact today (Cairney 2012). Despite constant revisions of the ACF, including a number by Sabatier himself, the 1988 Paper is the most cited paper in *Policy Sciences* (approaching 3000 Google Scholar citations) and shows no signs of decreasing its yearly citation output.

This 50th Anniversary review highlights a number of key reviews of the ACF that has been generated over that past 25 years. First, however, the ACF as originally presented in 1988 is highlighted. A quantitative analysis of papers—with journal article abstract data obtained from the Scopus—citing Sabatier's paper is undertaken. The VOSviewer software visualization program reveals networks of key terms from article abstracts citing the 1988 Paper (van Eck and Waltman 2007, 2010). Two types "reviews of ACF reviews" are highlighted: those examining contributions, modifications, and shortcomings of the ACF, and comparisons of the ACF with other policy process theories and frameworks.

A framework from a framework: continuous critical self-assessment

The earliest formulation of the ACF can be found in Sabatier's 1986 *Journal of Public Policy* paper "Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research: A Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis."¹ The ACF was seen as a product of "critical self-assessment" in his earlier implementation research (the Sabatier/Mazmanian framework) as well as the growing complexity of US policy-making (Hecl 1978). Specifically, he advocated a general model of the policy process which combines the best features of the bottom-up and top-down approaches, while also applying them to a longer time frame than what was the case in most implementation research (Sabatier 1988, 36). Sabatier was primarily concerned with understanding and explaining causality within complex multi-level policy-making processes. The outline of the proposed ACF is sketched out in last five pages of the article, including the well-known and universally copied heuristic "flow diagram" (Fig. 1) containing a "common vocabulary including major conceptual categories and general relations between them" (Weible and Nohrstedt 2012, 127).

¹ According to Jenkins-Smith et al. (2018), Sabatier submitted an ACF manuscript to *Policy Sciences* in 1984, but it was rejected.

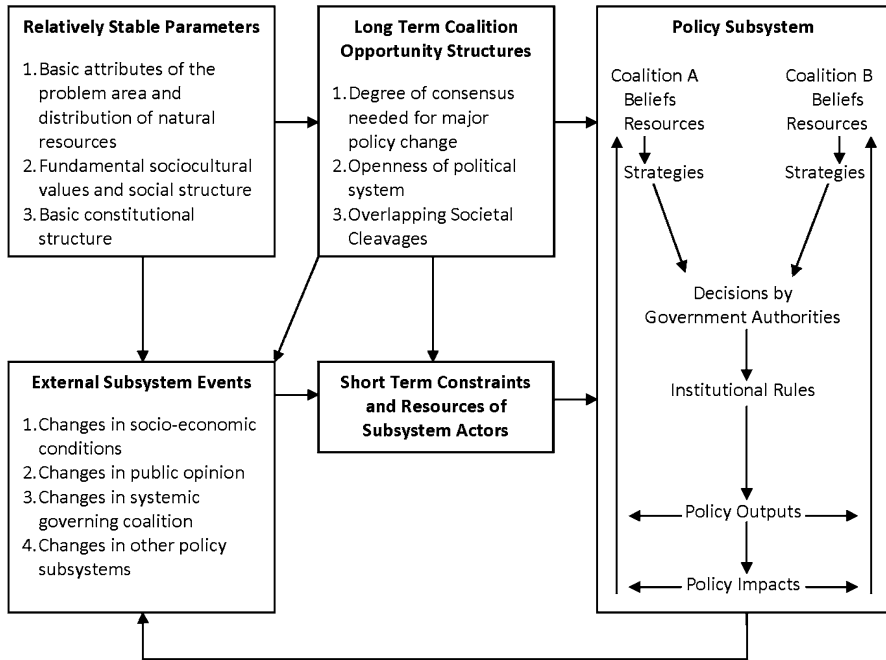


Fig. 1 The ACF flow diagram (Reproduced with permission from Weible et al. 2009)

Sabatier’s 1988 Paper fleshes out his earlier proposal. The framework’s main assumptions include that the unit of analysis required to understand policy changes occurs within what he referred to as a “political subsystems.” These subsystems will often be populated by more than 30 governmental and non-governmental organizations. Events external to the subsystem are considered primary inducements for major policy shifts and constrain the actions of the policy actor. A second path of policy change can occur within subsystems providing that they are on minor or less controversial aspect of policy. Measuring the impacts of policy change and policy learning requires a time perspective of a decade or more. Sabatier found that there is typically one dominant coalition along with two to four key contending or emerging coalitions within a subsystem (Lindquist 1992). What differentiates one advocacy coalition from another is a three-leveled hierarchical belief system. From these belief systems, coalitions develop their overall policy direction and devise specific programs. A policy-oriented belief system is arranged according to three distinctive categories: a deep normative core, a policy core, and the secondary aspects. The deep core, which is equated with the personality of an individual, is nearly impossible to change. The policy core belief, which is the basic strategy and overall policy position of a coalition, is possible to change but very difficult. Secondary aspects are the instrumental decisions associated with the policy core. Changing a coalition’s core policy belief would eventually alter the basic perception of policy problems as well as the general policy prescription of an issue (Sabatier 1988). But as long as the dominant advocacy coalition remains in power within the subsystem, belief systems are unlikely to change, and the core attributes of a government program are unlikely to be significantly revised. Most routine policy changes occur at the secondary aspect because it does not threaten the dominant coalition’s core policy belief because subsystem actors are willing to give up

Table 1 The original core ACF hypotheses in Sabatier (1988)

ACF hypothesis	Description
1	On major controversies within a policy subsystem (i.e., when core beliefs are in dispute), the lineup of allies and opponents will tend to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so
2	Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects
3	An actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of his (its) belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core
4	The core (basic attributes) of a governmental program is unlikely to be significantly revised as long as the subsystem advocacy coalition which instituted the program remains in power
5	The core (basic attributes) of a governmental action program is unlikely to be changed in the absence of significant perturbations external to the subsystem, i.e., changes in socioeconomic conditions, system-wide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems
6	Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there is an intermediate level of informed conflict between the two. This requires: (a) each have the technical resources to engage in such a debate and that (b) 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
7	Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there exists a forum which is: (a) prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate and (b) dominated by professional norms
8	Problems for which accepted quantitative performance indicators exist are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those in which performance indicators are generally qualitative and quite subjective
9	Problems involving natural systems are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those involving purely social systems because in the former many of the critical variables are not themselves active strategists and because controlled experimentation is more feasible

secondary aspects more readily. This type of policy change occurs via “policy learning” which Sabatier defined as a relatively enduring alteration of thought or behavioral intentions that are concerned with the attainment (or revision) of the secondary aspects of the policy belief system (Sabatier 1988). The advantage of this definition is that it transcends an information-based view of learning and considers alterations in frames, values, and meanings (Kemp and Weehuizen 2005).

Sabatier maintained that policy learning’s influence upon policy change requires a number of common factors. The most significant contribution made in the 1988 Paper was the introduction of nine core hypotheses (Table 1) which represented the first attempt to permit empirical testing of the framework and Sabatier’s desire to take causality seriously in policy research. A great deal of the ACF scholarship over past 30 years has been dedicated to developing new hypotheses or modifying the central assumptions in core hypotheses and has been the subject of reviews highlighted later in the paper.

The durability of Sabatier’s 1988 Paper: more than advocacy coalitions

Before reviewing the ACF reviews, it is important, first, to consider the wider impact of the 1988 Paper. A Scopus database search of abstracts fields of documents published between 1988 and 2017 citing “An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein” yielded 1033 results, of which 737 were peer-reviewed articles. In comparison, using the same criteria, the term “advocacy coalition framework” yielded 227 peer-reviewed articles. Since 2007, there has been a sharp rise in the number of citations of the 1988 Paper (Fig. 2). This trend roughly corresponds to articles citing the ACF. The USA remains the most popular location for the 1988 article and the ACF in general followed by the UK and Canada (Fig. 3). Outside of Anglo-American countries, papers originating primarily from northern European countries dominate. The geographic trend also holds true for ACF-related articles. Henry et al. (2014) found that 75% of ACF empirical applications were found in North America and Europe. The 1988 Paper has been cited most frequently in *Policy Studies Journal* (40 times) followed by *Policy Sciences* (33 times), *Journal of European Public Policy* (27 times), *Review of Policy Research* (19 times), and *Forest Policy and Economics* (18 times). In all but one case, the 1988 Paper was, as expected, cited far more frequently than ACF-based article. The exception was *Policy Studies Journal* with 35 papers examining the ACF (Table 2).

A freely available bibliometric mapping computer software, VOSviewer, was employed to analyze the abstracts from 737 peer-reviewed articles citing the 1988 Policy Paper. The program produces easy-to-interpret two-dimensional maps in which the distance between nodes (key terms in the abstract) is a measure of similarity. The dataset contained relevant 223 terms that occur in the abstracts. The most frequently occurring terms were: “advocacy coalition framework” or “ACF” (139), “policy subsystem” (35 abstracts), “hypothesis” (30 abstracts), “advocate” (29 abstracts), and “failure” (28 abstracts). Network visualization of sources referenced 10 or more instances of a particular theme from article abstracts referencing the 1988 Paper. A node in this network depicts them. The size of the node indicates the number of instances on which a theme was mentioned in the abstracts. The nodes are clustered based on similarity—nodes in the same color are more similar than

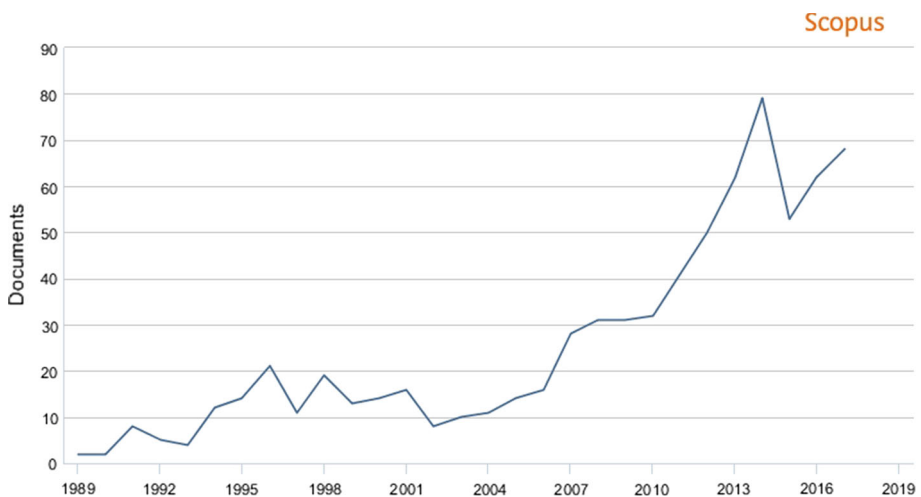


Fig. 2 Yearly citations of the 1988 Paper

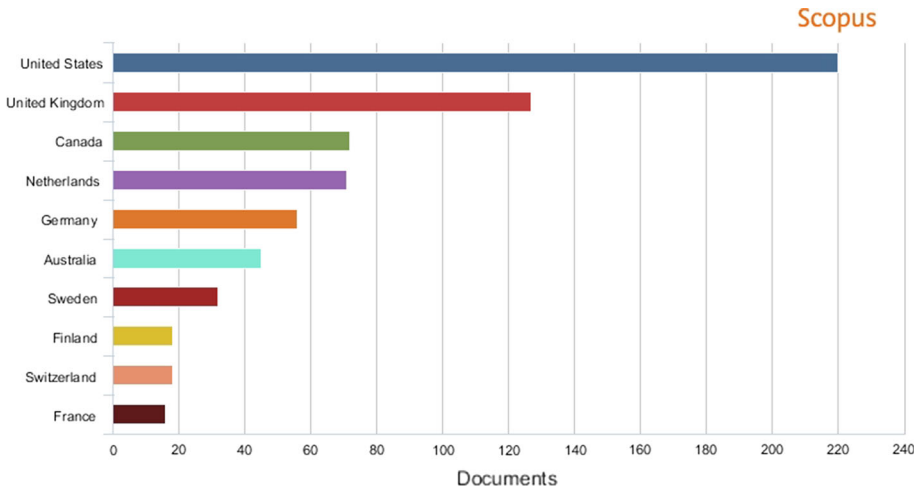


Fig. 3 Country of origin of the 1988 Paper

Table 2 Number of times the 1988 Paper and ACF have been cited in peer-reviewed journals

Journals	Number of times the 1988 Paper has been cited	Number of times the ACF has been cited since 1988
Policy Studies Journal	40	36
Policy Sciences	33	7
Journal of European Public Policy	27	6
Review of Policy Research	19	9
Forest Policy And Economics	18	10
Public Administration	12	4
Energy Policy	11	2
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	11	5
Environment And Planning C Government and Policy	10	3
Journal of Public Policy	10	1
Science and Public Policy	9	1
Journal Of Comparative Policy Analysis Research And Practice	8	6
Ecology and Society	7	3
Environmental Politics	7	1
Global Environmental Change	7	2
Governance	7	0
Administration and Society	6	3
Environmental Policy and Governance	6	1
International Journal of Drug Policy	6	1
Technological Forecasting And Social Change	6	0

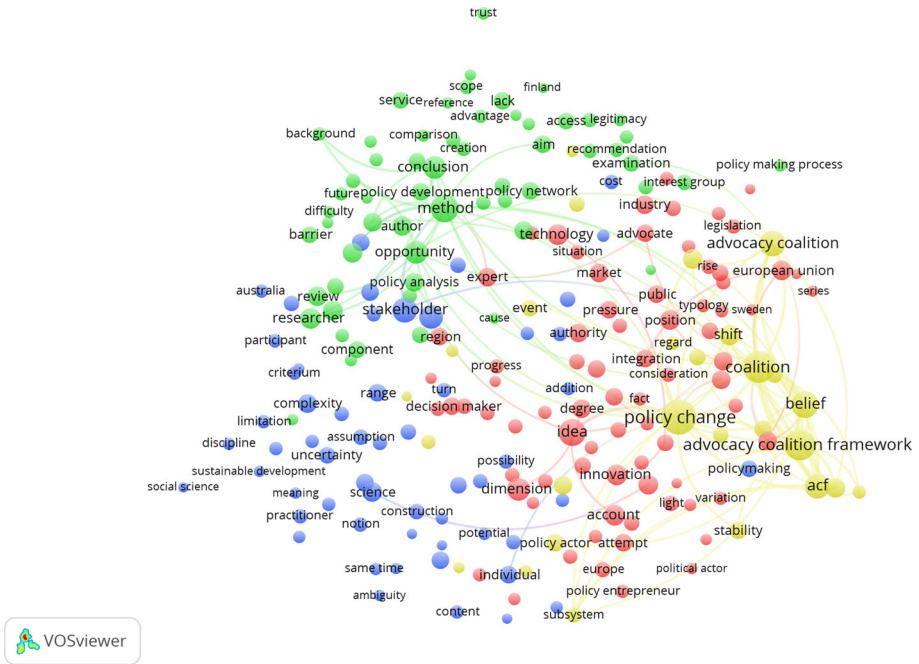


Fig. 4 Co-citation networks of sources referenced on 10 or more terms. (Color figure online)

nodes in different colors; nodes closer to each other are more similar than nodes farther from each other. A link between two nodes indicates a co-citation relationship.

Every student of the ACF should appreciate the VOSviewer network’s coalition-like output (Fig. 4). The dominant network is the tightly clustered one (yellow nodes) with the largest nodes and the most number of intra-network links, meaning that these terms were frequently used together. Here, the abstracts address advocacy coalitions, beliefs, policy change. This is consistent with previous discussion regarding the large ACF-oriented literature. A smaller but still very densely clustered network (green nodes) presents a methodological/empirical theme (e.g., methods, policy, analysis, comparison, researcher, science, policy network). There are also strong linkages between the ACF network and the methodological/empirical network nodes. A third more scattered network represented by the red nodes presents a less cohesive theme based on ideas, technology, innovation, and decision-making, policy entrepreneurs. While there are many intra-network linkages, very few inter-network linkages exist. Finally, the fourth network represented by the blue nodes has virtually no inter- or intra-network linkages. Papers about stakeholders, science, research uncertainty, and individuals provide a looser and less coherent theme. The “heat” map in Fig. 5 illustrates the overall density of terms with red areas representing the highest density. Policy, advocacy coalition framework, method, stakeholder were the most important concepts from the VOSviewer analysis.

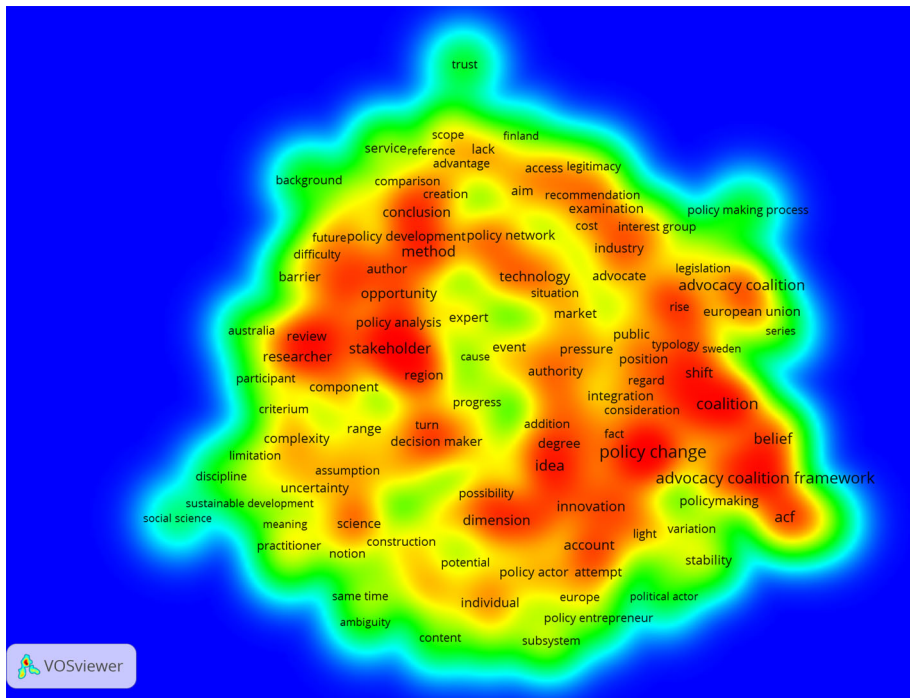


Fig. 5 Density view of sources referenced on 10 or more terms. (Color figure online)

Review of the ACF reviews

In 1993, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith undertook the first significant review and revision of the ACF. Their critical reassessment for the framework was in part motivated by six empirical case studies. Table 3 lists the subsequent major reviews of the framework and their contribution to ACF research. These reviews provide an accounting of ACF studies, namely their location, or the types of analysis undertaken. With the inclusion of new case studies, there has been the development of new hypotheses. Most of the revisions have focused on the composition and stability of coalitions, the structure of beliefs, interaction in subsystems, coalition behavior, strategies for influencing behavior, policy learning, and policy change.

Since 1999, there have been four editions of *Theories of the Policy Process* edited or co-edited by Paul Sabatier. In each there, there has been a chapter reviewing the ACF along with discussions of other key policy process theories or frameworks. However, it was not until the third edition that a stand-alone chapter was dedicated to comparing the approaches (Cairney and Heikkilä 2014) and was subsequently updated in the 2018 edition (Heikkilä and Cairney 2018). In Table 4, two lines of inquiry are followed: comparing the ACF with other theories and the role that the ACF plays in synthesizing efforts. Heikkilä and Cairney (2018) provide the most extensive comparative overview of the ACF (across 15 indicators) along with the multiple streams approach, punctuated-equilibrium theory, policy feedback theory, the narrative policy framework, the IAD framework, and the innovation and diffusion model across three broad criteria: theoretical elements, research and methodological approaches, and their ability to explain the policy process.

Table 3 ACF reviews

References	Applications, revisions, and critiques of the ACF
Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) (Edited volume)	Four qualitative and two quantitative ACF case studies
Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1994) (Article)	New hypotheses that included administrative agencies advocating a more centrist position than interest groups and technical information can influence policy brokers and government officials Revised hypotheses namely the policy change can come about if imposed by a superior hierarchical power (H4) and other minority coalitions can bring about change through skillful exploitation of a significant perturbation (H5) Belief versus interest debate
Zafonte and Sabatier (1998) (Article)	Introduced concept of imposed interdependencies in addition to shared beliefs as the explanation for coalition formation
Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) (Edited volume chapter)	Distinction between mature and nascent subsystems (modification of H1) Revision of the belief systems (e.g., policy core policy preferences)
Fenger and Klok (2001) (Article)	Revises Zafonte and Sabatier's (1998) coalitional interdependencies Coalition formation determined by symbiotic, independent, and competitive interdependencies
Sabatier and Weible (2007) (Edited volume chapter)	The introduction of the "devil shift" where individuals exaggerate the power and maliciousness of their political opponents, thus amplifying the severity of their losses Coalition opportunity structures defined by degree of consensus required for policy change and the openness of the political system Consideration of subsystem resources (e.g., legal authority, public opinion, financial resources) Major policy change via internal shocks Major policy change via negotiated agreements—based on the alternative dispute resolution literature
Weible et al. (2009) (Article)	"Third" path to policy change via internal events within the subsystem "Fourth" path to policy change via negotiated agreements. Review of 80 ACF applications from 1987 to 2006 Greater inclusion of other sectors and geographic areas Over half of ACF empirical applications have used unsystematic collection and analysis A majority of ACF studies do not test the formal hypotheses Coalition defection is not uncommon Policy learning can occur at the core level Empirical challenges are encountered when measuring policy learning
Sotirov and Memmler (2012) (Article)	Review of 41 natural resource based empirical ACF applications Seven new hypotheses that focus on the role of cognitive, cultural, and social patterns. Different types of political culture are critical to natural resource subsystems
Henry et al. (2014) (Article)	Review of 27 ACF applications outside of Europe and North America (1999–2013)

Table 3 continued

References	Applications, revisions, and critiques of the ACF
	<p>These studies tended to examine the entire framework to understand the overarching policy</p> <p>Context rather than testing specific hypotheses</p> <p>Strengths (7) specifically that the ACF can be utilized as a comparative theoretical approach</p> <p>Weaknesses (8) (e.g., need to consider international organization, the assume neutrality of the state, and the need to develop context specific hypotheses)</p>
Jenkins-Smith et al. (2014) (Edited volume chapter)	<p>Accounting of ACF empirical applications from 1987 to 2013 ($N = 224$)</p> <p>Environmental policy issues was the focus of a majority of studies (57%) followed health-based research (11%)</p> <p>A vast majority of studies were undertaken in the USA and Europe (84%)</p>
Cairney (2015) (Edited volume chapter)	<p>Review of the major revisions to the ACF (e.g., role of administrative organizations, impact of technological information, normative precepts versus precepts with empirical content</p>
Jang et al. (2016) (Article)	<p>Impact of the ACF on the policy theory field</p> <p>Review of 67 ACF applications in South Korea from 2002 to 2014</p> <p>Different cultural contexts influenced by Confucianism</p> <p>Informal assessment methods prevailed</p> <p>ACF hypotheses rarely tested</p>
Nohrstedt and Olofsson (2016) (Article)	<p>Review of 25 ACF applications in Sweden from 1998 to 2015</p> <p>Wide variety of sectors were examined</p> <p>Interpretive or mixed methods were primarily used</p>
Pierce et al. (2017) (Article)	<p>Review of 161 ACF applications from 2007 to 2014</p> <p>European and North American studies dominate but a growing number of applications from Asia</p> <p>Environmental based studies still dominate</p> <p>National government is the most studied level of government</p> <p>Mixed methods approach dominated</p> <p>Structure of advocacy coalitions, policy change, policy learning, and integration with other policy process frameworks and theories</p>

Conclusion

Thirty years after the 1988 publication of “An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein,” the fourth edition of *Theories of the Policy Process* was published. Destined to be a staple textbook for another generation of policy students in seminar classes across the world, the ACF chapter takes its place along other approaches. Its popularity is in part due to Sabatier and others developing a general theory of the policy process with attention to causality and hypothesis testing. Despite the modifications, the flow diagram and key hypotheses, the ACF’s core assumptions, remain largely unchanged. The goal of the next generation of ACF scholarship will involve more

Table 4 Assessing the ACF in the larger policy theory field

References	Theories compared and major findings
Schlager and Blomquist (1996) (Article)	Compares the ACF with Ostrom's institutional rational choice and Moe's politics of structural choice approach Each is compared according to their bounds of inquiry, the model of the individual, the role of uncertainty, information, and beliefs, assumptions about groups, levels of action, stages of the policy process
Zahariadis (1998) (Article)	Uses Allison's (1971) alternative lens to evaluate and compare the ACF with rational choice theory and Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams approach Each is compared according to their level and unit of analysis, actor goals and environmental structure, their view of collective choice, the role of institutions and procedural rationality prediction/description
John (2003) (Article)	Compares "synthetic" accounts of the policy process including the multiple streams approach, punctuated-equilibrium theory, and the ACF Causal mechanisms driving policy change require the adaptation of other social science theories Argues that evolutionary theory may reveal the micro-level processes at work
Nowlin (2011) (Article)	Descriptively examines ACF along with Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, multiple streams, policy diffusion, punctuated-equilibrium theory, and social construction and policy design Based on articles published between 2008 and 2010
Cairney (2013) (Article)	Discusses the ACF, Policy Agendas Project, and interpretive approaches in the context of combining policy theories Three approaches are considered: synthetic, complementary, and contradictory
Cairney and Heikkila (2014) (Edited volume chapter)	Compare the ACF with other key policy process approach according to their theoretical elements, research and methodological approaches, and their ability to explain the policy process
Howlett et al. (2017) (Article)	Highlights and critiques the ACF, the multiple streams approach and the policy cycle framework Argues for a synthetic approach
Heikkila and Cairney (2018) (Edited volume chapter)	Updated comparison of Cairney and Heikkila (2014)

compelling and measurable causal explanations. Rather than emphasizing "why" things happen, which been the case for many ACF studies, future research will should measurable causal claim and to describe "how" things happen.

References

Allison, G. T. (1971). *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban missile crisis*. Boston, NY: Little, Brown and Company.

- Cairney, P. (2013). Standing on the shoulders of giants: How do we combine the insights of multiple theories in public policy studies? *Policy Studies Journal*, 41(1), 1–21.
- Cairney, P. (2015). Sabatier's advocacy coalition model of policy change. In E. Page, S. Balla, & M. Lodge (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the classics of public policy and administration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cairney, P., & Heikkilä, T. (2014). A comparison of theories of the policy process. In P. A. Sabatier & C. M. Weible (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 363–407). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Cashore, B., Hoberg, G., Howlett, M., Rayner, J., & Wilson, J. (2001). *In search of sustainability*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Fenger, M., & Klok, P. J. (2001). Interdependency, beliefs, and coalition behavior: A contribution to the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Sciences*, 34(2), 157–170.
- Heclo, H. (1978). Issue networks and the executive establishment. *Public Administration Concepts Cases*, 413, 46–57.
- Heikkilä, T., & Cairney, P. (2018). Comparison of theories of the policy process. The advocacy coalition framework: Foundations, evolution and future challenges. In C. Weible & P. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Henry, A., Ingold, K., Nohrstedt, D., & Weible, C. M. (2014). Policy change in comparative contexts. Applying the advocacy coalition framework outside of Western Europe and North America. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 16(4, SI), 299–312.
- Hoberg, G. (1996). Putting Ideas in their place: A response to "Learning and change in the British Columbia forest policy sector". *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 29(1), 135–144.
- Howlett, M., McConnell, A., & Perl, A. (2017). Moving policy theory forward: Connecting multiple stream and advocacy coalition frameworks to policy cycle models of analysis. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 76(1), 65–79.
- Jang, S., Weible, C. M., & Park, K. (2016). Policy processes in South Korea through the lens of the advocacy coalition framework. *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 9(3), 274–290.
- Jenkins-Smith, H., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C., & Ingold, K. (2018). The advocacy coalition framework: Foundations, evolution and future challenges. In C. Weible & P. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Jenkins-Smith, H., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C. M., & Sabatier, P. A. (2014). The advocacy coalition framework: Foundations, evolution, and ongoing research. In P. A. Sabatier & C. Weible (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Jenkins-Smith, H. C., & Sabatier, P. A. (1994). Evaluating the advocacy coalition framework. *Journal of Public Policy*, 14(2), 175–203.
- John, P. (2003). Is there life after policy streams, advocacy coalitions, and punctuations: Using evolutionary theory to explain policy change? *Policy Studies Journal*, 31(4), 481–498.
- Kemp, R., & Weehuizen, R. (2005). *Policy learning: What does it mean and how can we study it? PUBLIC project Innovation in the Public Sector*. Maastricht: MERIT, University of Maastricht.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Lertzman, K., Rayner, J., & Wilson, J. (1996a). Learning and change in the British Columbia forest policy sector: A consideration of Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 29(1), 111–133.
- Lertzman, K., Rayner, J., & Wilson, J. (1996b). On the place of ideas: A reply to George Hoberg. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 29(1), 145–148.
- Lindquist, E. A. (1992). Public managers and policy communities: Learning to meet new challenges. *Canadian Public Administration*, 35(2), 127–159.
- Nohrstedt, D., & Olofsson, K. (2016). A review of applications of the advocacy coalition framework in Swedish policy processes. *European Policy Analysis*, 2(2), 18–42.
- Nowlin, M. C. (2011). Theories of the policy process: State of the research and emerging trends. *Policy Studies Journal*, 39(s1), 41–60.
- Pierce, J. J., Peterson, H. L., Jones, M. D., Garrard, S. P., & Vu, T. (2017). There and back again: A tale of the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Studies Journal*, 45(S1), S13–S46.
- Rayner, J., Howlett, M., Wilson, J., Cashore, B., & Hoberg, G. (2001). Privileging the sub-sector: Critical sub-sectors and sectoral relationships in forest policy-making. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 2(3), 319–332.
- 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. A. (1988). An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein. *Policy Sciences*, 21(2), 129–168.

- Sabatier, P. A. (1998). The advocacy coalition framework: Revisions and relevance for Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 5(1), 98–130.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1999). *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Sabatier, P. (2007). *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Sabatier, P., & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1993). The advocacy coalition framework: Assessment, revisions and implications for scholars and practitioners. In P. Sabatier & H. Jenkins-Smith (Eds.), *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach* (pp. 211–235). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1999). The advocacy coalition framework: An assessment. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P., & Weible, C. (2007). The advocacy coalition framework: Innovations and clarifications. In P. Sabatier & C. Weible (Eds.), *Theories of the policy process* (2nd ed., pp. 189–222). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P. A., & Weible, C. M. (Eds.). (2014). *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Schlager, E., & Blomquist, W. (1996). A comparison of three emerging theories of the policy process. *Political Research Quarterly*, 49(3), 651–672.
- Sotirov, M., & Memmler, M. (2012). The advocacy coalition framework in natural resource policy studies—Recent experiences and further prospects. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 16, 51–64.
- van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2007). VOS: A new method for visualizing similarities between objects. In R. Decker & H. J. Lenz (Eds.), *Advances in data analysis: Proceedings of the 30th annual conference of the Gesellschaft für Klassifikation e.V., Freie Universität Berlin* (pp. 299–306). Berlin: Springer.
- van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2010). Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. *Scientometrics*, 84(2), 523–538. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3>.
- Weible, C. M., & Nohrstedt, D. (2012). The advocacy coalition framework: Coalitions, learning, and policy change. In E. Araral, S. Fritzen, M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, & X. Wu (Eds.), *Handbook of public policy* (pp. 125–137). New York: Routledge.
- Weible, C., & Sabatier, P. (2018). *Theories of the policy process* (4th ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Weible, C. M., Sabatier, P. A., & McQueen, K. (2009). Themes and variations: Taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Studies Journal*, 37(1), 121–140.
- Wellstead, A. (1996). *The role of the advocacy coalition framework in understanding forest policy change: Alberta and Ontario*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Toronto.
- Wellstead, A. M., & Stedman, R. C. (2007). Coordinating future adaptation policies across Canadian natural resources. *Climate Policy*, 7(1), 29–45.
- Wilson, J. (1987). Forest conservation in British Columbia, 1935–85: Reflections on a barren political debate. BC Studies. *The British Columbian Quarterly*, 76, 3–32.
- Zafonte, M., & Sabatier, P. (1998). Shared beliefs and imposed interdependencies as determinants of ally networks in overlapping subsystems. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 10(4), 473–505.
- Zahariadis, N. (1998). Comparing three lenses of policy choice. *Policy Studies Journal*, 26(3), 434–448.