International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)
ISSN: 2643-9670
Vol. 9 Issue 4 April - 2025, Pages: 192-201

Application of Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) *A Case Study of Water Quality Policy in the Buriganga River*

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Abstract: *This study aims to apply the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to explain multi-actor collaborative policy processes for water quality management in the heavily polluted Buriganga River, which is regarded as the lifeline of Bangladesh. The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) framework offers a perspective to explore how various coalitions (government agencies, non-governmental organizations, industries, and civil society) interact in a policy subsystem to shape environmental decisions. Using a qualitative case study method, this study explores the beliefs, strategies, and resources of opposing coalitions engaged in Buriganga's water quality policy. It underscores the impacts of scientific information, policy-oriented learning, and external shocks on policy change. Data collected for this study highlight the challenges: fragmented governance, limited coordination among actors, and entrenched economic interests that get in the way of policy implementation. The application of the ACF further contributes to understanding the messy policy landscape of Bangladesh and provides implications for strengthening collaborative governance and sustainable water management.*

Keywords— Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Water Quality Management, Buriganga River, Environmental Policy, Collaborative Governance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), a model of the policy-making process, which was developed to understand policy issues characterized by high levels of public conflict (Gabehart & Weible, 2023; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

When dealing with such scenarios of multi actors in belief and policy change with inter-level and inter-actor disagreements of goals (Little et al., 2023; Hoppe and Peterse 1993), there are a better means of serving where you use creativity as a lense to see and explain belief and policy change (Head, 2008). Nevertheless, the ACF has emerged as one of the more useful public policy frameworks (Schlager 1995; Schlager & Blomquist 1996; Johns 2003).

There are dozens of ACF case studies and publications since the beginning of the ACF in 1988. The majority of applications are on energy and environmental policy in the United States, Canada, and Europe (e.g., marine/coastal policy, water policy, oil/minerals, air pollution, and climate change). However, the ACF has been used more widely for policy areas besides energy and environmental policy as well (e.g., domestic violence, drug policy, and public health). Since then, there has also been an increase in the number of researchers applying the ACF to issues in all over Asia, Africa, Australia and South America (Pierce et al., 2020; Sotirov & Memmler, 2012).

The relevance of ACF becomes particularly pronounced in countries like Bangladesh, where environmental governance is shaped by competing coalitions, fragmented institutional authority, and socio-economic interests. The Buriganga River, once a vital source of water and transportation for Dhaka, now symbolizes the environmental cost of unchecked industrial activity, particularly from tannery waste in Hazaribagh (Chowdhury, 2015; Majumder, 2009). Efforts to relocate tanneries to Savar illustrate not only the technical challenges of policy implementation but also the underlying political dynamics between pro-development and pro-environmental coalitions (Ahmed, 2020).

The ACF posits that policy actors, driven by deeply held beliefs, form advocacy coalitions to influence public policy within a defined subsystem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). These coalitions operate through coordinated strategies, using resources such as legal authority, scientific evidence, and public support to advocate for preferred policy outcomes (Sabatier & Weible, 2005). Crucially, the framework emphasizes the role of policy-oriented learning, whereby exposure to new evidence or external shocks, such as court rulings or environmental crises, can catalyze policy change (Schlager, 1995; Johns, 2003).

In this study, we apply the ACF to the Buriganga River water quality policy in Bangladesh, examining how

competing coalitions, industries prioritizing economic growth versus institutions and civil society actors demanding environmental justice, interacted over two decades. By employing a qualitative case study method, we explore how belief systems, resource mobilization, and judicial interventions shaped the trajectory of tannery relocation from Hazaribagh to Savar. This application not only enriches our understanding of the Buriganga policy subsystem but also demonstrates the analytical utility of the ACF in the Bangladeshi context, where governance challenges often intersect with deep-seated political and institutional dynamics.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to the water quality policy of the Buriganga River in Bangladesh. The case study method is appropriate for analyzing complex and multi-actor policy environments, allowing for an in-depth understanding of belief systems, coalition dynamics, and long-term policy change. The Buriganga River, historically regarded as the lifeline of Dhaka, has become one of the most polluted rivers in the country, primarily due to the unregulated discharge of tannery waste from Hazaribagh. The decision to relocate these tanneries to Savar has been a prolonged and politically contested process, making it an ideal case for applying the ACF.

Data were collected through document analysis and review of secondary sources, including governmental reports, judicial decisions, environmental assessments, and media articles. Key documents analyzed include reports from the Department of Environment (DoE), court verdicts related to tannery relocation, policy briefs from the Bangladesh River Commission, and implementation plans by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC). Additionally, media reports from widely circulated national dailies such as Prothom Alo, New Age, Daily Ittefaq, and Jugantor were reviewed to capture public discourse and stakeholder reactions between 2001 and 2020. These sources provided a comprehensive view of how different actors framed the issue, mobilized support, and influenced policy decisions.

The analytical framework of the ACF guided the classification and interpretation of data. Key elements such as advocacy coalitions, belief systems (deep core, policy core, and secondary beliefs), policy brokers, and mechanisms of policy change were used to map the interactions within the policy subsystem. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify the normative and empirical beliefs of key policy actors, particularly focusing on the tension between the pro-development coalition—comprising industrial associations and business groups—and the pro-environment coalition—made up of government regulators, civil society, and environmental organizations. The role of the High Court as a policy broker, and the influence of scientific evidence and judicial activism in shaping public policy, were carefully examined to understand the dynamics of belief change and policy learning.

While this study relies heavily on secondary data sources, the triangulation of official records, legal documents, and media narratives adds depth and reliability to the analysis. Nevertheless, the absence of primary interviews may limit the insights into informal negotiations and behind-the-scenes political maneuvering. Despite this, the qualitative case study, anchored in a rigorous application of the ACF, provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the policy processes surrounding water governance in Bangladesh.

3.0 Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) Structure

The ACF structural diagram (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999) is shown in the figure 1. Broadly, policymaking takes place within a policy subsystem, which is defined as the geographical area of a policy area that comprises policy participants from level of governments, confounding interest groups, research institutions and the media. Within a given policy subsystem, the participants coordinate their behavior for this purpose through advocacy coalitions. Policy subsystems to be led within, are accepted by, and on occasion act a much greater societal context.

The ACF divides the larger context in which society operates into two categories 1) relatively stable parameters and 2) external events. In the section below, we outline the three elements of Figure 1. We first describe the more stable parameters, second turn to policy subsystems, and third describe external events. From Table 2 we summarize the application of ACF to Buriganga river water quality policy subsystem.

International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)
ISSN: 2643-9670
Vol. 3 Issue 7, April – 2025, Pages: 1-1

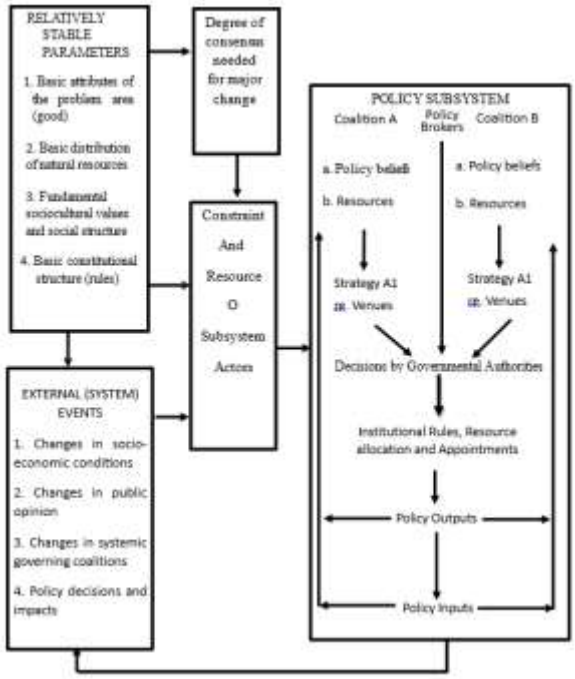

Fig. 1. *Diagram of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Source: Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999)*

Table 1: Summary of Application of the ACF Applied to the Buriganga River

ACF Component	Buriganga River Water Quality Application
Relatively Stable Parameters • **Basic Attribute of the problem area** • **Basic distribution of natural resources** • **Fundamental cultural values and social structure** • **Basic constitutional structure**	• Economically important for navigability • Dispute over dumping of tannery waste in Buriganga water • Constitutional rights of the business owner and environmental values • Governance including Dhaka South City Corporation and wards.
Policy Subsystems • **Territorial Scope** • **Substantive Scope** • **Policy Participants**	• Buriganga River • Water quality policy • Ministry of Industry, Local Government, Department of the Environment, Residents of Hazaribagh, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, Bangladesh River Commission, Department of Environment, Bangladesh Tanners Association, Bangladesh Finished Leather and Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters Association.
Belief Systems • **Deep Core Beliefs** • **Policy Core Beliefs** • **Secondary Beliefs**	• Pro-environment beliefs • Pro-development beliefs • Specific policy proposals regarding water quality (prohibiting dumping of tannery waste in the Buriganga water)
Advocacy Coalitions	Pro-development vs. Pro-water quality coalitions
Policy Broker	The High Court (High Court bench comprising judges) plays a role as a policy broker.
Resources	Scientific information
Venues	The High Court, Different Ministry, and Directorates, Local Government, other collaborative organizations.
Mechanisms of Policy Change • **Accumulation of Evidence**	Department of Environment showing declining water quality and atmospheric deposition after dumping tannery waste in the Buriganga River.
Hurting Stalemate	The High Court's verdict led to compromise between coalitions
External Shock	Growth of the environmental movement (Save the Environment Movement).

3.1 Relatively Stable Parameters

The upper box on the left of Figure 1 presents a set of relatively stable parameters: (1) key problem area features,

(2) general distribution of natural resources, (3) central socio-cultural values and social structure, and (4) fundamental constitutional structure (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993; 1999). The relatively stable parameters are stable for long periods of time, on the order of 100 years or so. They matter because they define the shape of the problem, constrain the resources available to policy actors, set the rules and procedures for policy change and collective decision-making, and broadly frame the values shaping the process of policymaking more generally. Due to their structural stability, these relative values are less frequently in the strategic sights of policy actors.

In our specific case study, the Buriganga River has a desirable physical characteristic, which is economically needed for navigation to the capital city of Dhaka. Launches and country boats link to the rest of Bangladesh, a largely riverine country. It runs along the south-western fringes of the capital city, Dhaka. The lake has a surface area of surface area 15.81 square kilometers, (6.11 square miles) an average depth of 7.6 m (25 ft) and a maximum depth of 18 m (58 ft). The river was the city's only source of potable water, too. However, the Buriganga River that we have today is suffering from the evil of pollution (Majumder, 2019).

The raw allocation of Buriganga water is contested. The Buriganga though originated from Dhaleshwari beside Kalita. Pollution is worse in the River Buriganga. Tannery Waste Water is the major source of pollution which comes from tannery effluents, mostly in the Hazaribagh area (Chowdhury, 2015). Buriganga water quality was monitored by the Department of Environment which witnessed a gradual decline in its transparency. For this, the High Court has ruled to relocate the tanneries in Savar.

Bangladesh has offered the constitutional rights of a business owner, and it is also liable to provide environmental protection along with the social good. Like many societies, Bangladesh struggles with the tension between the constitutional rights of business owners and the public interest. Use of clean water was clear by the Buriganga river itself before rise of tannery factories in Hazaribagh. So, it has been decided to move the tannery to Savar to detox the water of the Buriganga.'

Dhaka South City Corporation is the constitutional authority of the Buriganga. Policymaking requires a supermajority of necessary steps, which are taken by government officials and elected representatives. In order to tackle the decision-making of the Buriganga River, the Ministry of Industry assumed charge of the Leather Industries City Project in 2003. The Leather Industries City Project is being implemented by BSCIC (Ahmed, 2020).

3.2 Policy Subsystem

The stable parameters form clear configurations for policymaking within a policy subsystem (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). A policy subsystem consists of the territorial boundary, substantive topic, and hundreds of policy actors from all levels of government, multiple types of interests, the media, and research institutions. In order to bear upon policy, policy actors both focus on a policy subsystem to successfully further their aims and sustain their engagement over long periods to ensure their goals are met (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

The literal boundary for the Buriganga water quality policymaking subsystem is set by the River Buriganga watershed, which is, in substance, bordered by water quality policy, with water use being included indirectly. Participants include hundreds of polices and lobbyists interested in impacting policy decisions regarding the water quality of the Buriganga. The stakeholders involved in this policy are shown in the table below at Figure 2: Actors in Policy Selected Policy Actors Stake holders Ministry of Industry the High Court Department of Environment Residents of Hazaribagh Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation Environmental organizations Bangladesh Tanners Association Local government Bangladesh River Commission Some of the policy participants have been engaged in the Buriganga river water quality policy for more than 15 years.

By this way, in some policy subsystem there is some policy actors who are inactive for more than one policy subsystems, which make it difficult to precise policy subsystems geographic and substantive boundaries. However, Buriganga water quality policy subsystem has geographic and substantive boundaries that are not hard to define. Buriganga water quality policy subsystem is nested in Dhaka South City Corporation area. Policy subsystems are defined by one rule. This flexibility makes the ACF applicable and simplifies its application in this case study. The empirical boundaries of policy subsystems are to be determined. Wherever applicable, ACF applicators should not only identify the relevant policy subsystem, but also specify the territorial and substantive boundary of the issue, along with the major interest groups and government agencies involved.

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is theorized to have a set of assumptions and hypotheses within a policy subsystem, including (1) various cognitive characteristics of (or motivations among) those involved in policy (the "model of the individual"), (2) the pressure for most policy participants to form into advocacy coalitions, (3) the assumption that significantly few policy participants act in a neutral way as "policy brokers," (4) how coalitions make use of resources, and (5) the venues through which coalitions influence the policy system. We articulate these assumptions and hypotheses in the subsections below.

3.3 Model of the Individual

The ACF assumes that topic-area actors are rational but limited by their capacity to learn about, and understand, a complex world (Simon 1985). Individuals are bounded by their cognitive limitations, which place a cap on the amount of new information they can consume and which allows them to learn. By filtering their perceptions through their belief system (Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979; Scholz and Pinney 1995), ACF individuals simplify events and their milieu. They filter or dismiss any information that contradicts their beliefs but readily accept information that supports their beliefs. Such perceptual filters discount even the best technical information if not in keeping with their beliefs and accept deeply uncertain technical information if it is consistent with their beliefs. People tend to viscerally identify with their beliefs, so they're very mistrustful about people who hold different beliefs. They also remember lost policy battles — which they internalize as a painful personal loss — more than past victories (Quattrone and Tversky 1988). This heightens their emotive fear of their rivals, which supersedes more reasoned thought (McDermott 2004). Consequently, people are very prone to overstate the power and wickedness of enemy actors, which reinforces their bonds with those of the same faith (Sabatier et al. 1987, Sabatier; Jenkins-Smith 1999. In short, the ACF's individual-level motivation leads policy actors to find others with whom they can form advocacy coalitions (See below).

According to this, people have a triadic consistency network of beliefs. At the highest level are deeps core beliefs, which are normative/fundamental beliefs that cover many policy subsystems and are very resistant to change. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) characterize deep core beliefs in four components that range from relative value priorities (e.g., individual rights vs. social rights) to socio-cultural identify (e.g., ethnicity and religion).

Second, there are policy core beliefs, which are normative/empirical beliefs that cut across a whole policy subsystem. The policy core beliefs are still resistant to change but are more pliable than the deep core beliefs. The ACF recognizes eleven types of policy core beliefs, which encompass perceptions about the seriousness and causes of problems affecting the entire subsystem, orientation on core value priorities related to the policy subsystem, the effectiveness of policy tools, and the appropriate division of authority between the market and the state (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999).

In common with four types of indicators, the major parts of coalition's belief system in a given policy domain include a broad range of more focused beliefs about the seriousness of the issue (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). Through reading the online newspaper related to the tannery industries in Hazaribagh, we have identified deep core belief and policy core belief. Policy participants have commented on this problem, maintain their views of the causes of the pain or their preferences for causing the pain. The participants in this policy have outlined their own thinking about this policy topic. At the most basic, the core of the hypothesis is about empirical beliefs and policy preferences tied to some part of a policy subsystem: secondary opinions. Secondary idea(s): Policy participants' preferences for particular government tools to achieve objectives, or their perception of problems in specified locales. The three layers of beliefs vary in their responsiveness to new information and events, with secondary beliefs being the most volatile layer.

3.4 Advocacy Coalitions

How successful policy participants are depends on how well their policy core beliefs translate into actual policy. So as to enhance the viability of their chances, policy participants find allies, possessing similar sets of policy core beliefs and engage in action with such allies, within advocacy coalitions. Consequently, advocacy coalitions consist of policy actors that (1) hold similar policy core beliefs and (2) are not engaged in a trivial level of coordination (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999).

We found evidence of at least two advocacy coalitions in the Buriganga River. Development One is a pro-development advocacy coalition comprising of Bangladesh tannery association, Bangladesh Finished Leather and Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters Association, Leather Industrial City Project. The second coalition includes the Ministry of Industry, Department of Environment, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, Bangladesh River Commission, Local Government, which constitute a pro-water quality advocacy coalition. Since 2001, data indicates that these two advocacy coalitions have been in a battle over the use of water to discharge tannery wastes and environmental protection. The war between these coalitions continued for over 15 years. In 2001 the High Court ordered the tannery's relocation from Hazaribagh to Savar. This court order was given effect through the Director-General of the Department of Environment under abetments to Sections 4 (3) and 4 (a) of the Environmental Protection Act (No tannery factories can remain in Hazaribagh, 2017). The Leather Industrial City project was approved in a meeting held on August 17, 2003, but 15 years have already gone since its finalization (Order to shut down all tanneries in Hazaribagh, 2017). All the tanneries of Hazaribagh were also given time to transfer till June 2015. But the finish line is somehow falling behind. Some owners of the tanneries did not follow instructions to relocate. Then, the government extended the time till March 31, 2017. And even if some two-thirds of the tanneries are out by the end of 2017, deadlines that have since been repeatedly extended have in effect postponed relocation altogether. It was unwise of the government, in such a scenario, to extend the deadline by yet another year, asking

the tanneries to relocate by December 2020. [3] (A stunning additional postponement in tannery relocation, 2019).

3.5 Policy Brokers

Within a policy subsystem, most policy actors collude with partners in advocacy coalitions and cooperate to turn their beliefs into policy. Policy disagreements in competitive policy subsystems are between interest groups (or advocacy coalitions) often become fierce political battles. These conflicts are often mediated by "policy brokers." While most actors in policy processes aim to shape policy processes and outcomes in advocacy coalitions, policy brokers try to identify reasonable compromises among hostile coalitions. There are many different policy broker actors. Elected policy brokers include officials (Munro 1993), high civil servants (Doggan 1975), and courts (Mawinney 1993), Policy there is usually trusted sequential broker (Elinor Ostrom, 1998) - brokers trusted by both coalitions and with some range of decisions making power. There is a thin line separating policy brokers from policy activists. Policy activists, worrying about turnabout sometimes, ensure the continued maintenance and survival of a policy subsystems, will strive to play a role as policy broker. Other times, the policy broker is an externally hired facilitator of the policy subsystem.

The pro-development coalition against the pro-water quality coalition, Buriganga water use conflict was mediated by the High Court in 2018, after a 15-year-long impasse. Human sang for if both partnerships trusted the High Court and it sat as a policy brokering authority. It mediated a compromise between the coalitions. The tannery was supposed to be relocated from Hazaribagh to Savar per the High Court's order. Then the industry was adjusted to the leather industrial city of Savar by the government. A compensation has started being given to the 121 tanneries by the government (Order to shut down all tanneries in Hazaribagh, 2017).

3.6 Resources

According to the ACF, people use multiple resources that allow them to devise strategies to impact policy across a number of different venues. These resources consist of (1) formal legal authority to act, (2) public opinion, (3) information, (4) salable troops, (5) money, and (6) competent leadership (Sabatier and Weible 2005). The ACF assumes that interest groups strategically allocate resources to influence policy across multiple venue.

The one piece of scientific information that stands out in the pro-water quality coalition, of which the Buriganga River is one of the essential resources. The Department of Environment has been carrying out water quality monitoring for many years, and every time it has been observed that the water quality level has decreased since the establishment of tannery industries in Hazaribagh. It has tested the water of Buriganga and revealed the presence of a lot of harmful elements that are not good for people and the environment. The Buriganga contains all chemicals that tanneries use. As per the Environmental Protection Rules, the water temperature coming out of the CETP should be 20 degree Celsius. But the Buriganga water temperature is above 20 degrees Celsius. Normal water should have 8 to 9 levels per liter alkali. But there was something more than that in the water of the Buriganga River — alkali (Tannery waste in Buriganga, 2017).

3.7 Venues

Venues are potential arenas wherein stakeholders can advocate for beliefs or policy. Stakeholders spend a great deal of time just venue shopping, seeking out some arena there they could have competitive advantage. They are initiating programs at multiple sites in large clusters and protect their interests in multiple forums at once. Coalitions attempt to impress decision makers to respond to it in ways that frame policy processes and outcomes. Coalitions focus their struggle over institutional rules, resource allocation and appointments (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). What are these actions that produce some policy outputs and impacts that reverberate into the policy subsystem but also beyond it?

The two coalitions have also attempted to realize their goals in a number of venues in the Buriganga River. These facilities comprise the High Court, Ministry, and Directorate, Local Government, other joint groups.

3.8 External Events

The lower left box of figure one lays out a composite list of "external" events that can influence a policy subsystem (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999): (1) major socioeconomic change (2) shifts in public opinion, (3) changes in the systematic governing coalition, and (4) policy decisions and effects in other subsystems (Muller 1995). External events matter because they usually change public focus (and therefore capital) to or from a policy subsystem. For instance, the residents of Hazaribagh had been protesting over the relocation of the tannery. It had raised the public priority for environmental values. This resulted in the expansive number of national ecological regulatory statutes and grants, and the branding of new subsystems of respective environmental policy. A decade or so is slow motion in the external world. External shocks can also destabilize a policy system (Weible, Sabatier, and Nechodom 2005).

Likely, a rise in environmental activism from the 1980s onward gradually influenced a rise in public concern about the quality of Buriganga water at much the same time. Hazaribagh's environment has been contaminated by the highly toxic chemicals used in the tanneries. It has changed

the beliefs of policy participants, and water quality policy (Tannery relocation: Touch of development in Hazaribagh, 2019)

3.9 Belief and Policy Change

At the ACF, they separate major and minor change. Types of Policy Change: Major Policy Change: Subsystem-wide alterations of policy (changes in policy core aspects of the subsystem). The ACF defines as incremental, policy adjustment as change of a specific sub-component of the policy subsystem (changes in which is secondary factors of the policy subsystem). Small adjustments to policy happen often and have a lesser intensity in the substance or geographic scope of a policy subsystem. The ACF identifies three mechanisms through which minor or major policy change occurs: (1) through external shocks, (2) a suffering stalemate, and (3) the overall generation of scientific/technical evidence (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). These external shocks include phenomena such as changes in socio-economic conditions, changes in governing coalitions, and impacts from other policy subsystems (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). External shocks can force policy change in at least two respects. First, external shocks may change the allocations of resources or adjust the opened/closed venues triggered by the revival public attention of the public or key decision makers. This redistributes power among coalitions, giving the edge to a In other words, a different coalition with different policy core beliefs, and also occurring further up the policy stream leading to possible system-wide policy change.

That is how external shocks can supersede one dominant advocacy coalition within another (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999). Second, shock from external shocks may changes the core beliefs of the policy a in other words, when and how does the dominant advocacy coalition, overcome the conditions of the policy subsystem that manages to drive major policy change. For example, a pro-regulatory advocacy coalition may change course after the negative economic impact from rigid manipulators in an economic crisis.

The second mechanism of policy change is through belief change through policy-oriented learning through gradual accumulation of information like a scientific study, policy analysis, etc. (Weiss 1977). According to the ACF, policy-oriented learning is, “relatively lasting changes in thought or behavioral intentions based on experience and/or new information related to the achievement or modification of policy goals (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, 123). Policy- arising from the influence of action-oriented learning on the beliefs of actors operating within the policy subsystem, which can trigger incremental and even major policy change over long periods of time. However, learning is inhibited, because people are cognitively limited and filter or evade information that runs counter to belief. Whereas Policy core beliefs and, thus, the the center group of a policy subsystem, policy-oriented learning may require a decade or more.

A third mechanism of path change is a hurting stalemate (Zartman 1991). The basic pre-"condition for successful negotiations" is a state in which all parties to the dispute see.

A maintenance of the status quo as intolerable and pushed out of other places to realize their objectives. The theory is that people content with the status quo have no reason to will not concede anything in negotiations; so negotiating with them is probably pointless. Only are both warring coalitions willing when they have exhausted all alternatives and are unhappy with reality which relies on horse-trading to produce policy change.

We have identified three major changes in belief or policy in the Buriganga River that exemplify the AFC’s three mechanisms of change. The government launched a project in 2003 to relocate 154 tanneries from Dhaka’s polluted Hazaribagh to an industrial city that had been designed for them, due to environmental pollution. While environmental values were given higher public priority, most public awareness was related to Buriganga river water, which was the legacy of the environment movement. According to a scientific report issued from Department of Environment, tanneries wastes were the prime threat to the water quality of the Buriganga River. You were on the cusp of the scientific report which caused the transition in river water: the change in river water beliefs (in terms of severity of the environmental disaster happened) in terms of the causes of why the water quality is deteriorating shows that the sponsors actually learnt from it and responded to the scientific report by relocating tannery to Savar. The verdict placed compromise coalitions between the tannery owner who moved their tannery industries and the government who compensated the tannery owners.

4.0 Conclusion

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was developed as a causal-theoretical model that provides a holistic alternative to the traditional stages heuristic in policy analysis (Sabatier, 1988). The study has highlighted the relevance of ACF in comprehending the intricacies surrounding water quality policy within the Buriganga River, characterized by a myriad of stakeholders holding differing interests and belief systems that influence the policy landscape.

In the one hand, advocacy coalitions by government institutions, environmental NGOs, industries, and local communities influence the Buriganga River, on the basis of common normative and empirical beliefs. The ACF allows

us to track the processes through which these coalitions inter-relate, compete and collaborate over time, and in turn shape the evolution and impacts of policy. The findings illustrate that policy change in this instance is seldom straightforward, but is instead the result of sustained engagement over time, the strategic deployment of information and responsiveness to external events like political transitions or environmental crises.

Additionally, the ACF as demonstrated in this case study has broader implications for utility in the Bangladeshi policy context and for dealing with such issues, which are complex and multiple-actor such as environmental degradation. It offers an important way of looking at the policymaking process in developing states and how belief systems and engine rooms for policy — institutional setup influence its evolution.

The application of the ACF in the Buriganga River water quality policy case study illustrates not only the richness of local environmental governance but also the adaptability of the framework in dynamic policy subsystems. This eventually promotes the extensive usage of ACF in other sectors of Bangladesh for policy formulation that is evidence-based, inclusive, and sustainable.

5.0 STRENGTH

The ACF offers an alternative lens through which de facto policymaking frameworks can be analyzed. Traditionally, the policy process was represented with a stages heuristic, which sequentially distinguishes among those steps of problem identification, agenda setting, adoption, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement (Lasswell 1951). The ACF is a bit more healthy version of the stages heuristic, having clear causal assumptions, empirical hypothesis that can be tested, explicit information role, explicit individual model, and multiple interaction cycles with hundreds of actors (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). The ACF also serves as a valuable comparative lens to the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (TADF; Ostrom 1990, 1999). While the ACF presumes policies are the translation of competing advocacy coalitions normative and empirical beliefs, the IADF assumes that public policies (i.e., institutions) are the outcome of people's efforts to lower transaction costs of collective action. We recommend further comparative analysis with the ACF and IADF (Leach and Sabatier 2005).

The ACF emphasizes the magnitude and the types of political conflicts. Barke's (1993) study of the mid-twentieth century telecommunication policy conflict is an example of this, where millions of dollars were at stake in the disagreement over secondary beliefs (choice of television technology) rather than policy core beliefs (public vs. private ownership). So, the telecommunications dispute was both a low amplitude conflict and one with a relatively easy compromise path. The ACF can also show us weak points in a belief system-like a flawed causal argument--that are vulnerable over long time periods to change through the accumulation of counterevidence. This can be useful for coalition members or policy brokers in achieving their goals or making collective decisions.

The ACF offers an alternative perspective to the de facto premise that the institutional affiliation of policy actors is primordial (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). Instead, the ACF invites researchers to view policymaking as battles of advocacy coalitions and offers a different way to synthesize the hundreds of actors trying to impact policy.

In policy and political disputes, scientific and technical information plays a prominent part. Most rely on representations and models of the world that ignore the scientific and technical information or treat researchers, policy analysts, and scientists as neutral actors. Research ACF over the years forces to conclude that scientists often form active participants in advocacy coalitions and the significant role technical information play in promoting policy-oriented learning and policy change (Zafonte and Sabatier 1998; Herron, Jenkins-Smith, and Silva 2005).

The ACF can be applied in various governance structures, cultures and societies, and areas of policy. The brief review of literature at the start of this chapter reveals that the ACF has been applied in a broad range of public policy domains and in a multitude of different countries. We anticipate that scholars will continue to apply and test the ACF in different sociopolitical contexts.

6.0 LIMITATIONS

The ACF takes a perspective of a decade or more to explain political conflict and policy change, and the data are usually questionnaire and interview-based. However, this is a slow and expensive process. In absence of resources, we want to encourage researchers to do fast, qualitative ACF-style analysis of policy subsystems. These could involve a few informal interviews as well as an examination of documents and reports.

Without coalitions that have clear lines of organizations and within them lines of advocacy coalitions the ACF loses some of its functionality (May, 1989) and so does the ACF in policy subsystems with one overall advocacy coalition (Stewart 1991). Such policy subsystems tend to deal with low salience issues such as new and often highly technical policy areas, expert driven policy that takes place the public's view, or in outlying regions. In contrast, the ACF is most useful in highly salience issues that provoke political conflict between hundreds of policy actors on behalf of dozens of public and private organizations within relatively bounds policy subsystems.

A well-known criticism of the ACF is that common beliefs alone cannot prevent the temptation to 'free ride' on the efforts of other coalition members (Schlager 1995; Schlager and Blomquist 1995). As it concerns agency theory, we have some qualitative illustrations of coordination from recent ACF research showing that coordination networks can explain policy core beliefs (Weible 2005; Weible and Sabatier 2005; Sabatier and Weible 2005). More research is needed, though, to confirm these findings as well as to describe what kinds of activities coalitions undertake.

The ACF claims that actors use shared policy core beliefs to align themselves into advocacy coalitions. Sure, but cross-coalition interactions happen. For instance, state agency officials may need to coordinate certain aspects of their interaction with commercial fishermen in order to effectively manage a fishery, even when fishermen are members of the opposing coalition (Weible 2005), but the ACF has yet to identify the smallest degree of coordination necessary to generate coalitions, or to ascertain the impacts of these cross-coalition interactions on policy subsystem results. Importance of ties among different groups (that is, ties among members of diverse social groups are valued more than redundant ties among members of one's own social group) has been highlighted due to growth of policy network analysis (Granovetter 1973; Burt 1992)

The ACF visualizes causal processes, some linkages there need further theoretical and empirical attention. Understanding how advocacy coalitions utilize resources and arenas and knowing what constructs policy subsystems in order to promote the existence of one dominate advocacy coalition, two or more conflicting advocacy coalitions, or no advocacy coalitions at all have been identified as the missing links in such studies (Stone, 2002). These missing links must be understood in order to reconstruct and test the subsystem processes of belief and policy change proposed by the ACE. A number of these missing links are under investigation (Sabatier and Weible 2005).

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