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Potential effects of “Advocacy Coalitions” on NFP Processes

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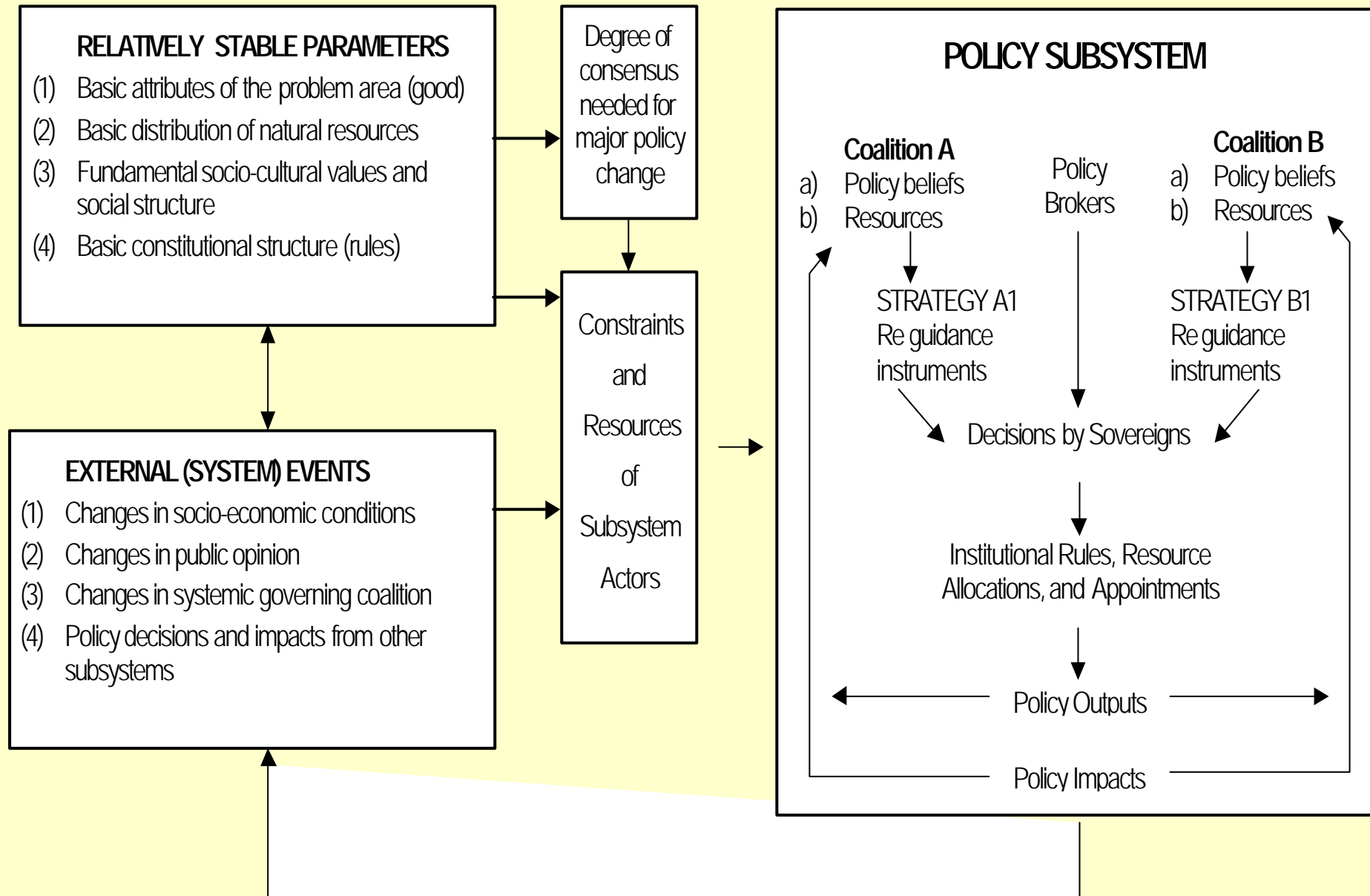
Underlying assumptions

- The idea of NFPs meets forest policy domains, where structures and actor relations are well-developed.
- Forest policy domain networks are firmly rooted in legal, administrative and political institutions, which have shown great persistence over time.
- Meeting the demands for broad “participation”, “inter-sectoral and multi-level co-ordination often requires “policy change”.
- The reluctance to change crucially depends on the structure of the dominant forest policy networks and on the “policy belief systems” of its members.
- The AC-framework aims at explaining “policy change” by referring to the actors’ belief systems.

General assumptions of the ACF

- (1) Theories of the policy process need to address the role of knowledge and learning.
- (2) It assumes that the time-frame to analyse policy change and the role of policy learning therein has to be a decade or more.
- (3) It assumes that the most useful unit of analysis for explaining policy change is not any governmental unit or a program but a **policy-subsystems**, i.e., actors from different institutions who follow and seek to influence governmental decisions in a policy area.
- (4) Actors within a subsystem can be aggregated to a number of 'advocacy coalitions' which mostly include actors from different levels of government.
- (5) Hierarchical Conception of Programs and Belief Systems: public policies can be conceptualised in the same way as belief systems.

Core elements of the ACF



Concept of belief systems

	<i>Deep Core</i>	<i>Policy Core</i>	<i>Secondary Aspects</i>
<i>Defining Characteristics</i>	Fundamental normative and ontological axioms	Fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem	Instrumental decisions and information searches necessary to implement policy core
<i>Scope</i>	Across all policy subsystems	Subsystem-wide	Usually only part of the subsystem
<i>Susceptibility to Change</i>	Very difficult, akin to a religious con-version	Difficult, but can occur if experience reveals serious anomalies	Moderately easy; this is the topic of most administrative and even legislative policy-making

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

Preliminary remark: derived from theory, revised on the basis of empirical evidence!

Abbrev.: **IS** ... affecting inter-sectoral coordination; **P** ... participation,
D ... decentralisation, **AD** .. adaptive, iterative approaches)

- Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects. (Sabatier/Jenkins-Smith 1997:12)
- An actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of his (its) belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core (ibid.)
- → "On major controversies within a mature policy subsystem when policy core beliefs are in dispute, the line-up of allies and opponents tends to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so" (**IS**, **P**, ibid.: 25)

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

- While policy-oriented learning is an important aspect of policy change and can often alter secondary aspects of a coalition's belief system, the policy core attributes of a governmental program are unlikely to be significantly revised as long as the subsystem advocacy coalition which instituted the program remains in power. (All elements that require "major policy change", *ibid.*: 25)
- Significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g. changes in socio-economic conditions, public opinion, system-wide governing coalition, or policy outputs from other sub-systems) are a necessary, but not a sufficient, cause of change in the policy core attributes of a governmental program. (see above)

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

- Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there is an intermediate level of informed conflict between the two coalitions. This requires that:
 - each have the technical resource to engage in such a debate; and that
 - 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 (see above, *ibid.*).

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

- Problems for which accepted quantitative data and theory exist (e.g. Problems involving natural systems) are more conducive to policy-oriented learning across belief systems than those in which data and theory are generally qualitative, quite subjective, or altogether lacking (see above, *ibid.*: 12).
- Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there exists a forum that is
 - prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate, and
 - dominated by professional norms (see above).

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

- In order for scientist with quite different points of view to come to consensus and for that consensus to be accepted by the major coalitions, the technical advisory committee should include both (a) scientists clearly associated with each of the major coalitions and (b) neutral scientist. The chair should come from the latter. Consistent with the very concept of a professional forum, however, only professionals with established reputations should be involved in the forum.
(primarily **P, IS, AD**, Sabatier/Jenkins-Smith 1997: 36ff)

Hypotheses of the ACF - Some of the Lessons to draw

- Funding must come from an institution which is not perceived as being controlled by a single coalition. This will usually require funding either by (a) a legislative body on which all the coalitions are well-represented or (b) multiple agencies representing the various coalitions. (primarily **P**, **IS**, **AD**, *ibid.*)
- A forum should meet at least a half-dozen times over a year or so. (primarily **AD**, **P**, **IS**, *ibid.*: 36f)
- A forum will be successful only in a context of policy stalemate, i.e. when each of the coalitions views a continuation of the status quo as unacceptable. (primarily **P**, **IS**, *ibid.*)

Thank you !