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Paper Abstract

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T01P11 - The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Research Challenges and Opportunities in Asia

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Title

Official Decision Makers as Policy Broker

Abstract

In South Korea, the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) has been applied to more than one hundred policy cases across a wide range of topic. In 2014 alone, 12 articles that applied the ACF in a variety of policy areas were published, and two theoretical papers discussed applicability of the ACF in Korean context. The framework’s popularity demonstrates its high explanatory power, but a number of studies address differences in the policy environment that the ACF assumes and the actual policy environment in Korea (Baek, 2008; Kim & Lee, 2009). Since the ACF is designed upon the premise of a pluralistic society where well-organized interests groups have multiple outlets to influence policy process (Sabatier & Weible, 2007), it seems Korean scholars made adjustments to the framework (Kim & Park, 2011; Lee & Woo, 2013; Lee & Kwon, 2013; Cho, 2009) to better describe policy process in which bureaucrats exercise much authority.

One particular challenge to applying the ACF in Korea is the framework’s stress on the role of policy broker (Kim, 2006; Park & Choi, 2011; Chung & Chung, 2012). According to the ACF, policy outcome is a result of compromise between the two coalitions whose belief system was modified as a result of policy-oriented learning, hurting stalemate, or external shocks (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). However, since official decision-makers often lead the policy process in Korea, there is little room for other actors to directly affect policy outcome. It is question if nonprofit organizations and interests groups are capable of taking the role of policy broker in Korean policy setting, and even if they do, quantitative meta-analysis result from 47 ACF studies suggests that nonprofit organizations and policy experts take the role of policy broker
only to provide information to official policymakers; their role as a negotiator is very limited (Suh and Choi, 2014).

Given the setting, some recent studies focus on official decision makers and their role as policy brokers. Choi and Ji (2008) presented four types of policy broker in Korea by the level of their involvement in policy process. They further linked each type to Wilson’s typology of politics --- official decision makers’ role as policy entrepreneurs is most closely associated with entrepreneurial politics, policy advocates with interest group politics, policy brokers with majoritarian politics, and blame avoiders with client politics.

Applying the four types of policy broker that Choi and Ji (2008) suggested, this paper seeks to conduct meta-analysis on the existing literature published in Korea in order to examine 1) what type of policy Korean scholars apply the ACF model, 2) what type of policy broker do proximate policymakers become of, and 3) how each type affects policy-learning and policy change. Approximately 50 case studies published in academic journals and dissertations that applied ACF will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is expected that the paper will contribute to understanding localized application of ACF in Korea and the role of official policymakers as policy brokers.

**Reference**


