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An Analytic Framework for Public Policy Advocates

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Introduction

Public policy advocacy is any attempt to alter the flow of events on issues related to the public life of a community. By this definition, it happens in everything from a conflict over the hours at the public swimming pool to a dispute over global warming. The people who engage in policy advocacy include paid professionals and a far larger number who do so as individual citizens and members of organized groups.

As with any such activity, some people are better at it than others. They make better decisions about what to do and when to do it. The authors know from personal experience that people can learn to be more effective if given enough time, and for several years we have been searching for ways for beginners to move up the learning curve more quickly and for practitioners to benefit more from their experience.

There are many textbooks that explain how to analyze a policy problem or evaluate a policy proposal, but relatively few about how to promote or resist a change. To fill this gap, we studied research from social scientists and compared it with what we have learned from talented advocates working at the local, state, national and international level. The Analytic Framework is our effort to synthesize the best ideas from both worlds.

The Analytic Framework will feel awkward and even artificial at first, but it will become less so with repetition. Scientists who study how people learn find that we have two processes for making decisions: An intuitive mode in which judgments and decisions are made automatically and rapidly, and a controlled mode, which is conscious, deliberate and slower.[1] To improve the ability to make good decisions under pressure, a person needs employ self-awareness (paying attention to one's patterns of thought and

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[1] Daniel Kahneman, "A Perspective on Judgment and Choice," 58 American Psychologist 697-720 (2003).

action), intention (a desire to improve), reflection (evaluating results from experience), and practice when they have time to be in "controlled mode." The Analytic Framework is a tool to help advocates develop habits that will improve their effectiveness.

Summary of the Analytic Framework:

The Analytic Framework is presented as a series of questions. The questions need not be answered in any strict order, nor can any one of them be answered fully before moving on to the next. Advocates are necessarily operating with some kind of assumptions each topic; asking the questions is a way to assess whether the current answer is an unexamined assumption or a well-considered opinion.

1. What's the plan? At any given moment advocates are implementing a strategy. The strategy may be articulated explicitly, or it may be an automatic reflex, but it contains the following elements, whether they have been consciously chosen or repeated out of habit: (1) some combination of *tactics,* (2) *stories* about the conflict or issue and its meaning, (3) messages to *targets* intended to generate some form of (4) *motivation* for the targets to think, feel and act in ways that guide the flow of events towards a (5) *preferred path*. Organizations, like people, can lose sight of their original objectives by reacting to the pressures of the moment. Effective advocates strive to be self-aware and intentional, and to frequently review current strategies in light of their mission and the shifting context.

2. Who am I and what am I doing here? Wise advocates know to ask themselves: "Am I an independent leader or a representative of a group? Am I a prophet who can speak his or her own mind, or will my words be attributed to others? Is this a job or a cause to which I am personally committed? What are my value commitments, the boundaries that I will not cross even if others want me to?

3. *Who is "we?"* Policy advocacy is a group sport, and individual advocates are connected to a "we." Whether it is an informal group, a large formal coalition or something in between, "we" has a socially constructed identity with certain features: A name, a history, a mission, an issue or cause, shared perceptions about causal relationships and how the world works, a deep core of beliefs that cannot be compromised, and a boundary—there are many subjects and issues outside the scope of the group's positions and interests. As the size and diversity of an issue-oriented coalition grows, the scope narrows because what participants have in common is more limited.

4. What do we want? The wants, needs and interests of organizations and groups are both substantive and institutional. Most groups have a mission and a vision that articulates their value priorities and the outcomes they want in the long run. In the short

run they have positions on policy instruments, procedural issues and other objectives that define their preferred path. In additions, each group or organization also has important institutional needs including constituency development, media attention, fund raising, and morale.

5. What's the situation? Advocacy occurs in some sort of context that involves various parties, stakeholders, decision makers and onlookers. The initial encounter with a policy conflict can be confusing, as events, claims, characters and acronyms are tossed around at random. A good way to develop a sense of what is happening is to start with the immediate event or controversy and construct a timeline of events leading up to the current moment and what is likely to follow in the immediate future. For example: if a bill is about to be signed by President, it was necessarily preceded by bill introduction, sub-committee hearings and markup, full committee action, a floor vote in the House and Senate and a negotiation leading to a single bill that was approved by both; after the bill is signed, implementation will require executive agencies and other Congressional committees to react in the future.

As the timeline gets complicated and crowded, it is usually helpful add columns or rows to separate the "policy stream" from the problem stream (where real outcomes are happening) and the political stream (elections, appointments, emergence of political movements and swings in public opinion). To ground yourself, construct a timeline of reports about the issue and major events stretching back several years, before "zooming in" to examine in detail the situation that everyone's attention at the moment.

6. Who are the players? Each event or situation draws the attention of a certain number of decision makers, advocates, interest groups, academic experts, journalists and other onlookers. Look for other situations on your timeline and any others that touch on similar issues and add people and groups from these other situations to create a more comprehensive list of actors who are influencing your situation, or who might become involved at a later time. As you construct the list, try to identify sources of the power or influence that each participant commands. What are their preferences? Which players are allies, which are always at odds? Who has prevailed in the past?

7. What are the rules? Policy issues come up in settings that have some kind of structure. Fights over logging sales on the National Forests are played out through public documents and hearings controlled by the U.S. Forest Service, with occasional interruption from federal courts in the western states. Adjustments in the money supply by the Federal Reserve are done through a secretive process preceded by a predictable round of public debates and formal reporting. Agency responses to alleged child abuse are controlled by policies and rules set by state legislation and state courts.

The participants in each situation are constrained by three types of variables: Formal rules, cultural norms, and biophysical constraints. Lawyers tend to focus on the formal *rules,* which is important. However, as any advocate who has worked with the state

legislatures of both Idaho and California will attest, each place has a distinctive culture with norms about the kind of conduct that is expected. Biophysical conditions include constraints such as budget limits and the schedules of the participants, along with factors beyond human control, such as climate, geography and ecological processes.

8. What are the sides? Journalists who cover politics make frequent reference to the "sides" in a conflict, such a pro-life and pro-choice. Although people and groups vary enormously in their styles and preferences, political scientists argue that a mature policy arena or subsystem tends to Political scientists have long observed that the work of government occurs within "subsystems" most of the time. Most of the decisions and most of the arguments about policy occur among a group of insiders that include legislative committees and staff, sub-cabinet agencies, interest groups, experts, think tanks, journalists, bloggers, academics and other specialists who pay attention to what is happening and engage frequently.

Not surprisingly, people are attracted to others who share policy preferences and beliefs about how the world works. And they form elaborate networks—*sides.* The most compelling models from political science characterize these alliance structures as belief systems rather than mere interest-based coalitions. And beliefs are more resistant to outside attack or change than rational calculations about benefits and costs.

9. What do "they" want? The other participants and stakeholder groups involved in an issue or conflict typically have an agenda of policy positions and demands, and it is necessary to keep track of them, but not all of them have the same weight or priority. Underneath the positions are the actual motivations, substantive goals and value priorities, and institutional needs for attention, fund raising, membership and status.

A clear-minded assessment of opponents is very hard, especially when they are treating *us* as if we were dogmatic, ideological, deceptive and motivated by the darkest of intentions. However, advocates who get below the rhetoric to understand the wants, interests and needs of "enemies" can adjust strategy or positions to soften resistance and (sometimes) uncover discover common ground.

10) What if? In the long run, the possible strategies are infinite because the potential combination of events and is infinite. Strategic choices are made in the short run. Given the flow of events in the policy, problem and political streams, the positions and power of the competing sides, the resources and priorities of the parties and the past history of interactions, the actual options on the table at any given moment will be relatively few in number. At every important node in the decision-making process, advocates need to ask "what if" as it relates to their policy preferences and their strategies. If our current policy preferences were enacted, would they deliver what we really want? If we pursue one strategy over another, how will others react? Based on their past patterns, what are other actors likely to do? How likely is it that events in the problem or political stream could alter the current balance of power or priorities of the Participants?

Back to Question 1: Should we adapt our positions or our strategy? Like individuals, organizations make the mistake of focusing to what feels urgent but not important to their long run goals, and fall into bad habits because of the pressures of daily life. The Analytic Framework invites a reexamination of strategies that have failed to produce results. For example, could we shift the action to a forum with more favorable rules? Could we break out of the existing "us" vs. "them" stalemate by shifting the focus to such an extent that "we" includes elements from both sides, triggering collaboration in place of competition? Do we need to change the "story" that we are telling in a way that mobilizes energy from our own allies while dampening resistance from the opposition? Do we need to rethink our "preferred path" and come up with a different solution altogether rather than to beat our heads against a brick wall?

Rigorous self-assessment is rarely fun. For any advocate who is asking other people for time, energy and money that could be devoted to other matters, it is an ethical requirement.

The Framework in greater detail:

1) What's the plan? A well-developed strategy has at least five components: *tactics*, a *story* about a conflict, a *preferred path* leading towards an improvement or resolution of the conflict, *targets* that have resources, power or authority to influence what is happening, and something that serves as a *motivation or incentive* for them to do what is needed.[2] The answers to each question in the Analytic Framework will suggest ways to test and modify the existing strategy.

2) Who am I? What am I doing here? Each person in a public policy situation has a role, a point of view and a place to stand. Unlike a novelist or a historian, people involved in the action cannot achieve the perspective of an omniscient observer. Assume, for example, a conflict arises over a proposal to tear down historic houses in a college town to build a new dormitory. If someone were to ask, "what's happening," they would get a very different answer from the provost of the college, the mayor, the president of the neighborhood association and the reporter covering the story.

Like actors in a play, advocates have roles to play. Outside of government, some people take on the role of prophet, an inner-directed person who speaks from the heart

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[2] See Conner, Roger and Ben Shaine, "The Building Blocks of Strategic Policy Advocacy."

without regard for the consequences. Prophets don't worry about making people mad, while an advocate who is a representative of a group or company has to be more diplomatic. Other common roles include leader, academic expert, enraged populist, wise elder, executive, opinionated columnist and even-handed journalist. Participants inside of government can be advocates, but self-restraint is required when they are supposed to be judge-like decision makers considering all of the evidence.

One's role governs the expectations of others. For example, low-level staff and interns are expected to follow instructions without asking a lot of questions; the morning of a demonstration to block logging trucks from entering an old-growth forest is not a good time for a new employee to start a conversation about pacifist theory or rigged research on global warming. An journalist who puts her own opinions into a news story or a company lobbyist who criticizes his employer in conversation with a Congressional staff person could end up without a job.

Roles are about the expectations of others. Finding a "place to stand" involves introspection. Am I a true believer or a skeptic? Am I a committed member of the group or an outsider? Am I reserving judgment or have I bought in wholeheartedly? Is this a short-term experiment or the expression of a long-term commitment? Most important of all, what are the bright lines of ethical behavior that I will not cross, even at the risk of sanctions or loss of employment?

Question 3: Who is "we"? Advocates represent other people and organizational entities, and need to keep clearly in mind who is included in the scope of their responsibility and who is not. For lawyers in private firms who represent individuals or corporations, this is straightforward. In the case of an association, there are typically board and committees that guide policy judgments. For citizen-advocates and those employed by NGOs the calculus is more complicated. The mission statements of NGOs are written in very broad terms so that the beneficiaries are broad demographic groups (*e.g.* women, Latinos, persons with mental illness) or the "public interest" in a single issue (*e.g.* nuclear power, public lands management or obesity). Policy is is made by senior staff in consultation with a self-perpetuating board, and the scope of work and tactics are heavily influenced by major donors and foundations; the members and the people who are supposed to benefit rarely if ever have any means express any disagreement.[3] The staff and board of these NGOs have a special responsibility to constantly re-examine the link between the policies being advocated and the interests of the group or interests they represent.

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[3] One notable to this general rule is the National Rifle Association, where it is routine for insurgent groups to nominate and elect board members in opposition to the senior staff's policies.

Advocates also need to be explicit and to reflect on the substantive boundaries that separate "we" from everybody else. Where "we" is a membership organization, people have joined because they support its mission, values and positions about a defined subject, senior staff and the board are inevitably asked to expand for fund raising purposes or to support coalitions working on related issues, and the resulting "Mission Creep" can blur the organization's image or cause a loss of members.

Advocates for whom "we" is a coalition have a different set of challenges. It is often the case that one or two organizations end up providing the money or staff of a coalition. In the absence of clear agreements about who is expected to pay and who has authority to speak for the coalition, debilitating conflict can ensue. Where "we" is a coalition of organizations drawn from a single Advocacy Coalition, the leaders can afford to operate with considerable flexibility because the partners share value priorities, perceptions of causal relationships, beliefs about the efficacy of policy instruments and a worldview. When coalitions of "strange bedfellows" are formed around a narrow policy position on which the parties agree, notwithstanding their differences on other issues. This kind of diversity is powerful but fragile; coordination and management of the group's public actions will rely less on trust and more on explicit ground rules and procedures. For this reason, diverse coalitions tend to use tactics such as joint public statements rather than an ongoing coalition with a broad mandate.

Question 4: What do we want? Advocates spend much of their time promoting positions on to bills, rules, agency action and the like, and it is easy to forget that hearings, press conferences, legislation and agency rulings are means to an end. At the end of the day, what matters is whether the mission and goals of the organization, coalition or movement are advanced. An advocate needs a deep understanding of the constituency's deepest wants and needs so that the "preferred path" of short term objectives is aligned with fundamental goals.

Question 5: What is the Situation? We have found two frameworks to be particularly helpful to understand how the immediate situation has developed and where it is headed: The IAD Framework from Elinor Ostrom and colleagues, and Multiple Streams from John Kingdon.

The IAD Framework suggests that public policy and outcomes unfold through a series of "events" occurring at specific places and times, most of which are embedded in "Action Situations," the term for series of linked events with a beginning, middle and end[4] such as a legislative campaign or a contest over the issuance of a construction permit for a

[4] The term "Action Situation" comes from the Institutional Analysis Development (IAD) Framework developed by Elinor Ostrom. See below.

nuclear plant. The IAD Framework revolves around the decisions of people who make and implement policies. Kingdon's Multiple Streams model adds a layer of useful complexity. He argues that events flow in three streams that are separate most of the time: the "policy stream" where specialists develop policy solutions and debate the merits of each; the "political stream" of elections, appointments, emergent political movements and shifts in public opinion occur; and the "problem stream," where real world outcomes occur despite human efforts to control them—unemployment, forest fires, cancer rates or an AIDS epidemic.

To Illustrate how the IAD Framework and Multiple Streams can be used together to analyze a situation, consider the example of the World Trade Center attack. Prior to 9/11 there had been few recent terrorist acts against US interests and none on American soil (the problem stream), and the issue of terrorism did not show up in election campaigns or public opinion polls (the political stream). As a result, the policy specialists concerned with possible legislation or executive branch activities (the policy stream) were laboring in obscurity. The 9/11 attacks—an event in the problem stream—had massive repercussions in the political stream; Members of Congress (Actors in the Action Arena known as Congress) needed to act. Within a week a bill was introduced in both House and Senate. The multiple Action Situations normally required to produce a bill were dramatically compressed. The usual process from conception to final passage takes months or even years. The USA Patriot Act was signed into law on October 26, thereby setting in motion a number of other Action Situations.

A good way to identify the flow of Action Situations is to construct a timeline beginning with events. Look at the news, the web, documents, newsletters and reports floating around the office. When in doubt, put it in. As people tell their stories, make it a habit to ask, "let me see, when was that?" "What else was happening about that same time?" "Who else was involved?"

Next, underline the most significant events and look at what happened before and after until the Action Situations appear. For example, if you find news coverage of a street protest about a bill, you know there where sub-committee meetings and interest group lobbying that preceded the demonstration and that some sort of action on the bill is likely to follow.

In short order, the isolated chunks of data will form themselves into a story about how the instant situation arose and where it is headed. For example:

> On December 10, 2010, the news programs in Nashville, Tennessee were filled with accounts of noisy demonstrations in front of the Administration building at Belmont University (an event). It turns out that the women's basketball coach had resigned after revealing that she was pregnant and in a long-term relationship with a same-sex partner. National groups assailed the university for alleged anti-gay discrimination. The president at first denied that the university

> discriminated, but then confirmed that the coach had been pressured to resign. The Action Situation escalated with student protests, denunciations from national organizations and emergency board meetings. The crisis atmosphere continued until the Board adopted a formal non-discrimination policy and the coach accepted a sizable financial offer. People familiar with the University now refer to the entire sequence of events as "the Lisa Howe situation"—a prototypical Action Situation.

Identifying Action Situations helps to expose gaps in readily available information. *To illustrate:*

> Assume that you hear about a demonstration at a nuclear power plant. That was an event. What other events was it connected with? Were there a series of demonstrations across the country as part of a campaign to block a bill in Congress? Was it connected with a local fight over renewal of the plant's operating permit? Or was the local labor union seizing on the environmental connection as a bargaining ploy? The event—the demonstration—is one piece of a puzzle. The puzzle is the Action Situation.

In the IAD Framework, Ostrom uses the Action Situation concept like Google Maps. Zoom out, and an entire election campaign can be seen as two Situations, the primary and the general election. Zoom in and each day's schedule can be seen as an Action Situation with a different set of Participants and constraints.

In the absence of publicity, information about the important Action Situations can be hard to find. In this case, search out and insert authoritative *decisions* into the timeline. In the case of a power plant, for example, the list of decisions might include: a) a state law was passed that required hearings before the Public Services Commission can approve new plant construction; b) The utility filed an application with the Commission under the new law; c) the commission decided that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was not required and that a less extensive Environmental Assessment would suffice; d) the commission approved the application; e) an environmental group sued ; f) a court issued an injunction and ordered an EIS; g) the utility prepared an EIS, after which the commission again approved the construction permit; h) the environmental group sued again, which held up the financing; i) the court rejected the citizen suit; j) the appeals court ruled against environmentalists; k) the banks agreed to issue bonds to finance the utility; l) the company applied for and received an operating permit after construction was completed.

Each of these decisions was connected to an Action Situation. In his classic short work on Policy Analysis, John Bardach says that the analyst should go from "people to paper, and from paper to people to fill in the blanks around each of them.

Question Six: Who are the Players?

Start with a list of the most obvious participants, then look at current Action Situation from Question five and add the names of individuals and groups with their affiliations. It is not necessary to look at every Action Situation from the past. The active Participants and Players tend to be drawn from the same pool of Actors. Once your list of organizations, businesses, government agencies and coalitions stops growing, the initial scan is almost complete.

Having identified the individual and groups involved as advocates, further analysis is needed to identify those who will become involved at some point by virtue of their formal authority. Look at the timeline for:

> *Decisions:* Note past decisions, and any upcoming decisions around which people are organizing.
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> *Forums*: Decisions are made in *forums* such as offices of public agencies, legislatures, courts, city councils, task forces or committees. In the absence of some form of intervention, what will be the forum for the upcoming decision, the one that is the focus of everyone's attention? Are there other Forums that will follow, or to which the issue could be shifted? What is the process for appeals, if any?
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> *Participants-in-Positions:* Looking at decisions and forums, a specialized category of Players comes into view: participants whose office or position gives them authority to decide, participate, provide input or review the final decision. The precise location of decision-making authority is often ambiguous, contested or diffuse, in which case the advocates spend considerable effort finding out who has the authority to schedule a meeting, commission a report, issue a contract or permit, review or reverse a decision once it is made. Knowing the personal inclinations of these individuals is as important as knowing the substance of legislation.
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> *Brokers:* Some players operate in the space between the sides. These are the brokers and peacemakers. Even if they are associated with one of the competing factions, they have the ability to be honest brokers when the time comes to de-escalate a conflict or break a stalemate.

After this exercise you should have a list of the principal organizations, agencies, individuals and groups involved in past Action Situations, the Situations that will come next in the usual sequence of things and other Actors who might become involved in the future.

Each participant has preferences and "resources of influence" or power. Power comes from many sources: people, money, ideas, authority, organization, and disregard for respectability can be sources of power. "People" refers to the ability to mobilize large numbers; money includes all of the things money can buy (access, lobbyists, experts, ads); "ideas" refers to expert knowledge, communications ability and analytical prowess; authority includes moral authority as well decision making power; and willingness to violate community norms about the level of antagonism or commitment to truthfulness can give one party an advantage over timid participants who want to avoid nasty conflicts.

By looking at the players, their resources and past outcomes from Action Situations in your timeline, patterns will emerge that show which players have enough power to control or shape outcomes and what happens when they get involved.

Question Seven: What are the rules? In every Action Situation there is a structure of some sort that defines the available options and constrains the Actors. The IAD Framework states that the Action Situations follow settled patterns defined by the Rules, Conditions of Community and Biophysical Conditions. The following figure shows how these factors connect to the Action Situations:

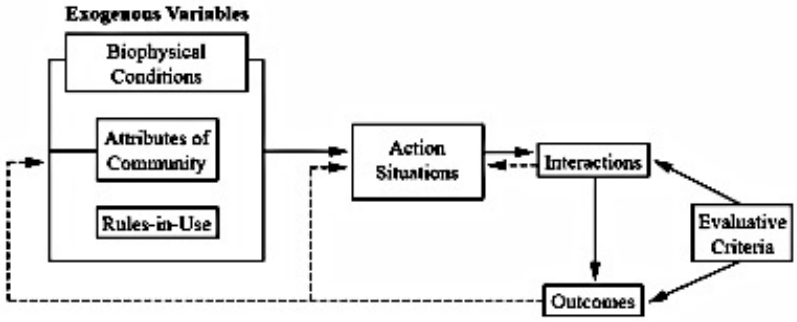

Figure 1. Basic Components of the IAD Framework.
Source: E. Ostrom (2010, p. 646).

The Rules-in-Use determine both procedures and substantive criteria for decisions. Each Forum has formal and informal rules about who must, may, and may not participate, substantive criteria for legitimate decisions and an order in which actions must occur. Each process has some opportunities for input, influence and leverage from the outside, though some are more open than others.

The Attributes of Community include norms, expectations and culture. The Biophysical conditions include budgetary limits and the cost of goods and services, space and time, and the biological, physical, chemical and other material variables that operate as givens.

Question Eight*: *What are the sides?

The list of participants in a big issue (and sometimes even a small one) can grow large and unwieldy. To reduce the complexity to a manageable level, look for networks and virtual coalitions. Even in the absence of umbrella associations or formal alliances, people and groups tend to move in packs. When bills are introduced or reports are announced, reactions tend to split along predictable lines. Academic scholars and consulting groups have many complicated models to analyze interest groups, but the one we find most useful is the Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by political scientist Paul Sabatier. Sabatier finds that most mature policy conflicts devolve into two to five implicit, unspoken sides, which he refers to as "advocacy coalitions." Advocacy Coalitions have the following characteristics:

- They have been around for awhile
- Experienced participants refer to them by name (*e.g.,* developers vs. environmentalists)
- Their component groups and individuals have similar reactions to legislative developments, events, reports or proposals
- They echo each other's facts and talking points on their web sites, in news releases, and at public meetings
- They appear to act in a coordinated fashion despite the absence of formal affiliations.

Sabatier argues that Advocacy Coalitions are held together by perceptions of causal relationships, value priorities, a worldview, and non-negotiable policy positions that he calls "policy core beliefs."

Applying the Advocacy Coalition Framework, identify the "sides." Which groups are at the heart of the coalition? Which positions are the most frequently defended with strident rhetoric ("policy core beliefs")? Which are mentioned less frequently or with more nuanced explanation (peripheral policy beliefs).

One of Sabatier's key insights is that most of the Players involved in an issue are aligned with to one of the competing Advocacy Coalitions, *including people inside of government, journalists, scientists, and others who do not think of themselves as "advocates."* Some are more strongly connected than others, but everyone has perceptions and beliefs about how the world works, which values matter most and a worldview, and they will give more credence to people who agree with them. Using this lens, how many Players and participants can you assign to one of the Advocacy Coalitions?

To effectively engage an Advocacy Coalition it helps to understand them *as they understand themselves.* What do they call themselves? How do they frame "the problem" when talking to each other? What are their perceptions of causal relationships?

What policy beliefs are core and which are peripheral? What are their value priorities and worldview? What are the stories they use to explain cause and effect, benefits and costs, victims and villains, good and evil, right and wrong and how the world works?

Taking a hard look at our *own* side's story is hard enough. After all, every advocate uses a certain amount of exaggeration, caricature, half-truths and card stacking, and after a number of repetitions their story feels like "truth." Understanding "their" stories requires even more effort. Donald Schön encourages advocates to enter imaginatively into the space of the "other" to experience their story from the inside—a process he calls "frame reflection—as a precondition for understanding them.

Which of the Advocacy Coalitions is dominant? Sabatier finds that the general direction of policy within a subsystem tends to be stable over time because one Advocacy Coalition routinely exercises more influence over both substantive and procedural decisions, thereby strengthening its hold on the system as a whole. Understanding the dynamics of the subsystem should guide strategic decisions of the advocates involved. Those in the Majority faction will want to keep decisions within the subsystem; those in the weaker Coalition need to attract attention from outsiders to alter the balance of power. Those in the stronger Coalition need to be wary of overplaying their advantage in a way that mobilizes others, while those in the weaker Coalition may look for policy proposals on the margin of the opposition's belief system until circumstances change. All of the Coalitions will be wise to attend to the political stream to get or keep friendly elected and appointed officials in office.

Question Nine: What do "they" want? If Ostrom is correct that advocacy typically occurs in Action Situations where the Participants hold conflicting positions about the decisions to be made; and if Sabatier is correct that the Participants in an Action Situation will be members of Advocacy Coalitions with differing beliefs about causal relationships, value priorities and worldview; it should not be surprising that Action Situations so frequently devolve into an us vs. them contest in which the more powerful Advocacy Coalition prevails most of the time.

While this outcome is commonplace, it is not inevitable. Sabatier explains that people caught up in a sustained conflict tend perceive the other sides as more extreme and dogmatic than they actually are, and to attribute negative or malicious intentions to "their" group members while attributing positive motivations to "ours."

He calls this the "Devil Shift," and he finds that the perceptions are often inaccurate and those who fall into the trap will miss many opportunities. If an advocate can see the other as flawed human beings rather objects, and if s/he can look beyond the rhetoric and the positions to understand the wants, interests and needs beneath them, different strategies may appear. For example, advocates in the weaker Coalition may be able to find a policy position that provides benefits to some in the opposing Coalition and pursue a "divide and conquer" strategy; they may find proposals that advance their own core

interests that are in the "secondary beliefs" of the more powerful Coalition; they can reframe the issue so that "we" includes elements of the other side, setting up a collaborative, rather than competitive process; and they can uncover "win-win" policy solution that address the needs of multiple participants without ritual warfare and pressure games.

Some divisions cannot be bridged, and many decisions will be determined by power overcoming power. In our experience, progress is more often achieved when advocates discover paths that do not require any of the parties to abandon their core beliefs or to "lose." To expand the available options requires *advocates to see the wants and needs of the other participants through their own eyes and not become blinded by assumptions about their malevolent motives.*

Question Ten: What if? This section under development)

Back to Question 1: Should we adapt or change our strategy?

Strategic Advocates know "who is we" and understand the needs of the people in their organization or constituency. They have a good working knowledge of events in the problem stream, the policy stream and the political stream. They "play the movie forwards" and construct "worst case" as well as "best case" scenarios. They study the wants, interests and needs of the other sides as well as their own. They are realistic about their own resources of influence, they do not exaggerate the venality or power of others (the "Devil Shift"), and they spend as much time thinking about to engage and defuse resistance as to how to build support.

This kind of thinking will influence every element of strategic advocacy discussed earlier.

For example:

> Lawyers in the Civil Rights movement understood that the legislatures were stacked against them because ballot access was denied, so they shifted the forum to the federal courts.
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> Anti-smoking advocates spent just as much time pressuring movie producers as they did lobbying Congress, because they understood that breaking the cultural link between smoking and sexual attractiveness was more important than changing the law.
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> When the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 created a window of opportunity for new regulations on off-shore drilling, environmentalists reallocated money and staff time away from other priorities, while oil companies dropped their "just say no" strategy and expressed a sudden

desire to sit down and work out compromises with lawmakers on regulatory reform.

On obesity, two opposing camps—anti-obesity groups and fat acceptance groups—are using different frames. Anti-obesity groups define obesity as an illness or epidemic caused by individual irresponsibility and food producers. Conversely, fat acceptance groups steer clear of the term obesity and define fatness as a body diversity issue, referring to the national obsession with fatness, as evidence of an unhealthy obsession with body image. To support their claims, fat acceptance groups cite evidence and statistics to demonstrate that fatness is genetic and not really the cause of health problems.

Because of their different definitions of the social problem, each group offers competing solutions. Anti-obesity groups recommend programs to reduce obesity and its associated health risks; conversely, fat acceptance groups urge non-discrimination and acceptance.

To gain media access, the parties employ four different frames: (1) fatness as body diversity, (2) obesity as risky behavior, (3) obesity as disease, and (4) obesity as epidemic. The media have predominantly picked up the "obesity as epidemic" frame and, to a lesser extent, the "obesity as risky behavior" frame. Fat acceptance groups are in the minority at present.[5]

Review

Policy advocacy is any intentional effort attempt to alter the flow of events in a group, a community or a place. Advocacy is *effective* to the extent that it alters the flow of events in the desired direction. Because advocates are compelled to make many of their critical decisions using intuition rather than deliberation, it is important to identify good tools and processes to assess situations and understand the available options, to practice these tools and processes in every situation where time allows.

The Analytic Framework provides ten questions or steps that will help advocates become more self-aware and intentional. These steps need to be practiced over and

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[5] From "Using Public Will to Secure Public Will," by Lori Ann Post, et al, in GOVERNANCE REFORM UNDER REAL-WORLD CONDITIONS, Sina Odugbemi and Thomas Jacobson, Editors, at 120 – 121.

over until they become part of the advocate's repertoire of intuitive responses in high-pressure situations.

These questions are:

1. What's the plan? An advocacy strategy consists of *tactics* that tell a *story* and generate *motivation* for *targets* to act and influence the course of events towards a *preferred path.*

2. Who am I and what am I doing here? Am I acting alone or as a representative? How does this relate to my personal goals? Are there limits on what I will do?

3. *Who is "we?"* Is the group formal or informal, defined or loose? Who makes decisions about policy? To whom am I responsible? What are the beliefs about causal relationships that "we" share?

4. What do we want? What are the core goals that are supposed to guide us? What are our positions in the immediate situation? Which of them negotiable? How can our strategy and tactics help us secure media, members, money and other resources?

5. What's the situation? Which events are immediately in front of me? What led up to the current Action Situation? What is likely to follow? What other Situations that could influence the one I am focused on?

6. Who are the players? Who are the advocates and stakeholders now engaged in my situation? Who are he decision makers? Who else might become involved, based on past experience? What are their preferences and resources of influence? Looking at comparable events from the past, what are the odds?

7. What are the rules? What are the formal procedures and the lawful criteria for the decision makers to follow? What are the norms that I need be aware of? What are the fiscal and material constraints everyone is taking for granted?

8. What are the sides? What are the Advocacy Coalitions operating around me? What are the beliefs about causal relationships, value priorities and policy positions that hold each of them together? Is my issue frozen in an adversarial posture or fluid?

9. What do "they" want? Is there common ground, or is war the proper metaphor? Do I understand their goals from their point of view, or am I caught up in the "Devil Shift?" Are there differences in their Advocacy Coalition that we could exploit?

10) What if? When we play the movie forwards, would our preferred policies deliver the outcomes we deeply desire? What are the other parties likely to do? Could the strategy

we are pursuing succeed under the best of circumstances? How could we raise the odds?

And the last step is, do it again . . . and again . . . and again.

Credits and bibliography

We developed the Analytic Framework by combining our personal experience with the writings of academic scholars that we found especially helpful, especially the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework of Elinor Ostrom and colleagues, the Advocacy Coalition Framework by Paul Sabatier and colleagues, John Kingdon's Multiple Streams and Donald Schön's Frame Reflection.

Ostrom, E. *Understanding institutional diversity*. Princeton Univ Pr, 2005.

Sabatier, P. A, and H. C Jenkins-Smith. POLICY CHANGE AND LEARNING: AN ADVOCACY COALITION APPROACH. Westview Pr, 1993.

Schön, Donald A., FRAME REFLECTION: TOWARD THE RESOLUTION OF INTRACTABLE POLICY CONTROVERSIES, Basic Books, 1994, summarized at http://www.beyondintractability.org/booksummary/10218/.

And for an overview of the main frameworks for policy analysis,
Sabatier, Paul A, ed. THEORIES OF THE POLICY PROCESS. 2nd ed. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2007.

Definitions

Event	Something that happens at a given place and time. Examples: A phone call, meeting, dinner, introduction of a bill, panel discussion, demonstration, publication of a report, issuance of a press release.s
Action Situation	A social interaction between two or more Participants defined by formal or informal rules; typically includes multiple events with a beginning, middle and end. Examples: Social life: a party, a relationship, a wilderness camping trip. Economic life: Returning a defective computer and getting your money back; buying a car. Policy: Agency decision-making process to approve power plant construction; election campaign; Park Service purchase of an "in-holding."
Nested Action Situations	The concept of an Action Situation is like a video camera with a "zoom" function. For example, when a professor is designing a course, s/he will need to zoom "in" and treat each class as an Action Situation that is linked to all the others. A student who is planning for a whole year would need to zoom "out" and treat each course as an "Action Situation." An hour is nested in a day, which is nested in a month, which is nested in a year, which is nested in a decade, and so on.
Participant	An individual, organizational entity, or a group that engages directly with other participants in an event or situation. Examples of participants might be: A class at Evergreen College (group), Governor Schwarzenegger (individual), Sierra Club (organizational entity), and California Air Resources Board (organizational entity).
Participants-in-Positions	Participants with Decision-making authority that derives from their formal role in their organization.
Group	Multiple individuals or organizational entities that act in a coordinated way so that they can be treated as one for purposes of analysis. Examples: local environmental coalition; developers; ad hoc coalition for recycling
Actor	In a given Action Situation, Participants are those who are involved. Actors are all those who could become involved based on an analysis of other Action Situations, analysis of affected stakeholders.
Forum	Organized setting in which decisions are made, such as a legislative body, a court, a public agency, a permanent or ad hoc task force or committee, or some other structured process.
Decision	A formal, public act that has the effect of saying "*you* may, may not, must;" or "*we* will, will not, may."
Rule	The "rules of the game." A generally accepted formal or informal regulation, instruction, precept or principle that directs and constrains action.
Action Arena	Equivalent to a "policy-subsystem." A social space with many Action Situations that interact to produce outcomes. Examples: A local school system; a legislature; automobile safety regulation; foster

	care.

We define power as a resource that can influence the way people think or behave. Accepting this definition for purposes of discussion, a central source of power in any public policy situation is what people *perceive or believe* to be valid interpretations of the Constitution, enacted laws, administrative rules, pre-existing policies and precedents.

For example, given the Separation of Powers under the U.S. Constitution as currently understood, President Barack Obama had the power to send U.S. warplanes to bomb Libya without a Declaration of War; in order to stop him, a majority of members of Congress would have needed to vote against him, a vote that could be blocked by the Congressional leaders in either the House or the Senate. By contrast, it has become an accepted interpretation of the rules of procedure in the U.S. Senate that a single Senator may impose his or her will on the entire country by placing an anonymous hold on a Presidential nomination.

The point of these examples is that the structure of the decision making process determines points of leverage where influence can be brought to bear. Power—resources that can influence what people think they may, must, must not or should do—comes from many sources, the most important of which are people, money, ideas, authority and the *status quo*.

By “people” we mean perceptions about the opinions of others and those of organized groups. Individuals in public life are generally reluctant to make decisions that they imagine would fly in the face of public opinion, subject them to ridicule by knowledgeable observers or arouse organized constituencies.

“Money” is shorthand for wealth in all of its forms.

Ideas are also a source of power. “Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.” Studies, reports and data analysis carry weight. Equally important is framing an issue in a way that links it to the zeitgeist; if and when that happens, wise advocates take the reality of the situation into account.

“Authority” comes in many forms. Experts, Blue Ribbon Commissions and wise elders command respect. Individuals like Mother Theresa can carry *moral* authority that can trump public opinion or wealth.

Another source of power is the *status quo.* Advocates who seek to change prevailing policies or alter the existing pattern of behavior have a greater challenge than those who want to leave things as they are. Other things being equal, the Advocacy Coalition that prefers to keep existing laws, policies or rules in place has a substantial advantage.

For example:

> Lawyers in the Civil Rights movement understood that the courts would not be a resource of influence in the battle against segregation until the Supreme Court doctrine of "separate but equal" was reversed; their legal strategy was built to achieve that result *first.*
>
> Anti-smoking advocates spent as much time pressuring movie producers as they did lobbying Congress, because they understood that breaking the cultural link between smoking and sexual attractiveness was as important as changing the law.
>
> When the Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010 created a window of opportunity for new regulations on off-shore drilling, environmentalists reallocated money and staff time away from other priorities, while oil companies dropped "just say no" and suddenly became willing to compromise with lawmakers demanding tougher regulations.

A simple list of *potential* resources of influence is not enough to predict outcomes. Organization, timing and priorities are "force multipliers," factors that determine how much of an organization's *potential* resources of influence will be invested in a particular case.

Extra

mere perception of interests. , bound together by more than narrow economic inter of the most compelling models to describe how a subsystem operates is the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) developed by Paul Sabatier. He argues that a mature policy subsystem devolves into two to five "Advocacy Coalitions" (*e.g.,* "pro-life" and "pro-choice"), which best understood as networks of people who share a belief system, *including people in administrative agencies, Congressional Committees, think tanks, universities and influential journalists* in addition to conventional interest groups. Once an Advocacy Coalition becomes dominant, it maintains power by altering the rules in its favor, and it resists feedback from the problem stream because people resist changes to their belief systems. Policy keeps going in the same direction until something happens in the Problem Stream or Political Stream that shifts power inside the Arena or temporarily attracts attention from outsiders.