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So you want to be a policy entrepreneur?

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ABSTRACT

Policy entrepreneurs are energetic actors who engage in collaborative efforts in and around government to promote policy innovations. Given the enormous challenges now facing humanity, the need is great for such actors to step forward and catalyze change processes. Academic research on policy entrepreneurs has flourished over recent years and, as a result, we know a lot about what makes for effective policy entrepreneurship. This article summarizes that research and offers insights for those who aspire to be policy entrepreneurs. The work of policy entrepreneurs involves various strategies, including (1) problem framing, (2) using and expanding networks, (3) working with advocacy coalitions, (4) leading by example, and (5) scaling up change processes. These strategies call for sophisticated deployment of a range of attributes and skills enumerated here, many of which can be nurtured and taught.

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Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming whether you like it or not.

– Greta Thunberg, Speech at the U.N. Climate Action Summit, 9/23/2019

Policy entrepreneurs reveal themselves through their attempts to transform policy ideas into policy innovations and, hence, disrupt status quo policy arrangements. Many examples can be found. John Kingdon, a political scientist and close observer of politics in Washington DC, popularized the concept of the policy entrepreneur, although he was not the first to use it. Kingdon suggested such actors “could be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations. But their defining characteristic, much as in the case of a business entrepreneur, is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money – in the hope of a future return” (1984/2011, p. 122). Kingdon asserted that policy entrepreneurs represent a distinct class of political actor, different from typical elected politicians, typical appointed officials, typical interest group leaders, and so on.

Given the enormous challenges now facing humanity, the need is great for such actors to step forward and catalyze change processes. We have entered a period of

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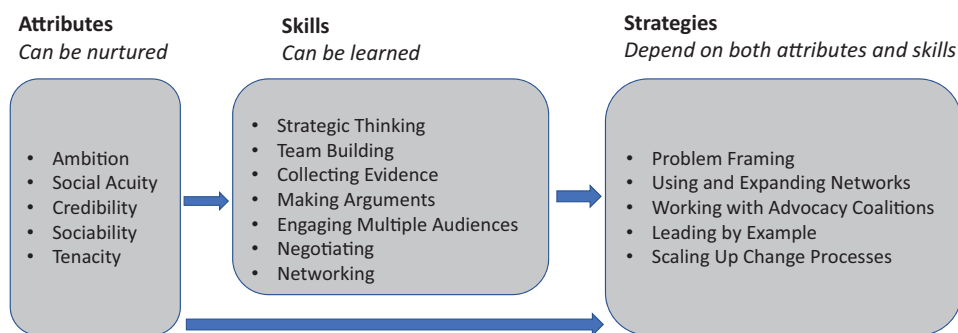


Figure 1. Common attributes, skills, and strategies of policy entrepreneurs.

world history where all governance will occur under climate change. The consequences are profound. The need has never been greater for extensive shifts from status quo ways of understanding and managing our relationship with the planet and its myriad ecosystems. No area of government activity will be immune from the disruptions to come. Efforts to drive policy innovation might involve introducing wholly new policies within specific jurisdictions or they might involve making significant advances upon particular policies that are already in place.

Following Kingdon's lead, many scholars have sought to understand what makes policy entrepreneurs stand out from others in and around policymaking circles. That effort has produced a convergence of views on the attributes, skills, and strategies commonly associated with policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom 2020). Those findings inform the discussion in this article.

To date, researchers have found great diversity in the policy issues that policy entrepreneurs care about and their reasons for caring about them. Transforming policy ideas into policy innovations with the intention of disrupting the status quo requires considerable capability. No individual could do such work along. Therefore, while the literature on policy entrepreneurship often places the focus on specific individuals, how they collaborate with others is always fundamental to explaining the development and promotion of policy innovations (see Huitema, Lebel, and Meijerink 2011; Mintrom and Thomas 2018). Some contributors to this literature have suggested that organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, can serve as policy entrepreneurs. To the extent that collective entities consistently and effectively nurture and train professional staff who promote policy innovation, then it would seem reasonable to call such entities policy entrepreneurs.

1. Attributes, skills, and strategies of policy entrepreneurs

Before separately discussing attributes, skills, and strategies of policy entrepreneurs it is useful to explore the nexus that exists among them. Strategies can only be effectively deployed by people possessing specific attributes and skills. Further, while skills can be acquired, such acquisition depends on attributes that tend to take longer to nurture. This set of relationships is portrayed in Figure 1.

With respect to attributes, those fitting the description of a policy entrepreneur are likely to be ambitious in pursuit of a cause, to exhibit social acuity, to be able to pass a

relevant credibility test, to display sociability, and to be tenacious. Driving a major policy innovation takes serious commitment and energy. Those who are prepared to do this must be motivated by a bigger vision for a better future (Collins 2001; Quinn 2000). They must also be adept at interpreting social situations if they are to influence others. Social acuity is vital then, but so too is credibility, which will always be contextually mediated. Another important attribute is sociability, the capacity to get along with others. This is key to making anything happen in politics. Tenacity is another important attribute. Policy entrepreneurship involves taking risks. So anyone wanting to keep on this path must be prepared to take some hits and get up again. Those who give up achieve nothing. (Although sometimes quitting and cutting your losses might be a sensible choice.)

The attributes of ambition and tenacity usefully serve anyone seeking to acquire new skills. Further, the process of skill acquisition can greatly assist people to build credibility among those they seek to influence. Various efforts have been made to identify the skills that serve policy entrepreneurs well as they go about their work (see, e.g. Cairney 2018; Frisch-Aviram, Cohen, and Beeri 2019; Kalil 2017; Mintrom 2000). All of these skills would serve any professional well, and they are frequently discussed in studies of what it takes to be an effective public manager or policy analyst (see, e.g. McCorkle and Witt 2014; Mintrom 2003). Such skills, and variations upon them, are often taught in graduate degree and executive education programs. Professionals seeking to have influence during their career must have capabilities in at least some of these areas. It is especially important for professionals to be adept at collaborating with others who have skills that are different from their own but that complement them.

For the purpose of this article, seven skills are of high interest. They are strategic thinking, team building, evidence collection, making arguments, engaging multiple audiences, negotiating, and networking. Combined with the attributes already noted, these skills give policy entrepreneurs the capabilities they need to effectively deploy key strategies to develop and promote policy innovations. Those strategies will also be discussed further in a section to follow. They are: problem framing, using and expanding networks, working with advocacy coalitions, leading by example, and scaling up change processes.

For some years now, scholars have understood that policy entrepreneurs work at problem framing, team building, and networking. In recent years, additions to the literature have placed the spotlight on other skills, including leading by example, and exploring ways to scale up change processes (Frisch-Aviram, Cohen, and Beeri 2019; Mintrom and Luetjens 2017; Mintrom and Thomas 2018). All policy entrepreneurs deploy these strategies to a greater or lesser extent. As we will see, each of these strategies indicate a need for high levels of the attributes and skills identified above. When combined, they can powerfully support policy entrepreneurs as they pursue their agendas for policy change.

2. Attributes

Attributes are best thought of as inherent capabilities. Ambition, social acuity, credibility, sociability, and tenacity are attributes that would appear essential prerequisites for being an effective policy entrepreneur. Here, I briefly discuss these attributes of policy entrepreneurs in turn. While all policy entrepreneurs and many other professionals

would benefit from possessing these attributes, it is not clear that such attributes can be readily acquired. This makes them somewhat different from the skills of policy entrepreneurship to be reviewed presently.

2.1. Ambition

Kingdon (1984/2011) argued that policy entrepreneurs are defined by their willingness to invest various resources in the hope of a future return. Ambition leads people to make such investments. Further, the energy and commitment they display in pursuit of a cause enhance their credibility. As they display ambition, policy entrepreneurs get others to believe in what they are seeking to do and to join their endeavors. In his famous speech before a joint session of the United States Congress on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy declared, “... I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.” This speech clearly demonstrated ambition. Kennedy made many similar speeches in the following months, all intended to get others across the US to share this ambition and get behind its achievement.

2.2. Social acuity

Policy entrepreneurship requires high levels of social acuity (Mintrom and Norman 2009). Opportunities to promote policy innovations do not come along with labels on them. They need to be perceived within complex social and political contexts. Through their social acuity, policy entrepreneurs discover how people are thinking about problems. They come to appreciate the concerns and motivations that drive others. And they develop ideas about how to construct effective advocacy efforts, how to make most use of networks of contacts, and what kinds of political support, policy arguments, and evidence will serve them best in particular policymaking venues. For example, during the twentieth century, many presidents of the United States sought to expand access to health care insurance for American citizens, especially the working poor (Peterson 2011). But President Barack Obama was the one who displayed sufficient social acuity to deduce how he might bring a disparate group of stakeholders together and maintain their support for long enough to be able to sign the Affordable Care Act into law in 2010.

2.3. Credibility

Policy entrepreneurship involves promoting policy innovations through building strong coalitions of support. To attract others to work with them, policy entrepreneurs must be deemed credible. They can achieve credibility in a number of ways. These include demonstrating expertise in a particular field, holding particular positions within or around government, or having a compelling narrative of their lives and their

past achievements. Others will commit to causes only where the leading figures strike them as having what it takes to make a difference (Mintrom 1997). At the time when President Kennedy advocated a Moon landing, nobody else on the planet could have done so with such credibility. As a popular president of a nation that had recently proven its massive technological and military superiority, he correctly judged that others would accord credibility to his ambition to do what at that point seemed impossible.

2.4. Sociability

Although they choose particular policy innovations to advocate, policy entrepreneurs must always consider how others will respond to their ideas and ambitions. Policy entrepreneurs must possess the ability to empathize with others and understand other people's needs. This calls for high levels of sociability (Mintrom 2000). Sociability is both conceptually and operationally different from social acuity. For all politicians, sociability is the lifeblood. It grants them the ability to go from discerning points of common interest between themselves and others to engaging with others in ways that make those others feel appreciated. Effective policy entrepreneurs use their sociability to expand their networks and build advocacy coalitions. In the process, they often help others to see how their specific actions can contribute to the bigger vision for policy change. For example, Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), who advocated overthrow of British rule in India via peaceful protest, went to great lengths to connect with ordinary people and win them to his cause. He spent a lot of time visiting rural communities across India, learning how to craft culturally appropriate messages that would inspire grass-roots commitment to change (Gardner 1993).

2.5. Tenacity

Policy entrepreneurs must be tenacious (Duckworth 2016; Mintrom 1997; Quinn and Quinn 2015). Tenacity is the willingness to keep working towards a bigger goal, even when that goal seems nowhere in sight. This quality is important because policy entrepreneurs typically operate in contexts that are highly complex and where the chances of achieving success can seem slim. Conveying the significance of a change effort can assist policy entrepreneurs as they seek to maintain the focus and commitment of those working with them. Martin Luther King Jr's famous "I Have a Dream" speech delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to the March on Washington in August 1963 is a classic statement of political tenacity in pursuit of a cause. Notice the tenacity conveyed in these words: "This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy."

3. Skills

Skills differ from attributes in that they can be learned. Indeed, the skills of strategic thinking, team building, collecting evidence, making arguments, engaging multiple audiences, negotiating, and networking are all taught in various educational settings.

On university campuses, such skills are most likely to be taught in schools of business, public policy, and public management.

3.1. Strategic thinking

When people think strategically, they choose a particular goal and then determine the set of actions they will need to take and the resources they will require to pursue that goal. Strategy is made challenging by the presence of other people and the uncertainty and potential turbulence others create for you as they choose their own goals and likewise figure out ways to achieve them. We should never assume that other people's observed actions and behaviors will remain unchanged in the face of our own interventions. In the language of game theory, strategic thinking is necessary in many situations because we are acting in conditions that are subject to continual change through the behavior of other rational actors (Dixit and Nalebuff 2008).

Thomas Kalil (2017) provided several useful insights on how strategic thinking aids policy entrepreneurship. These emerged through his tours of duty as a senior advisor – and self-styled policy entrepreneur – in the White House during the Clinton and Obama administrations. Among other things, Kalil emphasized the importance of starting out with a clear goal in mind, having a large and growing “toolbox” of policy solutions that could be applied to address specific problems, and developing effective ways to work with others and reduce the barriers to others supporting your proposals. In operating environments where everyone faces strong incentives to be highly professional and highly strategic, policy entrepreneurs must be adept at playing the game.

3.2. Team building

Like their counterparts in business, policy entrepreneurs must be team players. Individuals are often the instigators of change, but their strength does not come from the force of their ideas alone, or from their possession of superhuman powers. As Petridou (2014) has observed, “entrepreneurial actions are carried out by teams and not just one heroic, lonely individual” (p.S22). Policy entrepreneurs who get along well with others and who are well connected in their local policy contexts are more likely to achieve their policy goals (Kingdon 1984/2011; Mintrom and Salisbury 2014; Rabe 2004). That is because they understand the ideas, motives, and concerns of the people whose support they must garner. Often, the gathering of political intelligence and development of strategy happens in team settings. A classic example was reported by Roberts and King (1996). In their study of policy entrepreneurs promoting school choice in Minnesota, these researchers observed the formation of a tight-knit team of policy entrepreneurs. The team included people outside of the legislative process who had developed ideas inspired by their grass-roots connections as well as seasoned legislators who knew every detail of parliamentary procedures and understood effective ways to secure policy change. Mintrom (2000) reported similar kinds of team interaction in other jurisdictions in the United States where school choice has been pursued.

3.3. Collecting evidence

Policy entrepreneurs must be adept at collecting evidence and using it strategically to support their quest for policy change. John Kingdon (1984/2011) wrote about this, focusing on the way that evidence can be collected and used to highlight problems that require responses. Likewise, Diane Stone (1997) has drawn attention to the ways that evidence is used in policymaking. There are two key aspects to collection of evidence. The first is to be aware of what existing evidence can serve to advance a specific perspective on a problem. The second is to find ways to collect new evidence that can be used strategically to promote a specific policy innovation. Social scientists often despair at the lack of rigor associated with use of evidence in policy discussions (Head 2008; Hird 2005). From within the cut-and-thrust of politics, however, it is clear that no universal standard is applied to determining what evidence should be given most attention or should be conferred most credibility in policy discussions. The art of evidence collection is to establish a rigorous, defensible base of data to support a given position and to present it and discuss it in ways that most effectively draw others to the cause. None of this is easy. The most experienced and senior public servants often struggle with determining how best to advance policy discussions with elected decision-makers (Washington and Mintrom 2018).

3.4. Making arguments

Collecting evidence, while an important activity, becomes most powerful for advocacy purposes when that evidence is used to make compelling arguments. Policy entrepreneurs need the skill of making arguments effectively if they are to have the kind of influence they need to achieve policy change. Those arguments need to be made to both build support for a policy innovation and to diminish opposition to change. When gaps in evidence and data serve to weaken a preferred position, it is incumbent on the policy entrepreneur to consider ways that new evidence or data can be found. This means that making good arguments purely on the substance of a policy issues can take years and months, not days. However, beyond what is needed to fight what Gramsci called a “war of position” (Cox 1983), policy entrepreneurs must also be adept at tactical argumentation, at making persuasive arguments at every turn, in order to promote their policy innovation. When policy entrepreneurs are good at making arguments, they become better able to win others to their cause and build coalitions of supporters.

3.5. Engaging multiple audiences

Many professionals spend a lot of their work time generating and synthesizing knowledge that has the potential to change the minds of people holding a variety of position in the policymaking community and the broader polity. Although presenting that information in one way might make it persuasive to one particular group, to extend the influence of our work, we usually need to find ways to reach other audiences. Thus, we need to tell the same story in different ways. Doing so means emphasizing different points to different audiences while maintaining a consistent broader message. The

mechanics of telling the same story in different ways are often seen when organizations present the results of a major policy project. For example, it is commonplace to see the launch of a major report being accompanied by seminars, workshops, press releases, short videos, blogs, tweets, and a strategically chosen series of one-on-one meetings with key decision-makers or stakeholders.

Policy entrepreneurs must find ways to engage multiple audiences. This requires carefully reflecting on the nature of the content and mode of delivery that will be most effective in making the desired connection with each specific audience. This is the practical manifestation of what William Riker called “heresthetic” – the discovery and emphasis of specific common interests that will lead multiple parties to support an idea that, at the outset, might seem unlikely to gain much support at all (Riker 1986; Shepsle 2003). The work of engaging multiple audiences is essential for building support for a policy innovation, reducing opposition to it, and maintaining the commitment of advocacy coalitions.

3.6. Negotiating

Policy entrepreneurs seek to change the status quo through the introduction of policy innovations. However, people who benefit from the status quo rarely welcome someone with plans to disrupt it. This inevitably raises the prospect that the things policy entrepreneurs talk about and the actions they take will fuel conflict and meet with resistance. Given this, the skill of negotiating can be of high value to a policy entrepreneur. This skill can assist a policy entrepreneur to win support from those who stand to gain from policy change. It can also assist in reducing the emergence of conflict and the scope of conflict from those who stand to lose from that change. The literature on negotiation and conflict management frequently emphasizes the value of focusing on interests rather than positions. For policy entrepreneurs, this means recognizing that policy changes typically deliver a spectrum of impacts. The key is to look for ways to make positive impacts salient and find ways to reduce negative impacts or mitigate them by offering additional benefits that tend to compensate for any losses (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991). Any knowledge and experience that can help policy entrepreneurs to effectively structure negotiations and work through them will serve them well as they pursue their policy goals. In this regard, policy entrepreneurs must often act like politicians engaging in the art of logrolling – that is doing a favor in one context in the expectation of receiving an equivalent return favor in another (Carrubba and Volden 2000).

3.7. Networking

Stretching back to Mohr’s (1969) study of organizational innovation and Walker’s (1969) study of the spread of policy innovations, we find that those actors most able to promote change in specific contexts have typically acquired relevant knowledge from elsewhere. Kammerer and Namhata (2018) and True and Mintrom (2001), among others, have demonstrated that engagement in relevant policy networks spanning across jurisdictions can significantly increase the likelihood that advocates for policy change will achieve success. Many scholars of the policymaking process have portrayed

it as something equivalent to a group of continuous conversations among interested parties (Kingdon 1984/2011; Majone 1989; Mintrom 2003). The content of these conversations changes over time, as do the people involved. Yet the procedures followed in formal political institutions, such as city halls and legislatures, help to structure policy conversations in and around these centers of power and support the emergence of norms of appropriate formal and informal behavior among participants (March and Olsen 2006). The set of ongoing interactions among participants in these policy conversations can be thought of as representing ties in policy networks. Anyone seeking to have influence in policymaking must develop excellent awareness of the nature of the policy networks operating around them and determine effective ways to participate in them (Goyal, Howlett, and Chindarkar 2019; Mintrom 2003). Often the most important connections get made via intermediaries – a phenomenon that sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973) coined “the strength of weak ties.”

4. Strategies

The attributes and skills of policy entrepreneurs reviewed above offer important insights into how such individuals manifest themselves in the world, and how they work with others. These attributes and skills contribute to the effective deployments of key strategies we will now discuss.

In reviewing common strategies of policy entrepreneurs, I do not seek to rank their relative importance. All policy entrepreneurs deploy these strategies to a greater or lesser extent. Some rely more heavily on specific strategies rather than others. This reflects the nature of the political contexts they are operating in and their own capabilities. For example, some policy entrepreneurs might show themselves to be highly adept at framing or reframing policy problems. In the process, they can make it easier to draw together coalitions of people supporting the policy innovations they are promoting. At other times, policy entrepreneurs might display considerable strength in networking. Those who are adept at networking across jurisdictions can often identify policy innovations and advocacy strategies that they can subsequently pursue in their own jurisdictions. However, to do this well, they must either have sound networks in and around local policymaking venues, or be highly effective at working with people who do. As we will see, all of the strategies reviewed here indicate a need for high levels of social acuity, sociability, and tenacity. In addition, if policy entrepreneurs lack motivation and credibility, then knowledge of how to deploy these strategies will be of little use. If you want to be a policy entrepreneur, you have to commit to a seriousness of purpose in developing your skills and deploying strategies that would leave most people scratching their heads.

4.1. Problem framing

The political dynamics of problem definition have been explored extensively by policy scholars over the past few decades (Allison 1971; Baumgartner and Jones 1993/2009; Nelson 1984; Rochefort and Cobb 1994; Schneider and Ingram 1993; Schön and Rein 1994). Problems in the policy realm invariably come with

multiple attributes. How those problems get framed – or what attributes are made salient in policy discussions – can determine what individuals and groups will pay attention to them. This suggests that advocates of policy change can improve their chances of building winning coalitions if they portray problems in new ways (see, e.g. Stone 1997). Problem framing, then, can be used to shape how people relate specific problems to their own interests. Viewed in this way, framing of policy problems is always a political act. Effective problem framing requires the combination of social acuity with skills in conflict management and negotiation (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991; Heifetz 1994).

There are several common tactics that policy entrepreneurs use when framing problems. Among other things, these tactics include presenting evidence in ways that suggest a crisis is at hand (Nelson 1984; Stone 1997), finding ways to highlight failures of current policy settings (Baumgartner and Jones 1993/2009; Henig 2008), and drawing support from actors beyond the immediate scope of the problem (Levin and Sanger 1994; Roberts and King 1991; Schattschneider 1960). Recent work by Dewulf and Bouwen (2012) has emphasized the interactional nature of problem framing. This casts policy entrepreneurs as conversationalists who construct the meaning of situations through discussion with others, rather than as architects who establish frames in advance of discussion, with the intention of using rhetorical skills to persuade others to adopt them as is.

Ken Livingstone, the former Mayor of London, did much to create the highly influence C40 group. His actions offer a lesson in the power of problem framing. Livingstone's fundamental problem framing act involved representing cities – rather than nation-states – as central agents in the response to climate change. By framing climate change as a fundamental issue facing urban populations, Livingstone showed other city leaders how to assert themselves as central players on climate change policy (Betsill and Bulkeley 2007). Members of the group subsequently came to frame the increasing pressures that cities are facing – population growth, planning policy, infrastructure provision, and so on – as presenting major opportunities to lower their carbon footprint through more efficient infrastructure and planning (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Rabe 2004; Victor et al. 2005). Further, Livingstone's framing of climate change as an urgent matter also helped him advance the view that there are already many helpful practical actions being taken in cities around the world. As Livingstone told the story, a great deal of good could be achieved – and achieved quickly – through cross-jurisdictional sharing of knowledge of what works. By promoting this portrait of cities, Livingstone argued for more extensive interconnection of an already established capacity for both mitigating and adapting to climate change.

4.2. Using and expanding networks

Policy entrepreneurs understand that their networks of contacts represent repositories of skills and knowledge which they can draw upon to support their initiatives (Burt 2000; Knoke 1990). Mintrom and Vergari (1998) showed that engagement in cross-jurisdictional networks helps policy entrepreneurs as they seek to gain legislative consideration for policy innovations. Meanwhile, for the same set of policy entrepreneurs,

engagement in networks in and around government in their home jurisdictions is vital for gaining legislative adoption of those policy innovations. In short, the external ties matter for idea generation, and the diffusion of ideas. The internal ties matter for actually making change happen. These observations are consistent with findings of Arnold, Nguyen Long, and Gottlieb (2017) who applied a sophisticated approach to network analysis to explore how policy entrepreneurs in the state of New York engaged in advocacy efforts regarding high-volume hydraulic fracturing. They found that policy entrepreneurs who enjoyed a larger coalition of allied interests in the relevant municipal governance network tended to attain more policy success. Further, those who sought to upset the status quo – which typically meant those opposed to fracturing – benefited from being able to access and deploy novel, policy-relevant information and resources. By doing so, they were better able to challenge the pro-economic development interests that often dominate local government. These observations on the power of networks are also consistent with the findings of Anderson, DeLeo, and Taylor (2019) regarding the crucial use that policy entrepreneurs make of credible information provision as they seek to gain trust with legislators and influence agenda setting.

4.3. Working with advocacy coalitions

Working with advocacy coalitions is closely related to building teams and making use of network connections. Paul Sabatier (1988) developed the Advocacy Coalition Framework, which has been highly influential among scholars of public policy. Sabatier (1988) defined an Advocacy Coalition as “people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system – for example, a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions – and who show a nontrivial degree of coordinated activity over time” (p. 139). The “glue” that holds an advocacy coalition together is its members’ shared beliefs over core policy matters. The Advocacy Coalition Framework assumes that members of coalitions will disagree often on minor matters, but that disagreement will be limited. The framework rejects the possibility that “coalitions of convenience” motivated by “short-term self-interest” can have lasting impacts on policy directions. Mintrom and Vergari (1996) used evidence from Michigan to show how policy entrepreneurs promoting educational change worked with and influenced an established advocacy coalition to promote policy change. While there may be times when policy entrepreneurs work to establish advocacy coalitions, it is reasonable to expect that they more frequently engage in actions that serve to build on the strengths of coalitions that already exist in some form.

The effort of Robert Klein to secure government funding for stem cell research in California offers a good example of how a policy entrepreneur can work with an advocacy coalition (Mintrom 2015). In 2002, California became the first state in the United States to pass legislation that explicitly allowed stem cell research involving both the destruction and donation of human embryos. The bill was intended to bolster the attractiveness of California as a location for stem cell researchers. No new funding was associated with passage of this law. The subsequent political action that opened up major funding streams for stem cell research in California revolved around the drafting

and approval of a citizen proposition, Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act of 2004.

Klein spearheaded the move to secure extensive support for stem cell research in California. Klein, a multi-millionaire and graduate of the Stanford Law School at Stanford University, made his fortune through the development of state-funded low-income housing in California. During his career, he gained extensive experience engaging in quiet actions to secure political support for property development activities.

Klein sought to convince the voters of California to support Proposition 71. To do so, he first had to engage in a great deal of intermediate work to gain support from powerful allies. He did not build a new advocacy coalition from the ground up. Rather, he found ways to bring together a range of entities already working in advocacy coalitions. Part of his genius involved encouraging these coalitions to work together in a coordinated fashion to support the policy change he was seeking. On this score, it is useful to observe that universities in the state, which stood to gain financially from the initiative, assisted in development of the proposition. Universities have good reason to be completely across all relevant state legislation. Consequently, they could support Klein without deviating from their standard operating procedures. Yet, in the process, they solved a potentially huge problem for Klein – how to devise a proposition that would achieve what was intended while still garnering a winning proportion of voter support. Other entities contributed in other ways, and in so doing became part of the coalition supporting the proposition.

The size of a coalition can be crucial for demonstrating the degree of support a proposal for policy change enjoys. Just as importantly, the composition of a coalition can convey the breadth of support for a proposal. That is why policy entrepreneurs often work to gain support from groups that might appear as unlikely allies for a cause. Used effectively, the composition of a coalition can help to deflect the arguments of opponents of change (Baumgartner and Jones 1993/2009). In the case of Bob Klein with Proposition 71, he found ways to make his proposal attractive to many ordinary citizens in the state. Most obviously, he took his own story of having a son fighting debilitating diabetes to build support from others who could identify with him, or who knew of families with loved ones who could benefit from advances in stem cell research.

4.4. Leading by example

Leadership by example is another way that policy entrepreneurs can effectively promote their proposals for policy innovation. Leading by example helps to make the pursuit of policy change believable. Risk aversion among decision makers presents a major challenge for actors seeking to promote significant policy change. Policy entrepreneurs often take actions intended to reduce the perception of risk among decision makers. A common strategy involves engaging with others to clearly demonstrate the workability of a policy proposal. For several decades, those promoting deregulation of infrastructural industries in the United States – both at the state and national level – relaxed regulatory oversight in advance of seeking legislative change (Derthick and Quirk 1985; Teske 2004). These preemptive actions reduced the ability of opponents to block change by engendering fears about possible consequences. For similar reasons,

foundations have funded pilot projects associated with expansion of health insurance coverage (Oliver and Paul-Shaheen 1997), the use of school vouchers (Mintrom and Vergari 2009; Moe 1995), and support for early childhood education programs (Knott and McCarthy 2007). In all instances, the creation of working models of the proposed change served to generate crucial information about program effectiveness and practicality.

When they lead by example – taking an idea and turning it into action themselves – agents of change signal their genuine commitment to improved social outcomes. This can do a lot to win credibility with others and, hence, build momentum for change (Kotter 1996; Quinn 2000). Further, when policy entrepreneurs take action, they can sometimes create situations where legislators look out of touch (Mintrom 1997). In such situations, the risk calculations of legislators can switch from a focus on the consequences of action to a focus on the consequences of inaction.

4.5. *Scaling up change processes*

Those seeking to promote broad policy change must pay careful attention to scaling up their advocacy efforts. Often, this requires starting off by securing desired changes in one jurisdiction and then using those changes as evidence to support changes in other jurisdictions. Earlier, I mentioned the case of Ken Livingstone with climate change as an illustration of effective problem framing. The case also illustrates how scaling up can occur. Livingstone was incredibly successful in building upon long-established linkages among large cities around the world to promote his agenda for action on climate change. His activism to bring other cities on board and to then create partnerships between C40 and other advocate organizations resulted in remarkable success in terms of the scaling up of advocacy (Mintrom and Luetjens 2017).

In a different way, William Hague, British Foreign Secretary (2010–2014), was also highly successful in scaling up support for efforts to prevent sexual violence against women. Sexual violence during war and conflict is not a new phenomenon but its use in contemporary war and conflict appears to have increased. Since the mass rapes that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda in the 1990s, widespread, systematic use of sexual violence has been documented in many conflicts. In 2000, the U.N. Security Council adopted its first resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Resolution 1325 recognized the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. As British Foreign Secretary, William Hague mobilized the U.K. government and the international community around his Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), which he launched in 2012. The launch took place at a screening of Angelina Jolie's film *In the Land of Blood and Honey*. As well as being an American actress, Jolie was at the time Special Envoy of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Hague's well-chosen actions had cascade effects that prompted further change initiatives led by others elsewhere around the globe (Davies and True 2017).

5. Conclusion

Policy entrepreneurs are energetic actors who engage in collaborative efforts in and around government to promote policy innovations. Policy entrepreneurship is tough

work. It often takes a lot of courage. By definition, the pursuit of change – unless it is a very tame kind of change – is highly disruptive. Against that backdrop, most policy entrepreneurs will be viewed by a few people as heroic and by everyone else as trouble-makers or crazies. That is because change makes many people feel uneasy. But, as Steve Jobs famously reminded us, “the crazy ones” are the ones who push humanity forward. They begin with a desire to change the world. And sometimes they achieve it.

This article is for those who desire to make a difference, who recognize the enormous challenges now facing humanity, and the need for individuals to step forward and catalyze change. By setting forth research-based observations about the attributes and skills required of policy entrepreneurs and common strategies they employ, I have sought to give those who desire to drive policy innovation a better sense of what it takes and how it might be achieved.

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