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**EXPLAINING POLICY CHANGE:
A CASE STUDY OF ESTONIAN ALCOHOL POLICY**

Master's thesis

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author
of this Master's thesis and it has not been
submitted for examination to any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to understand why policies change. It proposes a theoretical model building on Advocacy Coalition Framework encompassing theoretical implications of agenda setting literature and Narrative Policy Framework proposing that in order to study policy change, policy agenda should be analyzed. This thesis seeks to provide a coherent and easily analyzable model to study how policy agenda changes and what factors contribute to it. To this aim, the case of Estonian alcohol policy is analyzed. It demonstrates that actors in the policy domain coalesce into (often competing) advocacy coalitions. Sometimes, external events open up windows of opportunities that provide the coalitions contingences to push their policy alternative to the agenda. To exploit those opportunities and to appeal for the support of public and political actors, coalitions use their available resources and the external events strategically in order to advance their policy alternative to the agenda. Framing attractive narratives is a strategy effectively used by the coalitions. Information, statistics and policy research are important resources that help to shape attractive narratives. However, resources are hierarchical with formal legal authority to make policy decisions outweighing others in determining policy change.

Keywords: *policy change, Advocacy Coalition Framework, policy narrative, agenda setting*

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is driven by its author's interest in why policies that have long demonstrated a significant inertia or only incremental change, sometimes suddenly face noticeable changes. It started out with the general notion that at times serious alternatives are posed to the existing policy and, while raising opposition and conflict, those options are deemed as viable policy alternatives by important actors. This in turn led to more specific questions about policy change: 1) what factors have an impact on policy change? 2) how can the actors in the policy field influence policy change?

However, an exploration of existing literature soon revealed that comprehensive theoretical models that could provide convincing answers to these questions are scarce. While the long dominating school of historical institutionalism (Hall and Taylor 1996; Immergut 1998) effectively explains how the existing structures produce inertia and constraints on the actors of the policy process, it fails to explain why and how new policy goals evolve and policies change. This thesis builds on the theoretical assumption shared by many scholars (Anderson 2008; Lieberman 2002; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, Zittoun 2009) that besides institutions, ideas matter in public policy-making. Therefore, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is used as the main theoretical grounds because it incorporates many sound theoretical assumptions across theories and helps to explain the complexity of policy change. The ACF explains the role of ideas in the policy process while agreeing that institutional rules affect actors' behavior (Sabatier 1993); it emphasizes the importance of external factors in affecting policy change, as argued by policy stream theorists (Kington 1995), and borrows the notion of competing interest groups from the traditional pluralist theory (Truman 1951) while elaborating it to incorporate a larger variety of actors.

However, the ACF has its shortcomings. It does not explain how and where beliefs become viable policy alternatives that policy makers decide upon. In this respect it resembles a black box where beliefs enter and policy change exits. To overcome these shortcomings and to understand what goes on in the box, other theoretical approaches are integrated into the framework to develop the theory. Notions from the agenda setting theory are employed to define the arena where policy

alternatives become policy decisions. Agenda setting theory also helps to explain the actions that actors take to advance their policy ideas.

As policy-making often entails strategically convincing other actors and the public to support one's political ideas, a constructivist approach is also integrated into the theoretical explanation by incorporating policy narratives as the main indication of policy beliefs (McBeth *et al.* 2007). As a result, an alternative theoretical framework is proposed, building on the assumptions of the ACF, encompassing agenda setting theory and notions from the narrative policy framework to research what factors determine whether a policy idea becomes a policy proposal, how this proposal reaches the agenda, advances in the agenda and how the advocates of the proposal and its opponents can strategically influence it.

The empirical part of this thesis studies the case of the Estonian alcohol policy. The relative stability in the policy field was interrupted in 2008 when new policy instruments to regulate national alcohol policy were introduced. Thus, the thesis analyses the critical junctures related to the introduction of new policy instruments in the Estonian alcohol policy from 2007 up to the present day. As the empirical analysis will demonstrate, the case is especially illuminating with regard to the theoretical framework since important assumptions of the ACF are visibly present – there are two groups that advocate for their policy idea that conflicts in several respects. Those groups include a large variety of actors from different fields who coordinate their activities. The case study illustrates how different groups advance their conflicting policy ideas and strategically employ resources and external events to put their policy alternatives on the agenda.

To study the case, a qualitative research strategy was used. Desk research was conducted to pin down important actors in the field and to outline the history of the policy domain and its evolution over the decades. Additionally, 15 interviews were conducted with the representatives of active groups in this field in order to research their policy ideas and how they advocate them. The case enables one to understand how resources and external events impact policy change and how they are strategically exploited. Moreover, the case study makes it possible to develop the theory by providing a real-life testing ground for the theoretical model proposed in the first part of the thesis.

1 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This thesis treats policy change largely as the modification of policy goals, the means used to achieve these or both (Kraft and Furlong 2015:100). The term policy change is usually theoretically not contested. However, the factors contributing to change and theories explaining why policies change are manifold. The different institutionalisms (historical, rational choice, discursive institutionalism) all contribute to the understanding of various aspects of the complex phenomenon of policy change. The school of historical institutionalism views policy change (or the lack thereof) as being impacted by institutional legacies (Hall, Taylor 1996). The rational choice institutionalism sees the actors in the policy process as driven by strategic calculus and expectations of how others are going to act (Hall, Taylor 1996; 945). The discursive institutionalism in turn stipulates that besides institutions, ideas matter because they give individual or collective actors the capacity to influence others' normative or cognitive beliefs (Carstensen and Schmidt 2016; 318) by developing strategies to convince others to support their policy alternatives (Beland 2009; 703).

The theories contribute to the understanding of different factors but lack a comprehensive approach and are therefore in themselves insufficient to explain the complexity of policy change that often manifests itself in contradictory ways – in significant inertia or notable change. Therefore, ACF is chosen as the main theoretical model mainly because it incorporates the aspects of several theoretical approaches that are cognitively deemed important in affecting policy change: the impact of ideas (beliefs), the rational strategic choice of the actors and also the role of institutions. Thus, the theoretical model employed in this thesis incorporates general assumptions from all three institutionalist thoughts previously outlined. The ACF helps to analyze the actions of a huge variety of actors across institutions and cross-cutting many segments of life.

The theoretical part of the thesis is organized as the following: the main assumptions of the ACF are first outlined and then the concepts constituting the framework of the ACF are explained. This is followed by a critique of the ACF and a discussion of its shortcomings. In order to compensate

for the shortcomings, the thesis introduces the agenda setting theory and narrative policy approach as possible means to develop the model into a more comprehensive framework for the analysis.

As the ACF gives resources and external events a key role in the process of policy change, the analysis proceeds with close examination of what resources and external events are important in affecting policy change. Thereafter, the agenda setting theory is discussed, as it helps to develop the ACF by introducing agenda change as the main goal of the actors that advocate for their preferred policy alternative. This is followed by an exploration of the way the resources and external events are strategically used by the actors in advocating for the agenda change, incorporating assumptions from the agenda setting theory and narrative policy framework.

1.1 Advocacy Coalition Framework: explaining factors that affect policy change

1.1.1 Core assumptions under the ACF

There are several assumptions that explain the context of the conceptual factors of ACF. Those assumptions are hereby explained.

The ACF assumes that it is useful to aggregate the actors of policy process under the concept of **policy subsystem**¹ - it is the group of people or organizations, interacting regularly over a decade or more to influence policy formulation and implementation within a given policy area/domain. (Sabatier 1998; 11). Hence, a policy field in this thesis is treated as having largely two attributes - a certain thematic field and people that wish to influence it regularly over a longer period of time.

People's interests in the policy field are manifested through **policy beliefs** that are bound by scope and topic to the policy subsystem (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrsted *et al.* 2014; 200). The ACF assumes that public policies incorporate theories of how to achieve the objectives and therefore can be conceptualized the same way as belief systems involving value priorities, perceptions of important causal relationships, perceptions of world states, the magnitude of the problem, perceptions of the efficacy of the various policy instruments, etc. (Sabatier 1998; 99).

¹ When referred to policy field, -realm, - domain, -area, they are connoted as a policy subsystem in terms of ACF in this thesis.

The beliefs are hierarchically organized. At the broadest level are the deep *core beliefs* that include general normative assumptions about human nature - fundamental values. Core beliefs are like deeply held personal philosophy, protected with great conviction (Jenkins-Smith *et al.* 2014) and even akin to religious convictions (Sabatier 1988; 145) - therefore they are difficult to change. Because of the policy actors' reluctance to change their core beliefs, the political discussion and action most often revolves around *secondary beliefs* that are narrow in scope and address detailed questions within a specific policy or program (Sabatier 1993; 30-32).

Belief systems are not mere representations of abstract ideas, but also incorporate causal patterns about what shapes the empirical world. An important source of this causal understanding is **technical and scientific information** that "can point to specific causal relations, problem attributes and sometimes policy alternatives" (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrsted *et al.* 2014; 201). It is claimed that the cumulative effect of findings from different studies and also from ordinary knowledge, i.e. empirics, has the greatest influence on policy (Lindblom and Cohen 1979). It is so because in order to realize policy goals over time, policy players also seek to learn instrumentally about how the world operates and about the effects of various governmental interventions. (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Sabatier 1998). One of ACF's central concepts is **policy-oriented learning**, which refers to relatively enduring alterations of thought or behavioral intentions that result from experience or new information and are concerned with the attainment or revision of the policy objectives (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

Policy players strive to translate their policy beliefs into policy before their opponents do – to do so they also seek allies among people who hold similar policy beliefs - they organize into **advocacy coalitions** (Sabatier and Weible 2007; 196). Advocacy coalitions consist of actors from a variety of public and private institutions at all levels of government, members of international organizations, interest groups and their legislative allies but also researchers, agency officials and even journalists. Those actors within a coalition share a set of **basic values, causal assumptions and problem perception** and engage in a non-trivial degree of **coordinated activity** over time (Sabatier 1998; 103; 107; 115). Coalitions coordinate their activities to alter the behavior of governmental institutions in order to achieve their policy objectives (Sabatier 1998; 117) - they attempt to translate their beliefs into governmental policies and programs.

Within the policy subsystem there usually exist 2 to 4 advocacy coalitions formed around important and often competing policy ideas (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 26). While most policies involve some level of compromise between competing ideas, there is usually a **dominant**

coalition that controls (most likely through resource superiority) subsystem policy and one or more **minority coalitions** as the ones vying for influence or for the absence of coordinated opposition (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 34; Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al 2014; 206). However, the concepts of dominant and minority coalitions are not defined in detail by the authors of the ACF. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the concepts are defined as follows: **dominant coalition** as the coalition whose policy ideas have a stronger representation in the policy, and **minority coalitions** as the ones whose policy ideas are still not represented in the policy to the degree they themselves find sufficient. Subsystems also have some actors not belonging to any coalitions, but they are hypothesized to be unimportant in the long run by the ACF (Sabatier 1998; 103).

1.1.2 Conceptual Categories of the ACF

The framework of the ACF as explained below, illustrates the policy process that is influenced by several conceptual categories and builds on the assumptions brought out in the previous section. Some conceptual factors under ACF are not explained in more detail because they rarely change within periods of decades and therefore they do not usually provide impetus for policy change within a policy subsystem (Sabatier and Weible 2007;193). Thus, to simplify the analysis, the following factors are omitted: distribution of natural resources; basic constitutional structures; the category of long-term coalition opportunity structures.

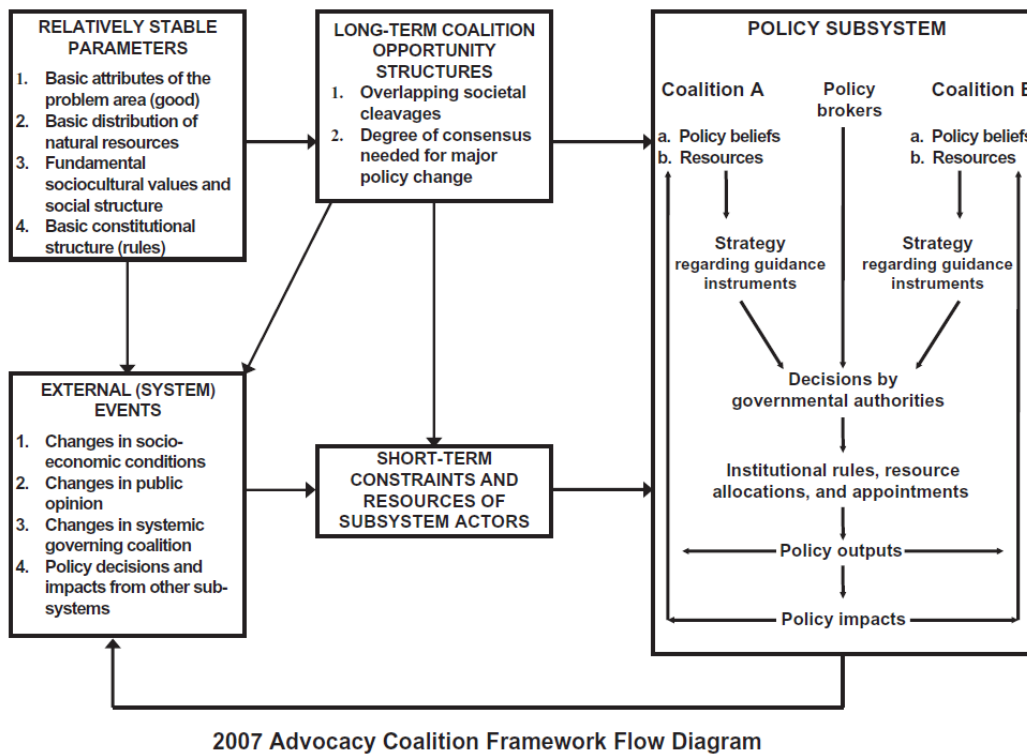


Figure 1: Framework of the ACF. Source: Weible, Sabatier, McQueen 2009

The **policy subsystem** category illustrates a case of two competing advocacy coalitions representing their actors' **policy beliefs** (a) and **resources** (b)². The coalitions use various strategies to influence the policy decisions of the governmental authorities. Some actors, seen as policy brokers, serve to mitigate conflict and help opponents reach agreements (Sabatier and Weible 2014). Policy decisions are fed back to the subsystem by policy outputs and outcomes partly through the process of policy-oriented learning and they have an impact on the coalitions' resources.

The relatively **stable system parameters** affect the subsystem through the more dynamic factors. An important set of factors impacting the policy subsystem are the **dynamic external events**,³ which are prone to change. The set of variables between external events and policy subsystem – **short-term constraints and resources of subsystem actors** – illustrate that changing external events may provide short-term opportunities that the coalitions can exploit (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt *et al.* 2014; 201-203). Therefore, they are not actually seen as separate resources of the

² The coalitions' internal resources are explained in more detail in section 1.3.

³ External events are explained in more detail in section 1.4.

coalitions but rather as possibilities that occasionally open up and provide convenient opportunities for one coalition and constrain the possibilities of actions of the other coalitions.

1.2. Critique of the ACF and introduction of alternative theoretical approaches

The ACF has been criticized in volumes over the decades and also updated in important aspects when critique has proven to be grounded. This chapter relies on the critique brought out by Schlager (1995), and Sato (1999) and complements it with some critical remarks of the author of this thesis about the shortcomings of the ACF. The chapter also proposes possible solutions to overcome them.

An important critique of the ACF comes from Schlager (1995:246), who claims that the ACF does not sufficiently explain the strategies coalitions use to reach their policy goals. According to the ACF, the strategies of the coalition affect the decisions of the authorities (Figure 1), but it is not sufficiently explained why and how coalitions strategically exploit external events and maximize resources in order to advance their policy beliefs. Broader societal and cultural trends and external events are not seen as an object of strategic use by the coalitions but rather as one-way influence that might open up new opportunities. However, how they exert their influence on policy change is not explained in ACF. To provide a better theoretical understanding how these factors are linked and also strategically used, the agenda setting theory is introduced into the analysis in this thesis when discussing external events and strategies.

It can also be claimed that the variable on Figure 1 -**short-term constraints and resources**- is not thoroughly explained under ACF. It creates conceptual confusion between those resources depicted under this variable and the ones coalitions use to influence policy decisions within the subsystem. Therefore, it is posed in this analysis that the well-developed concept of **window of opportunity** could be used instead of this variable as it provides a conceptual clarification, which can be useful for the purposes of operationalization. Windows of opportunities are seen as short periods of time when several external factors affecting the agenda come together in an opportunity for greater attention to an issue (Birkland 2005; 116-117). When new problems appear, a turnover of elected officials or changes in national mood occur, new opportunities may be created to push problems and proposals to the fore (Kington 1995; 203) creating the possibility for policy change.

This thesis also claims that the ACF does not explain how beliefs are voiced by the advocacy coalitions, which makes them difficult to operationalize for the empirical analysis. Moreover, according to Sato (1999) the ACF is underdeveloped in terms of explaining how beliefs are translated into policy alternatives. Thus, it should be clarified how beliefs advance to being actively considered and decided upon by the government authorities. **Policy alternative** is defined in this thesis as different policy proposals in a policy field that are recognized as viable policy options providing alternative **problem perceptions** and posing alternative **solutions for the problems**.

This thesis proposes that the **Narrative Policy Framework** (NPF) comes in handy when understanding how policy beliefs are voiced by the coalitions and helps to operationalize the concept. NPF claims that individuals in the advocacy coalitions produce policy narratives that are formed around policy beliefs and reflect their preferred policy outcome (Shanahan *et al.* 2011; 545). These narratives are strategically constructed stories intended to persuade the public or the policy makers of the policy proposal that the coalition advances (Shanahan *et al.* 2011; 546). Therefore, policy narratives encompass policy beliefs and also provide the missing link in the ACF between beliefs and policy proposals. This is because the tracking of policy narratives enables one to learn about the policy beliefs and also the policy proposals of the coalitions. For that reason the empirical part of this thesis focuses on policy narratives of the coalitions and derives information on the underlying policy beliefs from an analysis of the narratives.

To understand how policy alternatives become policy decisions, the concepts of the agenda setting theory are introduced in section 1.5. As a useful addition to the ACF, the agenda setting theory introduces the fora where policy beliefs become policy alternatives and where those alternatives are acted upon by the authorities.

1.3 Policy resources

While the belief system determines the direction in which political actors will seek to move governmental programs, their ability to do so critically depends on the resources of the advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 29). Sabatier and Weible (2007: 202-203) have presented a typology of policy-relevant resources that participants can use to influence policy:

- **formal legal authority to make policy decisions** – the ACF views actors in positions of legal authority as potential members of advocacy coalitions. As institutional members provide other resources for different coalitions, they are an important resource themselves (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993;29);
- **public opinion** – supportive public and opinion polls are a major resource for policy participants in ways further explained in section 1.5.2;
- **information** – information about problem severity and its causes and costs-benefits of policy alternatives is an important resource for winning battles against opponents and also to provoke learning;
- **mobilizable troops** – members of the public who share the beliefs of the policy elites are often used as an inexpensive resource to engage in political activities;
- **financial resources** – money can be used to purchase other resources, for example research or think-tanks to produce information;
- **skillful leadership** – skillful entrepreneurs are required to bring about actual change in policy as skillful leaders develop attractive coalition vision and exploit other resources efficiently.

The theoretical framework places an emphasis on the **role of information**. According to the ACF, policy research is used to alter the perceptions and conceptual apparatus of policy makers over time through the cumulative effect of findings from different studies (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 16). When dominant coalitions revise their understanding about the existing policies, i.e. learn, policies may start to change (Norhstedt 2005).

The framework presupposes that while members of the coalitions learn through the increased knowledge of the problem parameters and the factors affecting them, such learning is usually instrumental – so that while information is sought to understand the world, the main purpose of it is to further the policy objectives (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 19). It should also be noted that the theory predicts that owing to the rigidity of the belief system, such learning predominantly affects the secondary aspects of the policy (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen 2009) while people try to keep their core beliefs intact. Policy-oriented learning is especially difficult during high levels of conflict between opposing coalitions. In such cases, information is used to attack or protect one's values rather than to learn (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999).

Change occurs when the signals of information from the outside world are extraordinarily strong or accumulate over time and overcome the friction of opposing forces (Baumgartner and Jones

2012:8). Therefore, in a world of scarce resources where learning gives a competitive advantage to advance one's goals, those who can marshal persuasive evidence can also conserve their political resources and are more likely to win in the long run than those that neglect technical arguments (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 45).

It is claimed by Norhstedt (2011) that while all the resources are important at one point or another, they have a different impact. **Formal legal authority to make policy decisions** has the capacity to influence policy change more than other resources. Therefore, resources should be pictured as being hierarchical with formal legal authority being at the top as the most influential. Formal legal authority is seen as especially substantial in the strong multiparty competition system where there are veto players whose agreements are needed for policy change to happen (Norhstedt 2011;480). It is claimed that the greater the number of veto players and the greater the competition between them, the less likely a significant policy change becomes (Zohlnhöfer 2009; 109). The possibility of policy change therefore depends on the preferences of the political veto players (*ibid.*; 100).

1.4 External events that facilitate change

This section explains the external system events as depicted on Figure 1. It also incorporates some notions of the agenda setting literature to develop a better understanding of how actors use these events to advocate for a policy change.

External events are often needed to push for a major policy change (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). Thus, policy change may be induced by “external shocks” – challenges stemming from outside the political system (Zohlnhöfer 2009; 103). The occurrence of a large scale event may pave the way for major changes in policy by changing the coalition structure and redistributing political resources (Nohrstedt 2011; 463).

The main exogenous events affecting critical resources are: **changes in socio-economic conditions, changes in public opinion, changes in systemic governing coalition and changes in other subsystems**. For example, regime change, disaster, severe economic recession, so-called critical elections, changes in ruling government coalition or changes in other subsystems may shift agendas, focus public attention and attract the attention of key decision-making sovereigns (Sabatier and Weible 2007; 198-199; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 22-23). The reason why

changes in government composition may lead to policy change is rather straightforward: parties pursue different programs and change in government complexion will most likely lead to changes in policy preferences (Zohlnhöfer 2009; 103). External events might also induce shifts in members of the minority coalition or produce changes in public opinion that tilt the balance of power and pave the way for major policy change (Nohrstedt 2011;463).

As ACF stipulates, it is also possible that internal shocks or so-called **focusing events** disrupt subsystem so much that it leads to the path of policy change. Focusing events are “sudden, relatively rare events that spark intense media and public attention because of their sheer magnitude, or, sometimes, because of the harm they reveal.” (Birkland 2005; 118). Focusing events can lead groups, media, political leaders, the public, etc. to pay greater attention to new problems or to existing but dormant problems (Birkland 2005; 119). When such crises undermine the dominant policy ideas, the extant paradigms may start to incorporate ideas from other paradigms in order to ensure policy’s survival (Donnelly and Hogan 2012; 344).

Therefore, these external events/shocks/crises/focusing events all work in three ways. Firstly, those instances may provoke social learning that brings people (public and elites) to new attitudes and political disposition (Lindblom and Cohen 1979; 19). Secondly they may redistribute important resources (money, public opinion, formal authority). Thirdly, those new resources might change the power structure of the subsystem by providing minority coalitions advantages before the dominant coalition.

1.5 Changing the agenda: a strategic view to policy change

1.5.1 Agenda change as a prerequisite of policy change

The ability of group acting in coalition to influence policy change is not only about who can make the technically and rhetorically most persuasive argument (Birkland 2005; 114) but it depends upon the power to raise the issue on the agenda or to prevent an issue from the agenda and from becoming a policy (Birkland 2005; 115). Thus, in order to induce policy change, groups must a) make a persuasive argument (using all the information they can get), and b) have (or gain) the power to raise the issue on the agenda or prevent it from reaching the agenda.

Agenda is a list of things that are being discussed and sometimes acted upon by an institution, news media or larger public. Agenda may be as concrete as a list of bills before a legislature but also include a series of beliefs about the problem and how to address it. (Birkland 2005; 108, 110). Owing to the limited amount of time and resources, only a limited number of ideas reach the **institutional agenda** – the list of ideas up for an active and serious consideration of decision makers (Birkland 2005:111). A necessary precondition for a change in policy is that the policy idea must be acted upon by a government body – it means the idea must reach the next level of the agenda – the **decision agenda** (Birkland 2005; 112).

The reason why agenda change is needed for policy change, is evident, but why and how agenda changes, needs further causal linking. Inherently, it is a question of why some issues gain attention of the government. It is proposed, that one of the crucial factors to determine which problems gain the attention of the political actors and thus rise to the agenda, is the **priorities of the public**. Baumgartner and Jones (2006; 20) claim that the public is definitely not a bystander, but is seriously involved in the agenda setting process and demonstrate substantial evidence of **congruence between the priorities of the public and law making activities of the national government** over a long period of time. Kington (1995; 146-147) agrees that national mood⁴ has important impact on policy agendas and policy outcomes, as it has the ability to promote higher agenda status and direct the course of action of governmental officials (*ibid.* 65)

Hence, advocacy coalitions must strive to construct a problem that is appealing both to the public and to the political actors in order to influence the agenda. Problem construction is of essence because it defines what solutions are chosen (Baumgartner 2005; 126). Thus, actors in the policy field must persuade others, that “the problem is real or that the problem cited, is a *real* problem“(*ibid.* 126). At the same time, dominant coalition try to retain control over the problem definition and such problems are suppressed by the dominant actors in policy making by attempting to keep problems and underlying policy issues low on the agenda. (*ibid.* 2005; 115).

Hence, the construction of the problem is of essence in defining what issues gain public attention, and therefore gain the attention of the political actors and reach the agenda. Change becomes likely when less powerful groups’ construction of the problem becomes more prevalent (Birkland 2005; 115). However, the effectiveness of problem construction lies not only in the ability of the coalition to master the arguments but it is claimed, that problem construction is also embedded in our

⁴ National mood – a large number of people thinking along common lines. It is also known as the climate of the country, changes in public opinion, and broad social movements (Kington 1995; 146).

culture. As Birkland (2005:126) demonstrates analyzing the construction of the problem of drunk driving: “What if the problem is embedded deeply in our culture, one that prizes recreation, relaxation and even glamour and links these benefits to relatively easy access to alcohol by the adults” (Birkland 2005;126). Nevertheless, the actions of the coalitions greatly influence what problems gain the attention of the public and are raised to the agenda. Those strategic actions are viewed in greater detail in the becoming section.

1.5.2 Strategies for getting a policy proposal on the agenda

While in some instances, problems are so pressing that they “set agendas by themselves” (Kington 1005; 198), in most cases, agenda-setting requires deliberate action by policy advocates. Even in the occurrence of facilitating developments that create the window of opportunity, group action is needed to press for change. These events must be skillfully exploited to have any effect on policy, as they are in themselves often insufficient to generate policy change and require an advocacy coalition that seizes the moment and mobilizes political resources (Norhstedt 2011, 463).

Firstly, advocates of a policy proposal often **keep their proposals ready**. When a pressing problem is demonstrated, a policy proposal can be coupled to the problem as a solution. Sometimes, such external events as changes in administration, call for a different political direction. Then the policy proposals that fit the new administration’s direction, come to the fore, and rise to the agenda. (Kington 1995; 201)

Information has acritical role in policy change because flows of information indicate whether a problem is worthy of government attention or not (Baumgartner and Jones 2012; 6) However, information must be interpreted and translated into policy action by the policy actors (Baumgartner and Jones 2012; 7). To mobilize the public and also other potential supporters behind the coalition’s policy alternative, an **attractive policy narrative** is often formed, one that is consistent with the beliefs of the coalition (Sabatier and Weible 2007; 203). Coalitions use agreed upon symbols to construct their vision of problems, causation and solution. These images and symbols are made public because as long as those narratives are contained by the society, remain invisible and uncontested, the agenda access for the minority coalitions is difficult. (Birkland 2005; 115).

Narratives are constructed in an attempt to influence policy towards favorable directions (Shanahan *et al.* 2011). Coalitions use symbols and images to induce sympathy for their cause

(Birkland 2005; 115) – most commonly the stories of decline or the stories of control (Stone 2002). The language and symbols are always used in narratives in a strategic way to call in reinforcements to one's side in the conflict (Stone 2002; 155).

To advance one's policy alternative, advocacy coalitions often use **research, statistics and policy analysis** (Sabatier 1993) to construct the problem and advocate for the solution. It is communicated through their narrative. Changes in indicators, i.e. changes in the statistics may indicate that the problem in the core of the policy is getting worse thus the issue will gain considerable public attention (Birkland 2005; 115). Strength in numbers also results in greater attention from the policy makers (Birkland 2005; 122). Thus, constructing an indicator and getting others to agree to its worth becomes major preoccupation for those pressing for policy change" (Kington 1995; 93).

Information (indicators, analysis, surveys, etc.) may be **used selectively** by different groups to advance their preferred policy ideas or to oppose those of their adversaries (Birkland 2005; 117). In those circumstances, the groups often engage in an analytical debate presenting technical substantiations for their position (Sabatier 1993; 49) and using policy analysis in an "advocacy" fashion to justify and elaborate one's policy position (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1994, 47-48). The opponents of the policy alternative often use the strategies of **challenging the validity of the data** concerning the seriousness of the problem; **challenging the causal assumptions** concerning technical aspects or **concerning the efficacy of institutional arrangements**; or attempt to mobilize political opposition by **pointing to the costs**. (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 46-47)

Going public with the problem is an important strategic move (as demonstrated in the previous chapter) because greater attention to the problem area tends to increase negative public attitudes toward the present situation (status quo) (Birkland 2005). Thus, changes may then start to happen because public opinion is a powerful incentive that may direct governments to do something and also restrain them from doing something (Kington 1994:65). Garnering public support is a typical strategy also because a supportive public is more likely to elect coalition supporters to positions of authority and thus help sway the elections (Sabatier and Weible 2007; 203).

For minority coalitions, garnering public support might be difficult. **Focusing events** such as a crisis or a disaster call attention to the problem (Kington 1994; 95) and advocates of a new policy may take advantage of such politically favorable moments to claim that their proposal is a solution

to a pressing problem (Kington 1994; 202). However, it is claimed that the more visible the policy domain *per se*, the less important are these kinds of focusing events (Kington 1994; 95).

Otherwise, the strategies used by the coalition members to increase their resources are largely those identified by the interest group theory: to augment their budget, recruit members with legal authority, expertise or money, place their members or allies in positions of legal authority through elections or political appointment, etc. (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; 29).

1.6 Defining research questions

It is hereby premised that actors who share common policy beliefs coalesce into advocacy coalitions to advance their policy beliefs. To translate those beliefs into policies, advocacy coalitions use information to construct problems and define solutions that are appealing to the public and gain the attention of the policy makers. They form attractive narratives. To make the policy change happen, the actors strive to get their policy alternatives on the agenda. They use different resources and apply different strategies in order to do that. Other groups, opposing the policy alternative use their resources strategically to impede it from gaining access to the agenda and from advancing in the agenda (from institutional to decision agenda). Sometimes, external events provide windows of opportunities redistributing important resources of the subsystem making it easier for the coalitions to access the agenda.

This thesis proposes thus a framework for studying policy change, which encompasses ACF, notions from the policy narrative theory and agenda setting:

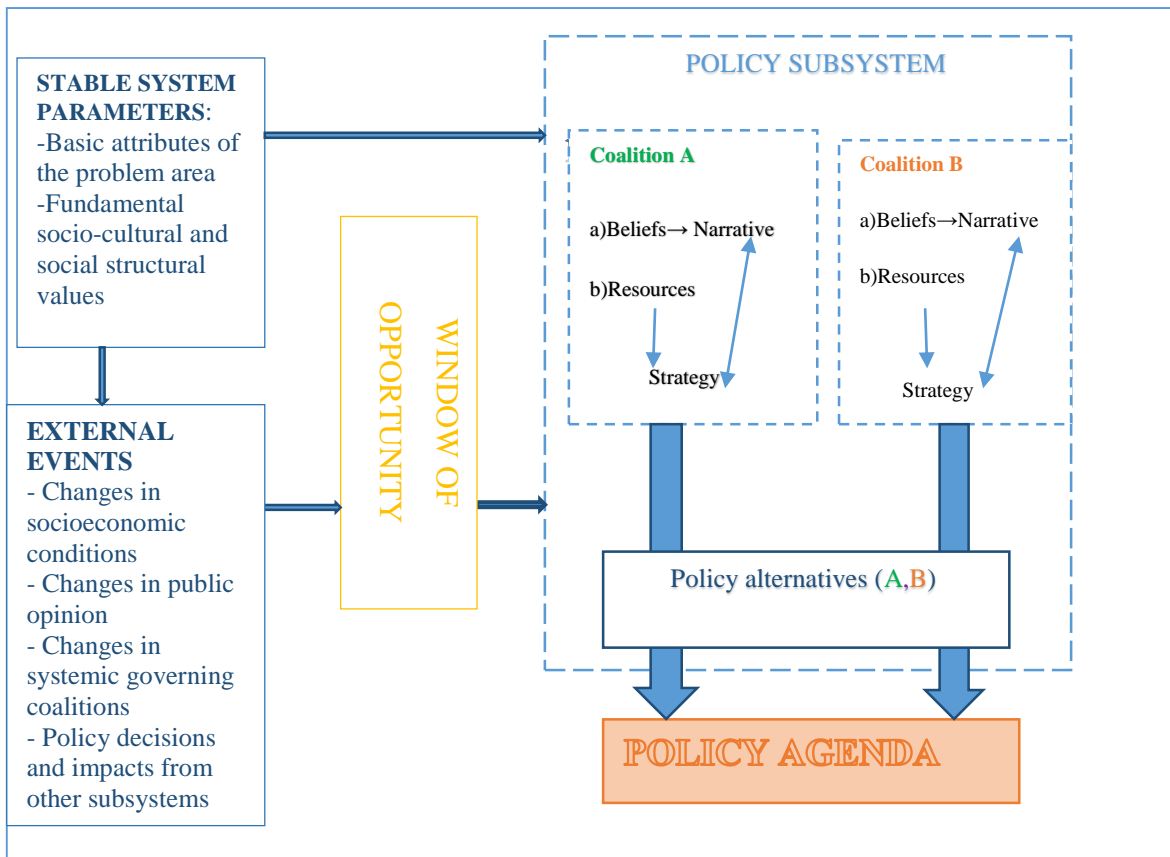


Figure 2: Revised model of the ACF. Source: author, based on Weible, Sabatier, McQueen 2009.

Building on the assumptions of the ACF, taking into account the factors highlighted by the agenda setting literature and NPF as discussed beforehand and to understand how policies change in the context illustrated above, the following research questions are posed for the case study:

What factors affect the ability of a policy alternative to advance to the institutional and decision agenda?

How are resources and external events strategically exploited by the coalitions to influence the policy agenda according to their policy ideas?

2 CASE STUDY: ESTONIAN ALCOHOL POLICY

Alcohol policy can be defined as “all the national measures and strategies aimed at influencing alcohol availability, demand and residents’ consumption habits” (Kollom 2006). The case of Estonian alcohol policy is an interesting example of conflicting ideas that are eminent even to an ordinary citizen from the discussions of various interest groups in the media. This case has both inherently important assumptions of the ACF visibly present: a) conflicting values that manifest through the rhetoric of various actors and b) coalitions that include individuals and groups from a variety of fields and that advocate for their preferred policy idea. Therefore, this case serves as an illuminating case for a) further development of the theoretical framework and b) the understanding of the empirical questions this thesis has posed.

The empirical part gives first an overview of the development of Estonian alcohol policy and its main actors. The empirical part analyzes the factors (resources, external events and strategies) together based on the coalitions in the Estonian alcohol policy. As the analysis shows, the resources, external events and strategies of the coalitions are so inherently intertwined that for the sake of a coherent analysis they should not be separated.

Estonian alcohol policy is defined through a set of policy instruments encompassing advertising restrictions, sales restrictions, tax policy (excise tax), measures to constrain drunk driving, awareness raising measures and treatment/rehabilitation (*Riikliku alkoholipoliitika põhimõtted*, Principles of National Alcohol Policy 2009). The empirical part analyses the so called critical junctures in Estonian alcohol policy making i.e., the occasions where new policy instruments have been introduced or important government decisions taken.

To give an overview of the policy domain and the way of its evolvement through different acts and initiatives, a historical overview is brought out in Annex 2. This thesis adopts the advocacy coalition approach, and therefore only the measures affecting the interests of the coalitions are regarded. For this reason, treatment and rehabilitation measures and measures to reduce drunk driving are not included in the overview. They have not triggered any opposition by neither of the policy coalitions.

2.1 History of the policy domain and its main actors

It will be argued that the history of Estonian alcohol policy was long influenced by the country's Soviet past and that is in many ways determined by the small size of the country (like all other policy fields). The influence of the Soviet era is best illustrated by the fact that a decree of the Council of Ministers of The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted in 1989 that defined the principles of Estonian alcohol policy aiming to increase the production of beer, widen the production of vodka and start to produce wine and champagne was abolished only in 2004 (Vabariigi Valitsus 2004). Though this decree had no legal authority after Estonia's return to independence (Püüa 2004), it illustrates the very different aims and context of alcohol policy before regaining independence. It has been claimed that Mikhail Gorbachev's authoritarian anti-alcohol policy that restricted alcohol consumption in 1985 for several years has strongly influenced Estonian alcohol policy (Kollom 2010) and also created an unfavorable attitude in Estonia towards political means of regulating alcohol consumption (Lagerzpetz *et al.* 1998). It is argued that after regaining independence, Estonian social policy has long followed neo-liberalist ideas, leaving human capital and public health issues second to business and market interests (Lagerspetz & Vogt 2003). Hence, the laws regulating production, retail and wholesale of alcohol in Estonia have been liberal and the market has been open (Josing 2006).

Based on media analysis and patterns of legislative initiatives it can be claimed that the public discussion on alcohol use, alcohol policy and alcohol-related harm has increased in recent years (see Appendix 2). Until 2008, the national policy instruments for regulating alcohol policy were foremost taxing instruments (see Appendix 2). In 2008 new national alcohol policy instruments were introduced: forbidding alcohol sales at night and restricting alcohol advertisement (see Appendix 2). Estonian government embarked on developing the foundations of current alcohol policy resulting in a cabinet memorandum in 2009 and a decision was made to work out the Green Paper of Alcohol Policy (hereafter Green Paper) in 2011. The Green Paper adopted by the government in February 2014 was a wide consensus of interest groups in alcohol policy, which was built on the framework of the World Health Organization's (WHO) global strategy (Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol 2010) and proposed measures to "decrease social, economic and health damages, resulting from consumption of alcohol, to ensure that children and

young persons with supporting growth and development environment and offer all people a safer living environment“ (Sotsiaalministeerium 2014, 3).

While the Green Paper remained on the institutional agenda, and thus had no legal consequences policy-wise, the draft legislative package was introduced in October 2015 (Alkoholiseaduse ja reklaamiseaduse muutmise seadus; eelnõude infosüsteem) proposing the following new policy instruments: prohibit alcohol retail in gas stations, prohibit alcoholic products' presentations, separate alcoholic beverages from other goods in shops, allow alcohol advertisements only on neutral backgrounds without any visual elements or sound, ban all advertisement of alcohol outdoors, etc. The draft law is still pending and is currently being updated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication to include measures for restriction of alcohol advertisement on the Web. Thus, the draft is still on the agenda and keeps attracting heated debate between many different actors from various fields to the present day. However, the question remains, how and why Estonia embarked on introducing new policy instruments since 2008 resulting in the draft legislative proposal in 2015. To answer the question, this thesis first introduces the main actors in Estonian alcohol policy and then turns to the theoretical approach introduced beforehand.

2.1.1 Subsystem actors

The process of compiling the Green Paper on Alcohol Policy that started in 2011 (Täht 2013) provides a solid starting point for defining the subsystem actors as it defined and integrated all the organizations/actors active in the alcohol policy domain at that time. The process involved 42 different organizations (Ministry of Social Affairs 2014). This thesis takes into account the precondition of the ACF according to which actors ought to have an active influence over a long period of time. Thus, actors were detected according to the following criteria : a) active in the policy field during the Green Paper process; b) issued public statements on the news media and offered statements on the legislative package of 2015; c) had regular coordinated activities with other active organizations in the policy domain. Important actors outside the subsystem were also detected. By this method the following subsystem actors to be included in the analysis of the case study were identified: Estonian Institute of Economic Research, Estonian Abstinence Association AVE, Estonian Chamber for Reducing Tobacco and Alcohol Related Harm, Healthy Estonia Foundation, Estonian Association of Importers and Producers of Alcohol, Estonian Beer

Association, Estonian Food Industry Association, Estonian Traders Association, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Estonian Association of Advertising Associations, Ministry of the Interior/ Police and Border Guard Board, National Institute of Health Development, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture and the Association of Estonian Doctors/ Association of the Students of Medicine. An important subsystem-external actor that has a strong influence of the alcohol policy subsystem is the Ministry of Finance.

The Green Paper process included also representatives of the Parliament from all the major political parties: the Reform Party, The Social Democrats, The Centre Party and the Res Publica and Pro Patria Union (IRL). The influence of party politics in this field should not be underestimated. As seen both in the early developments of the Excise Act⁵ and the latest development of the draft legislative package, the ministers of different parties have influenced the field remarkably and sometimes in contradicting ways.

2.2 Research methodology and data collection

The current thesis seeks to understand how and why policies change. This thesis also attempts to add to the large volume of work attempting to clarify the causal links of different variables and proposing means to overcome the deficiencies, thus also contributing to the development of the model of ACF. In order to answer the research questions, to gain a better understanding of how policy changes and to understand the variables affecting it, a case-study methodology is employed (Johnson 2002; 51).

The empirical study investigates the case of Estonian alcohol policy taking a long term view as proposed by the ACF and analyzing the critical junctures from 2007 up to the present day. The analysis starts with 2007 because, as demonstrated in the analysis, certain new policy instruments besides taxing in Estonian alcohol policy were adopted starting from 2008.

⁵ In 1994 a new political party – Reform Party was formed and the Excise Act was taken to the Parliament by its Minister of Economy, Ants Leemet, which abolished excise tax on locally produced beer and wine (Alkoholiaktsiisi seaduse esimene lugemine 1995).

The empirical study is based on document analysis – memorandums, different legal acts and an explanatory note of the legal act, protocols of the working groups of the Green Paper on Estonian Alcohol Policy, the official comments made by different ministries and organizations to the legislative proposal of 2015. Secondly, the reports of The Estonian Institute of Economic Research in the field of alcohol policy were studied. Thirdly, media analysis of online media was carried out. Lastly, in-depth semi-structured interviews with the representatives of the important organizations active in alcohol policy field, were carried out.

Topical interviews provide a good set of data from different actors to piece together a coherent narrative of the case (Ruben and Ruben 1995). Thus, the findings from the desk research were complemented with a range of qualitative interviews by first undertaking the more loosely structured interviews in order to gather background data and then the more topical ones. Interviews were semi-structured and followed general topics outlined in Annex 1. Overall 15 interviews were conducted⁶.

The interviews were representative by taking into account both coalitions and also important external subsystem actors. For some actors' information was gathered from desk research (AVE, Estonian Chamber for Reducing Tobacco and Alcohol Related Harm, Association of Estonian Doctors/ Association of the Students of Medicine, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Estonian Food Industry Association, Estonian Association of Advertising Associations). Three interviews were conducted with people outside of active national alcohol policy – with the representative of the Ministry of Finance to understand excise policy as an instrument in alcohol policy, with the representative of The Social Welfare and Health Care Department of the City of Tallinn to understand the origins of the alcohol policy of Tallinn City government, and with the head of the Estonian Institute of Economic Research to gain a better understanding of how information is used in alcohol policy-making and how the role of information has evolved over time.

Most of the interviews were recorded, and detailed notes were also taken during the interview; in two cases recordings were partial due to technical reasons, three interviews were not recorded. The interviews were then openly coded to find recurring and conflicting themes and opinions, and to triangulate the findings of the desk research.

⁶ See the full list of interviewees in Annex 1.

2.3 Coalitions in Estonian alcohol policy

This thesis attempts to define the coalitions to simplify the analysis but not to give an exhaustive overview of all the actors in the coalitions. Because of the limited volume of this work, an in depth analysis of all the organizations active in Estonian alcohol policy field, is not possible. Therefore, the list of organizations belonging to one or another coalition may not be exhaustive. It is a task needing further research.

Those coalitions are defined as based on a) shared beliefs and b) coordinated activities to influence policy towards their favored direction, as also referred to in the theoretical part. While coordinated activities are easier to detect, it is more difficult to answer, how the ideas about alcohol policy are linked to the general belief system of an individual.

Several studies state that respondents' own alcohol consumption levels seem to be one of the most important determinants of attitudes toward alcohol policies, with non-drinkers being more positive to regulations (Reitan 2004; 312). Hence individual beliefs and policy beliefs are strongly linked, even intertwined. However, the interviews conducted showed somewhat contradicting evidence in terms of what the role of beliefs in coalition formation is with only the politicians clearly stating that it is a matter of ideology/conception of the world (Interviews K, L, N). This thesis proposes a different approach for operationalizing beliefs. It builds on the assumptions that individuals in the advocacy coalitions produce policy narratives that are formed around policy beliefs and reflect their preferred policy outcome (Shanahan *et al.* 2011; 545). Hence, to be able to place an organization into a specific coalition according to their beliefs, policy narratives of the actors were studied through the content analysis of media statements and interviews to find recurring and matching narratives. A summary table of narratives is provided in Appendix 3.

Secondly, media analysis was conducted in order to find coordinated activities of the subsystem actors. In some cases, interviewees were asked to define their allies or co-workers (Interview A, B, C, D, E, F, H) and a snowball method for conducting interviews with the representatives of attached parties was used when people defined distinct allies.

To assign an organization to a specific coalition, its narrative must have either coincided with other narratives in this coalition or it must have engaged in coordinated activities with any other actor or actors in the coalition, or both. The method of narratives and/or coordinated activities defined

two opposing advocacy coalitions in Estonian alcohol policy subsystem: **the health coalition and the business coalition**⁷ and left some important actors undefined needing further analysis.

The narratives and activities of the advocacy coalition members are outlined in Annex 3.

HEALTH COALITION	UNDEFINED	BUSINESS COALITION
Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), National Institute of Health Development (TAI), Healthy Estonia Foundation (TESA), Estonian Abstinence Association (AVE), Estonian Doctors Association/ Medical Students' Association, Estonian Chamber for Reducing Tobacco and Alcohol Related Harm (ETAK)	Social Democratic Party (SDP), The Reform Party, The IRL, The Centre Party Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Ministry of Justice	Estonian Association of Importers and Producers of Alcohol, Estonian Beer Association, Estonian Traders Association, Estonian Food Industry Association, Estonian Chamber of Trade and Industry, Estonian Association of Advertising Associations

Several interviews brought out the connection of the Reform Party to the beer producers (Interview A, B, C, D, E, F, L, N). However, the Reform Party Ministers of Social Affairs have initiated the compilation of a memorandum of the alcohol policy (2009) and the Green Paper, plus the interview conducted with the representative of the Reform Party revealed several narrative elements consistent with the narrative of the health coalition (Interview K). Thus the grounds for placing them under one coalition or another are not clear. Some interviewees also mentioned party politics when discussing the fact that the IRL Minister of Justice left the draft unapproved (Interview H and L) or the ties of the IRL to the hard-liquor producers (Interview B, C). At the same time former IRL Minister of the Interior, Ken-Marti Vaher was seen as “the second health minister” (Interview A) who has taken important political steps in alcohol policy. While the Social Democrats and their leader Jevgeni Ossinovski, deemed as “a gift from heaven” (Interview D), have been very strong allies to the health coalition, there might be diversities even inside that party when it comes to

⁷ These names are given by the autor of this thesis to represent the main message of the coalition.

alcohol policy, as the note by The Social Democrat Minister of Entrepreneurship to the draft legislative package of 2015 asks for “further clarification in terms of impacts in some points” (Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium 2015). The Centre Party has individually pioneered with measures of regulating alcohol policy in the City of Tallinn (Interview I) and proposed additional alcohol advertising restrictions (see Appendix 2). Nevertheless they are not seen as coordinating their activities with state alcohol policy actors (Interview C).

Hence, analyzing party politics in terms of advocacy coalition formation offers somewhat contradicting input. Thus, before drawing definite lines in terms of party politics in Estonian alcohol policy, the role of political parties in Estonian alcohol policy should be further analyzed, which is a task not in the realm of this thesis.

As the ministries often reflect the ideas of the minister in power, the policy direction may shift when a new minister takes office. It is therefore not possible to include the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Justice into any coalition, because the actions under different ministers have had contradicting directions, sometimes placing the same organization in one or sometimes in another coalition.

However, leaving those considerations aside, party veto players are nevertheless critically influential by providing formal legal authority to make policy decisions (Sabatier and Weible 2007: 202). The greater the number of veto players, the less likely a significant policy change becomes (Zohlnhöfer 2009; 109). Hence, having political party members in a coalition may prove to be a critical resource. This is an implication to be analyzed in the becoming chapters.

2.4 Health coalition: resources, external events and strategies

The consolidation of **financial resources** of the Structural Funds for the national campaign “How Much Do You Drink” in 2009 had an important impact in bringing the health issues into the public and starting a public discussion (Interviews A, C, D, H). Foreign funding has been the main financial source also for Healthy Estonia Foundation (hereafter TESA), an important actor in health coalition, which has relied on Norwegian Grants in conducting its activities (Interview D, H). The significant role of external financial resources for the health coalitions’ agenda setting

capacity is assured also by the business coalition statement about the “euro-money behind the health coalition“(Interview F).

All of the interviews state that Jevgeni Ossinovski since becoming a Minister of Health and Labor has had a big impact on the health coalition in one way or another. As one of the business coalition’s interviewee has stated, the health coalition gained an important resource when it comes to minister Ossinovski (Interview B). While the interviewees of health coalition point to his right values and/or good ideas (Interview A, C, J), interviewees of the business coalition refer to his personal political ambition and hidden agenda (Interview B, F, G). Nevertheless, his importance as a resource of **formal legal authority** and **skillful leadership** for the health coalition cannot be refuted. In addition to Jevgeni Ossinovski, the impact of young foreign educated health professionals and activists is also seen as an important resource for the coalition. Namely Maris Jesse and Riina Raudne, who have taken the discussion of alcohol-related health issues further by employing the science-centered approach to the discussion (Interview D, H, N). Those professionals have been skillful in **mobilizing the public** (campaign Let’s drink Half as Much) and popular as spokespersons, having the so-called “Kalamaja hipsters” behind their campaign (Interviews C, H). The fact that liberal ministers have begun to deal with alcohol policy issues (like the Green Paper) could be explained by the extensive public discussion about the data and analysis supporting the health coalition aims, as some interviews suggest (Interview C, H).

The use of information has been of central importance in this policy domain, both over the long-run and also as a strategy to advocate one’s policy alternatives. The EKI report of 2008 stated that the vivid discussion on alcohol policy in both local administration and national government level was empowered by publishing of statistical indicators demonstrating the bad situation in Estonian alcohol consumption compared to that of in some other countries (EKI, 2008). The interviews conducted within health coalition state that scientific data and statistics about health deterioration and alcohol consumption have been crucially important in advocating for their measures (Interview A, C, H, K, N,). Interviewees point out that both sides look for policy analysis that would confirm their positions (Interview H), and also conduct their own analysis with the aim of supporting their ideas (ERR 25.01.2016) and to attacking the opponent (Interview M). In many cases, interviewees claim, that their opposing coalition members purposely interpret information in their favor, refer to the biased nature of research or even claim that the opponents manipulate with information (Interview A, B, C, F, G).

Therefore, it is evident that **information is used strategically** to advocate one's positions and to attack the opponent as hypothesized by the ACF. Information and statistics are important in **framing narratives** to influence policy as referred to in the theoretical part. Health coalition narratives are strongly based on statistics and information, referring to health decline and bad drinking habits supported by statistics. They also use symbols like stories of control by the alcohol industry (see Annex 3). Interview conducted with TESA claimed that framing an attractive innovation narrative and using the freedom narrative are very important in attracting partners (Interview D). TESA has been successful in using powerful symbols like referring to Soviet relics when talking about alcohol industry (Interview H). Besides creating attractive narratives, health coalition has initiated discussions with politicians and journalist, as well as recruiting different spokespersons (Interview C, D, H). It was brought out that as the result of the direct consultations with the Prime Minister of the Reform Party, the goal of alcohol policy in the 2015-2019 government action plan was expressed in the wording of TESA (Interview D).

The changes inside the government coalition, namely the exchange of the leader of the Social Democrats to Jevgeni Ossinovski and his appointment to the Minister of Health and Labor created a **window of opportunity** for the health coalition to advance its policy proposal from the institutional agenda, into the decision agenda in 2015. It redistributed the political resources between the coalitions and gave the health coalition a skillful leader that masters the narrative as well as the strategic use of resources. By that it gave a necessary push to the activities of the coalition that in itself were not sufficient to bring about agenda change.

The theory suggests that advocates of a policy proposal often keep their suggestions ready for sudden changes in the environment. Therefore, the fact that the draft legislative proposal was ready when the minister changed (Interview C) was crucially important. It is well illustrated by a statement of a member of health coalition: "Things happen when interests combine and suitable opportunities come about- it is a combination of different factors" (Interview C).

2.5 Business coalition: resources, external events and strategies

Business coalition sees itself as defending its interests from the attack of the health coalition (Interview B, F, G). This defines how they use their resources. The **formal legal authority** is a resource which the business coalition has had more than the health coalition. The main reason is

the support of the leading government party, as demonstrated in chapter 2.3. While the reasons behind the veto players' actions are left to further analysis, their importance in deciding the outcome of the draft legislative package is essential. The interviews revealed that traditional lobbying methods are in frequent use (Interview F, G). A meeting with the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure and the Minister of Justice as well as explaining the positions of the business coalition on the draft legislative proposal resulted in mutual understanding (Interview G, F). Thus, seeking to enhance formal legal authority is also a strategy to prevent policy change from happening.

The alcohol producers have also adopted measures of self-regulation. They seek to demonstrate the compliance of the industry to the overall aims of the state (Eesti Õlletootjate Liidu eetikakoodeks; Ojamaa 2013). An initiative to restrict alcohol advertising was acted upon by the producers and TV stations in 2010 (Alkoholifirmad ja televisioonid piiravad vastutundest alkoholi reklaami 2010). Also the traders have initiated several measures to keep the consumers better informed of the objective attributes of alcohol. In 2014 they made a proposal to the Parliament to reverse the permit to publicly consume alcohol (Interview E).

As demonstrated in previous chapter, the discussion of alcohol policy centers on **research, statistics and analysis**. This has evidently also driven the actions of the business coalition (Interview G). All of the interviewees of the business coalition admit using statistics, research and studies (Interview B, G, F, E). The strategies also use **the questioning of the validity of the data** presented by the health coalition. To do that, business coalition has conducted a study that proves health coalition wrong (Interview B). Also the study conducted by TNS Emor in 2011 on the request of the Ministry of Agriculture stated that Estonians favor personal responsibilities rather than state measures (TNS Emor 2011) - conflicting with the conclusions of the EKI reports requested by TAI. Also the actors outside the coalitions refer that alcohol producers conduct "surveys based on their ideology with biased questions" (Interview M). The importance of information and statistics is well illustrated by the fact that to put up with the growing workload and pressure to use and interpret information, the Estonian Association of Importers and Producers of Alcohol employed a researcher as an executive director (Interview F). All of the interviews conducted with the business coalition stated that while the goals of the policy as stated by the health coalition in their draft legislative proposal are not refuted, the **measures they propose are not effective** to this cause and the **costs of the policy** to the economy are adverse. Thus the

strategies outlined by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993; 46-47) are used by the business coalition to oppose to the policy measures of the health coalition.

Business coalition also uses available information to demonstrate that the severity of the problem is overstated by claiming that the numbers are already decreasing (Interview G) and the ranking of Estonians among heavy drinkers is not correct (Interview F).

However, financial resources are needed in order to purchase research and employ researchers. While other actors refer to much larger financial resources of the business coalition to lobby their interests (Interview M, H), the business coalition itself sees the situation as a contrary one, with health coalition having better resources in terms of financing from EU funds (F). Nevertheless, the impact of financial resources is undeniable.

The perks of attractive **narrative framing** are well understood also in the business coalition. As one interviewee stated: “health activists can use doctors as spokespersons and employ deaths as part of their narratives – they have better resources to attract attention, better arguments, better stories.” (Interview G). Nevertheless, the interviews indicate that by stressing the freedom of an individual and by framing the health coalition initiatives as restricting personal and entrepreneurial freedom (Interview B, F, G), a counter-narrative is framed by the business coalition.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis of the development of Estonian alcohol policy

As the theoretical part has demonstrated, the policy subsystem is influenced by several factors. Long term influence is asserted through social and cultural values and the parameters of the problem itself (how much alcohol we consume nationally). Changes in other policies nationally or locally, changes in the public opinion and changes in government exert more short term influence on the subsystem. They may open up windows of opportunities that redistribute resources and by that provide one coalition or another a contingency to push their policy alternative to the agenda, either to institutional or decision agenda. However, to be successful, those factors (values, public opinion, changes in other policies and government) and resources need to be strategically used by the coalitions. At the same time the coalitions that oppose the policy alternative, mobilize their resources and strategies to preclude the policy alternative from advancing to the agenda or to obstruct it from advancing in the agenda (from institutional to decision agenda).

The long term cultural and social values date back to the Soviet era where regulating alcohol policy was mainly a means to increase production and where severe authoritarian measures to restrict alcohol consumption (1985 -1988) created a link between national regulating of alcohol policy and restriction of personal freedom. Thus, the national liberal alcohol policy measures applying only taxing up until 2008 were most probably influenced by the worldviews of the politicians and the general public that remember that time.

However, in 30 years, a new generation of people has grown, that does not remember those days. It has become active in politics and entered the arena (Interview N, K). Simultaneously, a “critical mass of foreign educated young professionals” emerged in Estonian alcohol policy (Interview D), to name a few - Maris Jesse as the Head of National Institute of Health Development (TAI) and Riina Raudne in Healthy Estonia Foundation (TESA). The accession of Estonia to the EU in 2004 opened up critical resources from the European Social Fund (2007-2013) that were quickly harnessed behind the health coalitions’ policy ideas in alcohol policy. It resulted in an influential social campaign “How much do you drink” that was seen as the main factor provoking wider social

discussion on the issue. Also, external resources made it possible for TAI to start gathering evidence based material relating to alcohol policy. External resources were also used to fund the activities of TESA.

Year 2008 brought new national alcohol policy instruments besides taxing: restrictions on retail and advertisement. The activities of the Tallinn City Government provoked the IRL to demand wider policy measures from the national government which prompted Prime Minister of that time to request national action that resulted in new policy instruments of 2008 and the policy document of 2009 (Interview K, L). Thus, the changes in policies external to the subsystem - the measures adopted to regulate the local alcohol policy in the City of Tallinn probably became the window of opportunity to nationally adopt new policy instruments in 2008. While also the alcohol excise tax raise in 2008 was an impressive 30%, the explanatory note attributes it not to the aim of regulating alcohol policy but to the fiscal policy measures in order to regulate inflation and to comply with the euro convergence criteria (Seletuskiri alkoholi-, tubaka- ja kütuseaktsiisi seaduse ning teeseaduse muutmise seaduse eelnõu juurde 2007, 1).

In 2010 the government regulated state alcohol policy again with raising alcohol excise tax by 10% (EKI 2011). However, as the analysis has implied, raising excise tax has not actually been a measure for regulating alcohol policy but rather a fiscal measure that has appealed also to the health narrative (Interview J, L). Excise taxing is determined by the EU directives leaving little room for national modelling of excise policy (Hinna- ja maksupoliitika ja salaalkoholi leviku piiramine Lisa 4, 2014).

As the theory suggests, the use of information, analysis and indicators is a prominent activity how the coalitions attract public support and by that influence the politicians and the agenda in their favorable direction. The theoretical assumption is well illustrated by the several ways in which health coalition and business coalition have used those resources. Since 2008, on the request of TAI the Estonian Institute of Economic Research (EKI) has compiled the Yearbook of Alcohol demonstrating the high numbers of alcohol consumption in Estonia, alcohol related death statistics, health deterioration, alcohol related injuries, etc. Together with other reports of EKI demonstrating indications of high support of the public for the government to take stronger measures in terms of alcohol policy (EKI 2009; 23; EKI 2008;23) they have played a very important role in keeping up the public discussion on alcohol related harms and demonstrating the severity of the problem.

The strong narrative of the health coalition concerning deaths, huge national drinking problems and the freedom restrictions by the alcohol industry (see Appendix 3) has attracted the attention of the public and the politicians. The business coalition has had to adopt the narrative strategies used by the health coalition. When the sales restrictions by the City of Tallinn were introduced in 2007, the narrative of the business coalition included mainly threatening to close the shops and stating that people would start to stock alcohol (Kodres 2007) and also referring to adverse economic effects to the alcohol industry in 2010 (www.jootargalt.ee 2010). The narrative of the business coalition has come along to the evidence-based view now stating that the measures proposed by the health coalition, are not effective or restrict personal freedom (see Appendix 3). Thus, it is evident that the business coalition has been forced to collectively review and refine its narrative owing to the strong influence the narrative of the health coalition has had on the public and policy makers, and started to adopt stronger *laissez faire* arguments. The importance of framing an appealing narrative to attract the attention of politicians is best illustrated by the fact that in stating the aims of alcohol policy the wording proposed by TESA was used in the government action plan of 2015.

The strategies of the health coalition - building strong coalitions, recruiting important spokespersons (doctors, researchers), conducting surveys, national campaigns, etc. have challenged the activities of the business coalition in building up counterstrategies like conducting their own surveys, recruiting researchers, building alliances, issuing public statements, engaging in the debate and also demonstrating self-regulating initiatives to counterbalance the strong public influence of the health coalition and to restrain their policy alternative from advancing in the agenda. As the representative of the business coalition has stated: “we do not want anything to be written to the law, we want to demonstrate that we can do these things more efficiently ourselves“(Interview B).

The strong continued public support for stronger alcohol policy measures coupled with rising consumption numbers (see for example EKI 2012) overweighed the strategies and resources of the business coalition resulting in the adoption of The Green Paper of Alcohol Policy in 2014. By that the policy alternative of the health coalition was elevated to the institutional agenda. An important resource for the health coalition was the global strategy of the WHO. It ensured that all the policy instruments featured in the global strategy were also reflected in the Green Paper and later in the draft legislative package of October 2015 (taking them further in some respects) and none of them could be omitted as deemed irrelevant to the cause or ineffective to the aim (Interview C).

The very strong public support to health coalition problem perception was evident when in 2014 the permit to publicly consume alcohol attracted wide public discontent and resulted in abolishing the permit in 2015 (see Appendix 3). Thus, the national mood clearly directed the course of legislative action and demonstrated the continued support of the public for stronger regulation of national alcohol policy.

It is suggested that the window of opportunity that opened up for the health coalition when Jevgeni Ossinovski became the Minister of Health and Labour was decisive in determining that the policy alternative of the health coalition advanced to the decision agenda in October 2015. The window of opportunity opened suddenly and the health coalition was well prepared having its policy alternative ready to be presented to the Government (in October 2015) when a minister was appointed who favored “restriction of freedom to conduct business in directing national alcohol policy“(Pärli 2015). The health coalition was probably also better informed beforehand of the opening of the window than the business coalition. The opposition to the policy alternative was not gathered quickly enough by the business coalition resulting in the policy alternative reaching the decision agenda in October 2015. The way how the conflict has escalated after that, was well evident in all the interviews conducted. The language coalition members use when talking about the current affairs refer to war (Interview H), conflict (Interview K), manipulation (Interview A), attack (Interview A,B), lies (Interview B, F), etc. And also the strategies adopted after that have been more aggressive, featuring stronger statements in the media (see for example Jesse 2015; Luts 2015) and direct meetings with politicians to ensure important political veto players’ support. The fact that the business coalition succeeded in attracting two veto players’ support, resulted in the rejecting of the draft legislative package of October 2015. The policy alternative however still remains on the agenda with both coalitions taking active public measures and probably also direct lobbying behind the scenes to ensure that the anticipated policy change would reflect their preferred policy outcome as much as possible.

Thus the model proposed in chapter 1.6 which defines the factors influencing Estonian alcohol policy, and the actions of its actors is the following:

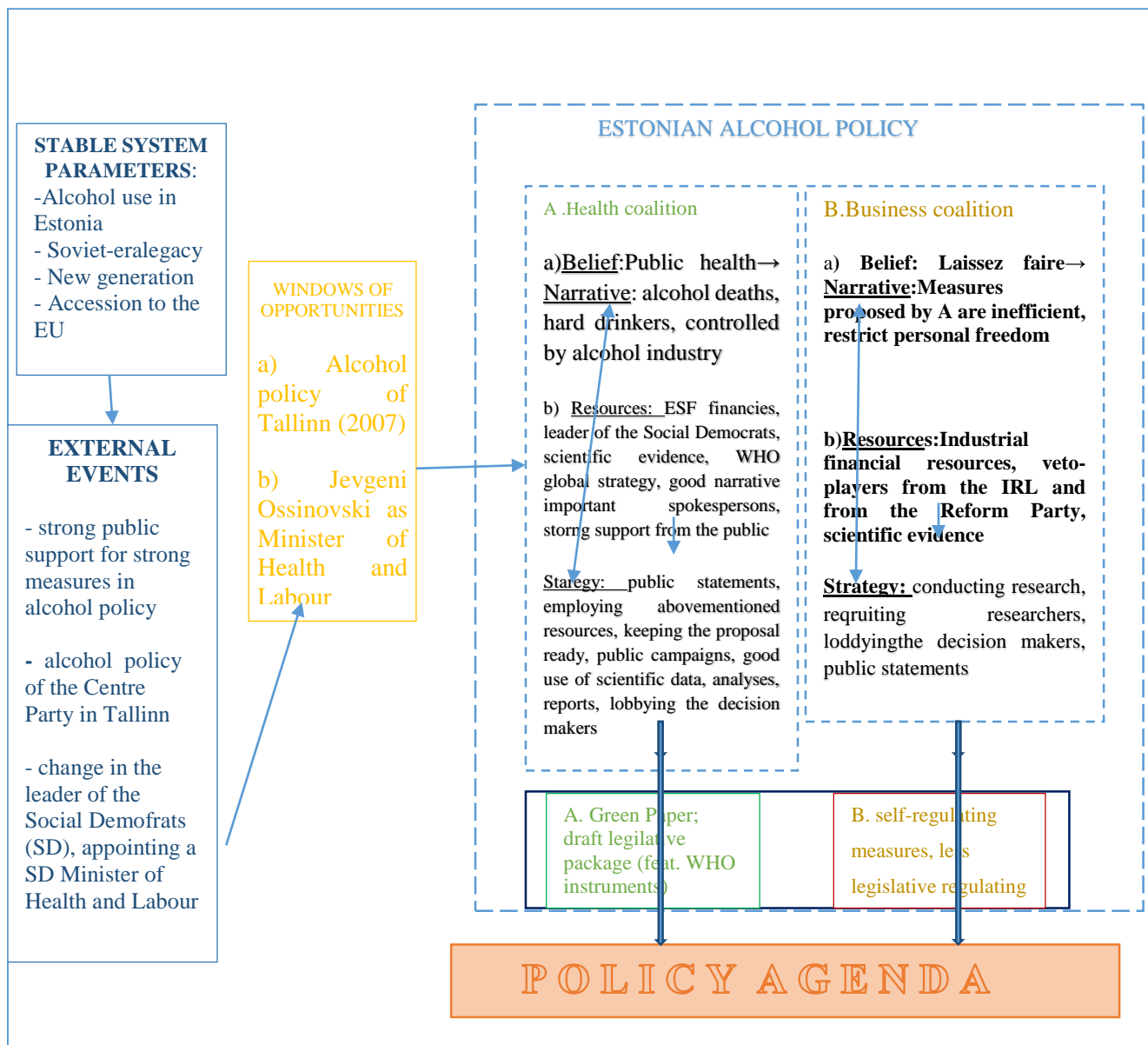


Figure 3: Framework of policy change in Estonian alcohol policy. Source: the author

The Estonian case-study demonstrates that **stable system parameters** - cultural and social values and attributes of the “national drinking problem” assert influence over the subsystem as hypothesized by the ACF. **The soviet legacy**, the **accession to the EU** and the **new generation** of professionals have effected on the type of policy instruments in Estonian alcohol policy. Soviet era legacy influenced the long-term liberal regulation of alcohol policy in Estonia (only taxing). Accession to the EU opened up crucial financial resources for health coalition’s policy that were exploited by the new generation of professionals free from Soviet legacy. Also objective **statistics of Estonian drinking habits** have kept the problem on the fore affecting the **mood of the general public**. The health coalition’s **strategic use of indicators, statistics and analysis** has helped to

frame an **attractive narrative** about the problem severity and causes. It has been appealing to the general public and by that affected the problem perception of the political actors, as also assumed in the theoretical part. The **policy changes in external subsystems** may become **windows of opportunities** for a policy alternative to reach the agenda. The **alcohol policy decisions of the City of Tallinn in 2007** opened a window of opportunity to **introduce new national alcohol policy instruments in 2008** besides taxing. Also the strong support of the general public and the raising indicators of alcohol consumption have helped to raise the **policy alternative of the health coalition** to the **institutional agenda in 2014** (with the adoption of the Geen Paper). An important **resource** for the health coalition's policy alternative has been the **global strategy of the WHO**, defining the policy instruments to be used in Estonian national alcohol policy making. **Changes in the governing coalition**, Jevgeni Ossinovski's becoming the minister of Health and Labor, **opened a window of opportunity in 2015** to push the **policy alternative of the health coalition to the decision agenda** by giving the health coalition more "**legal authority to make policy decisions**". That window was efficiently exploited by the well-prepared health coalition. However, the opposing business coalition has succeeded in building **stronger resources of formal legal authority** with two important **veto players** on their side. Thus, the draft legislative proposal of 2015 was not adopted and is still pending and attracting further strategic opposition between the two coalitions.

3.2 Implications for further research

The empirical analysis reveals that information about the problem severity and its causes and the costs-benefits of policy alternatives, is an important resource for winning battles against opponents as also claimed in the theoretical part. However, none of the interviews ascribed much importance to policy-oriented learning in the long run. The reasons why the health issues have emerged and gained importance in society are seen not in learning but rather in the natural evolution of things (Interview E, L, F). Thus, while the specific reasons for that need further research, it can be assumed, that Estonian post-Soviet development has in the long run influenced the alcohol policy discourse more than policy-oriented learning. Also, the accession to the EU and the financial resources that opened up thereafter, have played crucial role in empowering the health coalition. This raises the questions if the ACF as a model is adequate in explaining policy change in post-Soviet and post-EU accession states and whether a different set of contextual factors should be

developed to incorporate the important drivers of policy change in these contexts. It is a question that needs further research and analysis, thus, a solution may not be proposed in this thesis.

The empirical analysis demonstrates that the resources outlined by the ACF are actually used in strategic adoption of the strategies defined by the agenda setting theory and in exploitation of windows of opportunities. Hence the proposed model is helpful in defining the factors that contribute to policy change. However, the case of Estonian alcohol policy differs from Estonian general political context by featuring strongly conflicting policy ideas and -coalitions. This places the limits for the generalizability of the case to the overall policy-making in Estonia. Hence, the implications made in the empirical part of this study may not be induced in the general policy-process of Estonia without further analysis.

However, not all the theoretical concepts were verified by the empirical research. The role of focusing events was brought out neither by any of the interviewees nor by the media analysis. The policy domain has been very visible in recent year. Thus, the reason probably lies in the theoretical notion that the more visible the policy domain *per se*, the less important these kinds of focusing events are.

The assumption made in the theoretical part of this study that the resources are hierarchical and the formal legal authority to make policy decisions may outweigh other resources, was verified by empirical analysis. Coalition strategically seeks to increase that resource by lobbying potential veto players. Thus the theoretical notion was confirmed that veto players may determine the outcome of the policy and define whether policy change happens. Hence, the model should be further developed to incorporate hierarchical approach to the resources.

As formal legal authority lies in political actors, it makes them one of the crucial actors in the coalitions. However, defining political parties as coalition members is difficult because political actors are influenced by many factors that are not encompassed in the theoretical model proposed.

In the case of Estonian alcohol policy, the personalized relationships characteristic to small states probably play an important role as civil servants and other actors in the coalitions have better access to the policy-makers than in other states (Sarapuu 2010). In many cases, personal relationships extend party and coalition lines in Estonian alcohol policy (Interview H). Thus raising the question, how these personal relations and good access to policy-makers affect the foundations of coalition formation and if the coalitions are still based on beliefs in small states or

also on personal relationships. It may serve as an implication for further comparative research in the field of policy change and small states.

All in all, the theoretical model proposed in this thesis helps to develop the framework by providing manageable analytical units and better causal links. While the conclusions from the empirical case at hand cannot be generalized in respect of overall policy making process in Estonia, they still efficiently demonstrate which factors influence agenda change and how resources and external events may be used by coalitions in the policy process. However, the empirical analysis has highlighted the important areas that need further research: a) the post-Soviet and post-EU accession context and how it influences the policy process, and b) the coalition formation issues as theorized by the ACF when applied to a small state context.

CONCLUSIONS

Policy change is a fascinating, yet extremely complex phenomenon to research. The purpose of this thesis is to develop the framework of ACF in order to provide a coherent and manageable model for analyzing the different factors that bring about policy change. The proposed model borrows several concepts from the agenda setting theory with a view to a) explain how policy beliefs become policy decisions; b) simplify the external events category of the ACF; and c) research the actions of different actors. To operationalize the beliefs of the different actors, notions of the Narrative Policy Framework are also included in the analysis.

The proposed model simplifies the analysis of policy change and, while building on the assumptions of the ACF, strives to provide conceptual clarifications, more easily manageable operationalizations and better causal links. The case study of Estonian alcohol policy helps to demonstrate the explanatory power of the proposed model.

The thesis is the first of its kind in attempting to compile and analyze the empirical implications the Estonian case-study has to offer concerning the development of the theory. A qualitative research method for the case study was adopted and desk research was combined with the findings from the 15 interviews conducted with important stakeholders in Estonian alcohol policy.

While the conclusions from the empirical case at hand cannot be generalized to overall policy making process in Estonia, they still efficiently demonstrate that cultural background, public opinion, policy decisions from other subsystems and changes in government coalition influence agenda change by creating windows of opportunities for a minority coalition to get their policy alternative on the agenda. It also demonstrates that resources are used strategically by the coalitions to influence the agenda to their favored direction. Using information to frame attractive narratives which appeal to the public and influence the political actors' problem perception, is an influential strategy. Moreover, narratives of the coalitions also enable to research their policy beliefs and problem perception.

The analysis confirmed that even when coalitions have good resources, external events are needed that redistribute critical resources by creating windows of opportunities for a coalition to seize the momentum. However, the success in seizing the moment depends on strategic use of the resources by the coalition. The analysis also confirmed that resources do not have the same impact. While the supportive public is an important resource to attract the attention of the politicians to the problem, thus gaining access to the agenda, in the end, veto players may determine, whether a policy changes or not. Thus, the resource of formal legal authority has stronger impact in the policy process compared to other resources. Therefore, it is proposed in this thesis that the model proposed should be further developed in order to enable the interpretation of the resources in hierarchical manner.

While demonstrating the importance of veto players as resources to the coalitions, the available data was not sufficient for differentiating political parties into advocacy coalitions. The analysis revealed their crucial role in determining the direction and also the outcome of the policy process. However, the factors encompassed in the theoretical model do not enable to explain why the actions of politicians vary and sometimes also contradict within party lines. This is an implication that needs further comparative research.

Analysis also suggests that coalition formation in small states may not operate under the assumptions brought out by the ACF. The relations in small states are highly personalized with direct access to policy-makers. Thus, relationships extend coalition lines. Therefore, the question arises, whether coalitions in small states form not only based on beliefs but also on personal relationships. This is an area that needs further comparative research in public administration.

The case study of Estonian alcohol policy did not, however, confirm the importance of policy-oriented learning. The policy domain has been influenced by the processes that extend to the Soviet past of the country and also determined by the possibilities created by the accession of Estonia to the EU. Thus, other factors are seen as more important in influencing the domain.

This thesis helps to illustrate both the explanatory power of the ACF and the ways it can be improved by introducing policy narratives and the agenda setting theory, thus adding to the development of the model. The proposed model also enables to learn more about the causal links between the theoretical factors. However, while the work is illuminating in many respects, it has its limits in offering generalizability across cases.

EESTIKEELNE RESÜMEE

Seletades poliitikamuutusi: Eesti alkoholipoliitika juhtum

Püüd seletada poliitika muutumise põhjusi on suur väljakutse. Käesolev töö püüab pakkuda selle väljakutse hõlbustamiseks ülevaatlikku teoreetilist mudelit, mis baseerub eestkostekoalitsioonide raamistikul, päevakorraseadmise teoorial ning kasutab mõisteid poliitikanarratiivi teooriast.

Väljapakutud mudel lihtsustab poliitikamuutuste analüüsi. Mudel pakub lihtsamalt operatsionaliseeritavaid mõisteid ning toob välja selgemad kausaalsed seosed poliitika muutumist mõjutavate faktorite vahel.

Töö empiiriline osa keskendub Eesti riikliku alkoholipoliitika juhtumile. Töö demonstreerib pakutud mudeli seletusvõimekust läbi Eesti alkoholipoliitika juhtumi analüüsi. Töö käsitleb juhtumit pikaajaliselt, alates 2007. aastast tänaseni, keskendudes oluliste poliitiliste instrumentide muutustele Eesti alkoholipoliitikas. Käesolev töö on esimene sellelaadne, rajades teed empiirilise materjali loomiseks ning süstematiseeritud analüüsiks Eesti riikliku alkoholipoliitika juhtumis. Juhtumiuuring keskendus kvalitatiivsetele uurimismeetoditele. Viidi läbi 15 intervjuud Eesti alkoholipoliitikas oluliste isikute ning organisatsioonide esindajatega.

Kuigi käesoleva juhtumi põhjal tehtud järeldusi ei saa üldistada Eesti poliitilisele protsessile tervikuna, võimaldab juhtum siiski hästi demonstreerida pakutud teoreetilise mudeli paikapidavust ning vastata tööd esitatud uurimisküsimustele.

Juhtum näitas, et laiem kultuuriline ja sotsiaalne taust ning avalikkuse nägemus probleemist mõjutavad poliitikat. Muudatused teiste poliitiliste allsüsteemide poliitikas ning muutused valitsuskoalitsioonis võivad avada võimaluste aknaid, et vähemuskoalitsioon saaks oma poliitikaalternatiivi poliitilisse agendasse viia. Eestkostekoalitsioon peab need võimalused strateegiliselt ära kasutama. Selleks et saada oma poliitikaalternatiiv agendasse, rakendavad eestkostekoalitsioonid erinevaid ressursse ning strateegiaid. Informatsioon, poliitika analüüs ning uuringud on oluline ressurss, mille pinnalt eestkostekoalitsioonide liikmed formuleerivad sobivaid

narratiive. Narratiivid on viis apelleerida laiemale avalikkusele ning selle abil mõjutada ka poliitikuid.

Analüüs näitas, et ka tugevate ressursside korral on vaja väliseid sündmusi, mis jagaksid ümber olulisi ressursse, mis võimaldavad poliitikaalternatiivil agendasse saada. Analüüs kinnitas, et ressursid ei ole samaväärsed. Avalikkuse toetus on väga oluline ressurss, kuid “ametlik seaduslik volitus teha poliitilisi otsused” on ressursina siiski määrav. Selle ressursi ülekaal ühes või teises koalitsioonis võib saada otsustavaks, kelle ootustele vastavalt poliitika muutub.

Empiiriline analüüs ei kinnitanud, et Eesti juhtumi kontekstis on poliitikasuunalisel õppimisel olnud pikaajalist mõju.

Käesolev töö tõi välja mitu sisendit edasiseks uurimiseks. Töö teoreetiline raamistik ei võimaldanud poliitikute, parteide ja seetõttu ka mitmete ministeeriumide paigutamist koalitsioonide alla. Tööst järeldub, et olenemata poliitikute olulisest võtmerollist päevakorra seadmises ning muutuste suunamises, ületavad poliitikas toimivad seosed selle töö fookuse ja analüüsivõimekuse. Et aru saada poliitiliste otsuste tagamaadest poliitiliste muutuste elluviimisel, tuleks teemat käesoleva mudeli kontekstis võrdlevalt edasi uurida.

Ühtlasi näitab empiiriline analüüs, et Eesti juhtumi puhul ületavad isiklikud suhted erinevate koalitsioonide ning ka parteide piirid. Selle alusel võib järeldada, et väikeriigi kontekstis ei pruugi eestkostekoalitsioonid toimida mitte ainult ühiste poliitiliste tõekspidamiste alusel, vaid ka isiklike suhete, sõpruskonna ning tutvuste põhjal. Seega soovitab töö autor seda teemat väikeriikide kontekstis võrdlevalt edasi uurida.

Kokkuvõttes võimaldab käesolev töö arendada eestkostekoalitsioonide raamistikku, sidudes selle päevakorraseadmise teooria ning poliitilise narratiiviga ning pakkudes välja uue analüütilise mudeli. Kuigi töö on valgustav nii teoorias kui ka empiiriliselt lähtuvalt, tuleb selle üldistamisel teistele juhtumitele ning kogu poliitilisele protsessile silmas pidada juhtumi piiranguid.

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Appendix 1. List of interviews

Interview A – Representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, health coalition (23.03.2016), audio record

Interview B – Representative of the Alliance of Beer Producers, business coalition (29.03.2016), audio record

Interview C – Director of National Institute of Health Development, health coalition (30.03.2016), audio record

Interview D – Director of Healthy Estonia Foundation, health coalition (04.04.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview E – Representative of the Estonian Traders Association, business coalition (05.04.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview F – Representative of the manufacturers of hard liquor, Alliance of the Alcohol Producers and Importers, business coalition (07.04.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview G – Representative of the beer producers, Alliance of Beer Producers (07.04.2016), phone interview, partial audio record due to technical problems, detailed notes

Interview H – analyst of the Praxis Centre of Policy Studies, health coalition (14.04.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview I – Representative of the City Government of Tallinn (08.04.2016), detailed notes

Interview J – Ministry of Finance, tax policy department (18.04.2016), detailed notes

Interview K – Minister of Social Affairs 2007-2009, Reform Party (19.04.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview L – Member of Parliament, Social Democrats (20.05.2016), audio record, detailed notes

Interview M – Head of the Estonian Institute of Economic Research (27.04.2016), partial audio record, detailed notes

Interview N – Minister of the Interior from 2011- 2014, Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (03.05.2016), detailed notes

Interview O – Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (05.05.2016), detailed notes

Interview themes

1. Actors in Estonian alcohol policy
2. Resources of the actors in Estonian alcohol policy
3. Statistics, policy analysis, research and their use in Estonian alcohol policy
4. Actions of the actors in Estonian alcohol policy
5. Events that have had influence on Estonian alcohol policy

Appendix 2. Overview of Estonian alcohol policy 1992-2016

Year	Act/Document/Initiative	Content
1992	Alcohol Excise Act; Beer Excise Act. (Ülemnõukogu 1992)	Favoring hard alcohol, highest tax rates on beer
1993	Excise Act (Riigikogu 20.05.1993)	Combined the acts of 1992, favoring hard alcohol
1994	Excise Act (Riigikogu 08.11.1995)	Abolished all taxes on locally produced beer and wine
1996	Changes to the Alcohol Excise Act (Riigikogu 20.06.1996)	Re-introduced the taxing of wine and beer, favoring beer compared to other alcohol
1997	Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program for 1997-2007 (National Institute of Health Development)	Goal to work out a national alcohol and drug policy
1999	Alcohol Act (Riigikogu 10.02.1999) State Alcohol Registry (Riigikogu 10.02.1999)	Replacing the existing administrative acts, stricter regulation of retailing; Creation of alcohol registry.
2001	The Alcohol bureau created in the Ministry of Agriculture	Some alcohol policy issues redirected from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to

		Ministry of Agriculture because of the EU (PM Online 13.11.2001)
2004	National Strategy for Drug Prevention until 2012 (Sotsiaalministeerium 2004)	Although the goal was to work out also the national alcohol policy in 1997, it resulted only in drug prevention strategy
2007	-Sales restriction in Tallinn and Harju County ⁸ by the Centre Party -Centre Party initiated draft amendment act to the Advertisement act (Keskerakond algatas alkoholireklaami keelustamise 2007)	-Local Municipalities of Tallinn and Harju restricted alcohol sales from 20.00 PM to 08.00 AM (EKI 2008; Kodres 2007) -Ban all alcohol advertisement on TV, radio, as outdoors advertisement. Omitted from further proceedings
2008	-Amendments to Excise Act; - Amendment to Alcohol Act (Riigikogu 14.07.2008); -New measures in Advertisement Act (Riigikogu 01.11.2008) -creating a position dealing with alcohol policy in National Institute of Health Development	- 30 % alcohol excise rate increase, public health mentioned (Seletuskiri 2008); -alcohol retail abolished from 22 pm to 10 am; -new measures to restrict alcohol advertisement in order to “protect nations health from continuous spreading of alcoholism” (Seletuskiri 2008) -Human resources to deal with evidence-based alcohol policy directed to TAI by the MoSa in relation to a new an ESF program “Measures to support healthy choices”

⁸ Although the empirical part deals with alcohol policy at the national level, the analysis revealed that the measures adopted by the municipalities also had a strong impact on national alcohol policy.

		(Interview C; Eurotoetuste abil paraneb töötajate tervis 2008)
2009	<p>-Memorandum to the cabinet comprising the foundations of Estonian alcohol policy (Sotsiaalministeerium 2009);</p> <p>-Nation-wide campaign How Much do You Drink (Palju Sina Jood)</p>	<p>-Memorandum taken into notice by the government;</p> <p>-A public social campaign launched by the Institute of Health Development funded by the European Social Fund.</p>
2011	<p>-Draft amendment act to the advertisement act initiated Center Party (Eelnõude nimekiri 2015)</p> <p>-Government coalition action plan (<i>koalitsioonilepe</i>) for the Reform Party (<i>Reformierakond</i>) and the Pro Partia and Res Publica Union (hereafter <i>IRL</i>) for 2011-2015</p>	<p>-Proposal to ban all alcohol advertisement (Keskerakond algatas eelnõu alkoholireklaami keelamiseks 2011) was omitted from further proceedings.</p> <p>- The first government action plan to state that in order to reduce the consumption of tobacco and alcohol, the national alcohol and tobacco policy will be reviewed (Government coalition program 2011-2015).</p>
2014	<p>-Green Paper on Alcohol Policy adopted by the government</p> <p>- amendments to the Law-Enforcement Law (Riigikogu 01.07.2014).</p>	<p>-The compromise included all the concerned parties (incl. private sector) of the alcohol policy. Measures built on the framework of the WHO (Interview A, C)</p>

		-Permitting alcohol consumption in public places
2015	<p>-Permit of public alcohol consumption abolished (Riigikogu 01.07.2015)</p> <p>-Government coalition action plan for Reform Party, IRL and Social Democrats (<i>Sotsiaaldemokraadid</i>) for 2015-2019</p> <p>-draft amendments to the Alcohol and Advertisement Act proposed</p>	<p>-The Law- Enforcement Law was again amended to reverse the permit of public alcohol consumption due to negative public opinion (Kangro 17.12.14)</p> <p>-States its aims as to reduce the consumption of alcohol by half for the year 2030, to continuously raise excise tax on alcohol and to realize the principles of the Green Paper of Alcohol Policy (Koalitsioonilepe.08.04.2015)</p> <p>-legislative measures to execute the principles of the green paper introduced through the Draft Information System (EIS) (Alkoholiseaduse ja reklaamiseaduse muutmise seadus, EIS)</p>
2016	The draft legislative package is being updated by the MoSA and MoEAC to be introduced to the government in 2016	The draft will be updated in several aspects, main addition being the restriction of alcohol advertisement on the Web. The proposals were initially due in April 2016, but as of 15.05 they have not been publicly available in the Draft Information System (Memorandum valitsuskabineti nõupidamisele 2016)

Appendix 3. Advocacy coalitions in Estonian alcohol policy

HEALTH COALITION		
Organization	Narrative	Coordinated activities
Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA)	Initiator of green paper/legislative package ⁹	Coordinates the activities of TAI
National Institute of Health Development (TAI)	“Health deterioration, Estonia as one of the countries drinking most in EU” (Interview C; TAI 11.12.2015)	Subordinate unit of MoSA, provides research for evidence – based policy-making, educating public on health issues
Healthy Estonia Foundation (TESA)	Alcohol industry harasses the state, people blinded by the industry (Interview D)	Define themselves as acting together with MoSA, TAI on different arenas (Interview D)
Estonian Abstinence Association (AVE)	Serious health risks even at moderate levels (Müügiedenduse piiramise töörühma diskussioonidokument 2014); alcohol industry controls state (Beekmann 25.01.2015)	Interactive game “ISE” with TAI (TAI 20.03.2016)

⁹ As the author of the Green Paper and the legislative package of 2015, their narrative coincides with the narratives used in the documents.

Estonian Doctors Association/ Medical Students'	"Public health more important than freedom to conduct a business" (Aug L, ETAK)	Belong to the ETAK, Issue public support for the legislative package of MoSA
Estonian Chamber for Reducing Tobacco and Alcohol Related Harm (ETAK)	Alcohol harms health and economy (http://alkoholtubakas.blogspot.com.ee/)	Comprised of several associations; EVA, Doctors Association etc., issue coordinated public statements

BUSINESS COALITION		
Organization ¹⁰	Narrative	Coordinated activities
A) Estonian Association of Importers and Producers of Alcohol	Measures undermine local production and Estonia, personal free will should remain (Interview F)	- Joint public statements on media concerning the draft legislative package of October 2015 (Incl. A,B,C,D) (Meiessaar 22.02.2016)
B) Estonian Beer Association	Measures proposed are not right (Int B, G), not prohibiting but directing works (Interview B)	-Joint proposals to the draft legislative package of

¹⁰ The coordinated activities include various partners, thus to facilitate overview, organizations are coded for this table

	Not producer, but person itself should be responsible, freedom issues (Int G)	October 2015 (Incl. A, B, D + TV3) (EIS)
C) Estonian Traders Association (TA)	Trader is not a judge, everyone should decide themselves (Interview E) Impacts are not evaluated	
D) Estonian Food Industry Association (FIA)	MoSa ravages the competitiveness of Estonian food producers (Rudi 19.10.2015)	
E) Estonian Chamber of Trade and Industry	Measures burden entrepreneurs (EIS)	
F) Estonian Association of Advertising Associations	Measures proposed bring economic loss, not public gains (EIS)	