The Logic of Policy Change after Crisis: Proximity and Subsystem Interaction

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Abstract
This paper offers a nuanced re-conceptualization of crises and identifies the mechanisms that link crises to policy change. Building from a synthesis of the crisis management and policy change literatures, this paper (1) introduces the concept of policy and geographical proximity as a means to show how different types of crises alter the incentives for policy action within policy subsystems; (2) discusses an integrated set of proposals on how geographical and policy proximity affects the prospects of change in a policy subsystem; and (3) presents hypothesized scenarios outlining plausible intervening pathways linking a crisis to changes as contingent on policy subsystem structures.
Introduction

Crises denote periods of disorder in the seemingly normal development of human affairs, along with widespread questioning or discrediting of established policies, practices, and institutions. Consequently, crises are frequently cited as essential causal drivers for major or non-incremental policy change. Some research attributes the explanation for major policy change to the magnitude of the crisis, building on the maxim that ‘the bigger the cause, the bigger the impacts’ (Keeler 1993; Cortell and Peterson 1999). Other research points to variations in post-crisis outcomes from comprehensive policy change to continued stagnation (Boin and ‘t Hart 2003; Nice and Gross 2001). Indeed, relatively small events can initiate large and enduring political consequences (Pierson 2000). Even policy impacts after apparently similar crises vary; and minor, incremental policy responses, or even complete lack of policy change, are predominant patterns in many cases (Birkland 2006; Boin et al. 2009; Nohrstedt 2008). These differences in crisis impacts are puzzling and call for more careful theorizing regarding the role and impact of crises in public policymaking (Hall and Taylor 1996; Legro 2000).

In much previous research, crises with external sources have been assumed to be the principal precursors for substantial impact on public policy in a policy subsystem. The basic argument in the neo-institutional literature is that most policies are firmly rooted in inert institutional settings and a state of policy equilibrium, which cannot be changed from within. Therefore, stimuli, external to the policy subsystem, are required for non-incremental policy change. In an effort to clarify factors and mechanisms conditioning the effects of crises, this paper builds from a conceptual distinction between internal and external crises. The point of departure is subsystem politics i.e., the interaction between specialized actors involved in policymaking in any given policy domain (Birkland 2006; Baumgartner and Jones 1991; May et al. 2009). Even if many crises are followed by struggles over the dominant interpretation of causes and implications, the proximity of crises in relation to policy subsystems (in terms of policy and geographical distance) remain critical in order to clarify the nature, evolvement, and effects on policy debates.

To clarify the impact of crisis proximity on policy change, this paper structures its argument in part from the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993; 1999). The ACF offers a number of features that facilitate research on the crisis and policy change relationship, one of the most important of which is the policy subsystem. In recent years, there has been a growth of contributions drawing on the policy subsystem literature to explain policy change in the wake of crisis, emergency, and disaster (Birkland 2006; Boin, et al. 2009). This work has, in some parts, taken inspiration from the ACF, particularly with respect to policy-oriented learning, belief and policy change, and political behavior of advocacy coalitions. Less attention has been paid, however, to the ACF’s postulates regarding theory development about the mechanisms hypothesized to link a crisis to post-event
learning and policy change or, alternately, to continuation of the status quo (Nohrstedt 2005; 2009; Weible et al. 2009, 128).

The paper does not report new empirical findings but instead draws upon existing case studies and reviews of the literature to make three major contributions to the public policy literature. First, it introduces policy and geographical proximity as major dimensions of crises. Second, it discusses an integrated set of proposals on how geographical and policy proximity affect the prospects of policy change. Third, the paper presents hypothesized scenarios outlining plausible intervening pathways linking a crisis as contingent upon policy subsystem structures and interactions.

The paper proceeds inductively, starting with a short overview of how crises and policy change are described in the policy process and crisis management literatures. This is followed by a detailed discussion of crises and subsystem responses as described in the ACF. This section introduces the ACF along with a discussion of the importance of stable subsystem characteristics for policy change, patterns of subsystem interaction, the role of coalition strategies, and learning in response to crisis. The next section clarifies the relationship between geographic and policy proximity of crises and subsystem responses. The following section outlines five sets of hypothesized pathways linking crisis to subsystem responses. Finally, the concluding section summarizes the main arguments in the paper and proposes a way forward to assess empirically crisis impacts on subsystem affairs.

**Crises as Portrayed in the Policy Process Literature**

Some public policy theorists posit that crises, often conceptualized as external shocks, are one of the prerequisites for non-incremental deviations from the status quo (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999; Ostrom 2005; Zaharidis 2007; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Others argue that crises as the cause of policy change are overemphasized (James and Jorgensen 2009). There are several plausible explanations for these divergent views about the link between crises and policy change.

One explanation relates to a recurrent critique that public policy theory fuses different types of events under the label of ‘external shocks’ or ‘external events’. Consequently, external shocks cover a variety of rather disparate phenomena, including technological and macroeconomic change, regime shifts, social movement activities, revolutions, and demographic change (Cortell and Peterson 1999). Similarly, the ACF lists, as possible external events, changes in socio-economic conditions, changes in public opinion, changes in systematic governing coalition, and policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 202). One obvious risk of broadly conceptualizing external shocks is the tendency for scholars to link policy change to arbitrarily chosen exogenous phenomena. Thus, exogenous events easily become a sweeping explanation for policy change and a source of confirmation bias (Capano 2009).
Another explanation is divergent vocabulary. Whereas the disaster and crisis management literature has used the “crisis” or “disaster” concepts, public policy theorists have traditionally used more broadly defined concepts, such as “external events” and “external perturbations” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993), “external shocks” (Ingram et al. 2007; Ostrom 2005), “focusing events” (Birkland 1997; Kingdon 1995; Zahariadis 2007); or “critical junctures” (Hogan and Doyle 2009). In order to distinguish between these phenomena conceptually, we suggest that external events, perturbations, and shocks generally refer to broader processes of societal and/or political development without any analytical attention being paid to actors’ reactions to these events. In contrast, focusing events and critical junctures seek to capture not only the ‘impetus’ but also inherent parts of the societal and/or political processes triggered by certain events, including for instance heightened attention (Birkland 2006; Cortell and Peterson 1999; Kingdon 1995).

Conceptually, the notion of crisis lies close to the definition of focusing events, since it often seeks to capture a combination of external stimuli and societal reactions. Common defining characteristics emphasized in the literature involve surprise, threat to core societal values, uncertainty, and urgency regarding important decisions (e.g. Hermann 1972). In addition to these characteristics, which essentially capture more or less acute managerial challenges facing crisis operators and decision makers, others have emphasized elements of transition and de-institutionalization. Accordingly, ‘crises’ are defined as periods of disorder in the seemingly normal development of a system and widespread questioning or discrediting of established policies, practices, and institutions (Alink et al. 2001; Boin et al. 2005; Cortell and Peterson 1999). In summary, crises exhibit a combination of managerial challenges brought on by the occurrence of harmful events and political symbolic challenges resulting from actors’ deliberate attempts to discredit the existing order (cf. McConnell 2008, 557).

Another explanation is complexity of the phenomena and the simplified theoretical focus. Policy change occurs in complex political systems and subsystems with an uncountable number of interrelated elements that are dynamic over time. Any attempt to understand how external events affect such systems requires simplifying assumptions and clear theory. The challenge is how to simplify, what to emphasize, and what to ignore. Previous scholarship suggests that to clarify the relationship between a crisis and policy change, it is insufficient to focus merely on agenda-setting effects of crises and contingencies. Recent efforts to explain political and policy impacts of crises therefore recognize the importance of interaction between societal and political actors representing diverging frames of interpretation. Post-crisis debates are thus depicted as contests between frames and counter-frames regarding crisis severity, causes, responsibility, and implications, which in return affects political institutions, leaders, and public policies. These effects are mediated primarily by the nature of the crisis and its timing vis-à-vis
ordinary political and bureaucratic processes (Boin et al. 2009; Widmaier et al. 2007).

A final, and possibly the most fundamental, explanation associated with linking crises with policy change is underdeveloped theory and a history of narrowly focused empirical inquiries. To date, the theoretical and empirical efforts in the public policy literature have predominately focused on whether an external event caused a change in policy while less careful attention has been paid to (i) the nature of the event, (ii) the type of change, (iii) the contingent subsystem conditions conducive for change or stasis, and (iv) the causal mechanisms linking the external event and change. For example, the large number of applications of the advocacy coalition framework have attempted to link an external event with policy change, with few attempting to identify other changes in the subsystem (e.g., change in coalition resources), articulate the conditions of the subsystem that allowed such change to occur, and why the change occurred (perhaps through a process trace) (Nohrstedt, 2009; Weible et al., 2009).

### Crises and Major Policy Change in the ACF circa 2009

Using the ACF as a foundation of theoretical inquiry, this paper seeks to provide nuanced theoretical insight into the crises-policy change relationship. In many studies, the ACF has served as a ‘heuristic device’ to locate influential policy actors and to classify crisis-induced policy outcomes (Olson et al. 1999). In other studies, the application of the ACF’s subsystem concept has proved useful to curb the complexity in any political system by identifying the essential components for study (Davis and Davis 1988; Bischoff 2001; Farquharson 2003; Green and Houlihan 2004; Sobeck 2003). Another benefit is the ‘advocacy coalition’ concept, which helps to simplify and reconstruct the policy positions of key actors involved in post-crisis policymaking. It has been argued, for instance, that the specific set-up of advocacy coalitions as well as the involvement of policy brokers is important to understand differences in the policy effects of crises and disasters in different policy domains (Birkland 1997). Finally, researchers interested in policy change rely frequently on the ACF’s conceptual distinction between minor and major change (e.g. Boin et al. 2009; Kurtz 2004). According to the definition, major policy change includes changes in the policy core aspects of governmental programs whereas minor changes refer to changes in secondary aspects (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, 147).

The key to understanding the effects of crises on major policy change lies in answering three questions: First, what are the important properties defining policy subsystems? Second, how do subsystem actors cognitively respond to crises? And, third, what mechanisms link crises to major policy change? To date, the ACF has devoted some attention to these questions but without clear synthesis and presentation, something the subsequent paragraphs attempt to rectify.
What are the important properties defining policy subsystems? A policy subsystem has a number of defining properties that make it useful for grappling with the complexity of crisis-induced policymaking. Building largely from past work on complex systems (Simon, 1996) and on the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Sabatier 1998; Jones and Jenkins-Smith, 2009), five subsystem properties are described.

Property 1. Policy subsystems contain an uncountable number of components within their boundaries that interact in nontrivial ways to produce outputs and outcomes for a given policy topic. These components range from institutional and physical characteristics to characteristics of the actors involved. At the operational, day-to-day level and subject to various constraints, intra-subsystem components determine the outputs and outcomes. Emerging questions have to do with how do external subsystem events alter the interactions of intra-subsystem components and how these different intra-subsystem interactions then shape outputs and outcomes.

Property 2. Policy subsystems demarcate the integrated and nonintegrated actors on a given policy topic. Given the limited capacity of humans to process stimuli and because policies usually involve complicated topics, people must specialize in a finite number of policy subsystems to influence outputs and outcomes. With specialization come involvement and a perception among integrated actors of some autonomy from other subsystems. Additionally, questions arise about who constitutes the nonintegrated actors and who among them are most and least likely to become involved at some capacity. Some questions are then raised about how integrated actors often aligned in opposing coalitions respond to a crisis and to what extent the nonintegrated actors mobilize and attempt to change subsystem outputs and outcomes?

Property 3. Policy subsystems are interdependent (horizontally) and nested (vertically). Subsystem boundaries are artificial constructs and do not represent firm demarcations like jurisdictional lines on a map. From the perspective of the integrated actor, subsystem boundaries help foster specialization in a policy topic and maintain some control over subsystem affairs. From the perspective of the researcher, subsystem boundaries help simplify inquiry in a topical policy area. The implication is that subsystems are, to various extents, interdependent horizontally (e.g., water policy in Colorado is interdependent with water policy in Arizona) as well as nested vertically (e.g., water policy in Colorado is nested in the U.S. water policy subsystem). To understand how crisis affects subsystems, researchers must ask how a crisis in one subsystem affects other interdependent subsystems (e.g., a drought in Colorado and its effect on water policy in Arizona) and how a crisis in one subsystem affects subsystems nested within it (e.g., financial crisis in the U.S. and its affect on water policy in Colorado).

Property 4. Policy subsystems must provide a degree of authority or potential for authority. Authority of a policy subsystem might include the
institutional capacity to adopt, implement, monitor, and enforce policies or informal collective agreements. Integrated actors will only invest their time and effort in a policy subsystem if the possibility exists to shape outputs and outcomes. In the wake of crisis, the questions are about what types of policy changes are possible within the subsystem and to what extent the subsystem components might change through policy decisions in other subsystems (related to the degree of interdependence and nestedness).

Property 5. Subsystems undergo periods of stasis, incremental change, and major change. Policy subsystems are dynamic over time, with some subsystems exhibiting nascent attributes and others mature attributes. In nascent compared to mature policy subsystems, the set of integrated actors as well as their beliefs will more likely exhibit instability as subsystems policies emerge. After about a decade of existence, mature subsystems will more likely involve entrenched integrated actors anchored by specialized organizations, subunits of government, and existing policies (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). So how do nascent subsystems react to crises compared to mature subsystems?

The second major question on linking crises and policy change is, How do integrated subsystem actors respond to stimuli, such as a crisis? The ACF’s model of the individual begins with the bounded rationality literature led by Simon (1985; 1996) by assuming that individuals face cognitive limitations in their ability to process information and simplify the world primarily through hierarchically structured belief systems (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1999, 133). Such limitations manifest themselves in three phenomena. First, actors are more likely to select stimuli that confirm their beliefs and less likely to select stimuli that disconfirm their beliefs (Festinger 1957; Zaller 1992). Selective exposure to stimuli has been documented in a wide range of political and social phenomena, suggesting that actors seek out belief-confirming stimuli and may have less knowledge of events that do not bolster pre-existing belief (Zaller 1992). The ACF would predict that subsystem actors would attempt to tone down the consequences of crises if the implications threatened their belief system configurations and favored subsystem policies and programs. Furthermore, selective exposure suggests that some external events - which may appear a priori to the research as possible candidates for policy change in a subsystem - might be completely ignored by subsystem actors if they fail to recognize the political opportunities or risks. Second, actors will interpret stimuli to confirm their belief system (Lord et al. 1979; Munro et al. 2002). With respect to crisis, the ACF would predict that actors would interpret crises differently as viewed through their belief-driven conceptual lenses. Third, one implication from Lord et al. (1979) is that actors interpret ambiguous stimuli in such a way as to reinforce their pre-existing beliefs. The ACF would predict, for example, that a crisis with ambiguous causes and consequences will likely magnify the polarization of competing coalitions, plausibly reinforced by the “devil shift”, i.e. the perception of opponents as stronger and more evil than they really are (Sabatier et al. 1987). While the
model of the individual in the ACF derives largely from the social psychology literature, the general logic is at least partially consistent with recent advances in evolutionary models of human behavior (Richerson, et al. 2002; Hibbing and Alfred 2004).

The final question is, What are the mechanisms linking crises to major policy change? A response to this question requires a deeper understanding of the ACF flow diagram in order to clarify how crises might feed into ongoing processes of subsystem politics (see figure 1).

>INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE<

The ACF makes a distinction between relatively stable system parameters (e.g. constitutional structure and socio-cultural values), which are unlikely to change over a decade or more, and external events that occur more frequently and yet still unexpectedly. The latter includes a variety of events and situations unfolding outside the control of subsystem actors, including changes in socio-economic conditions, changes in public opinion, changes in system governing coalition, and policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems. A crisis, as conceptualized in the crisis management literature, would most likely occur as a component within the external events category (Jenkins-Smith et al. 1991; Sabatier 1987; Jenkins-Smith 1988), though it is feasible but rare for external shocks to originate in relatively stable system parameters, such as the impact on policy subsystems after the transition from former communist states in Eastern Europe in the late 20th Century (see Andersson 1999).

The ACF identifies three causal mechanisms that link events to major policy change. The first is redistribution of political resources including financial resources, public opinion, access to authority, mobilizable supporters, skillful leadership, and scientific and technical information (Sabatier and Weible 2007). In terms of agenda setting, dramatic and unforeseen events draw attention to problems and potential solutions, which in turn might provide new resources (in terms of public support, new members, financial means etc.) to coalitions or redistribute existing resources among the participants within a subsystem. In return, a crisis might tilt the balance of power within the subsystem paving the way for new actors to influence policymaking, sometimes even by replacing the previously dominating coalition. A terrorist attack, for instance, might undermine the position of civil rights coalitions while strengthening the position of the proponents of harsher measures to combat terrorism. What has yet to be articulated is how and under what conditions these resources make a subsystem conducive for change.

The second mechanism includes efforts of ‘skillful exploitation’ of events by minority coalitions seeking change. The ACF assumes that minority coalitions are populated by actors that constantly seek change by engaging in ‘venue shopping’. These groups try different venues in order to find a way to
influence public policy and obtain changes in accordance with their belief systems. Accordingly, minority coalition actors ‘lie in wait’ for policy windows to open (Kingdon 1995, 181) in order to stay prepared when unexpected developments alter the conditions for policy influence and change. Whether a crisis will result in policy change depends, to some extent, on minority coalitions’ readiness and ability to exploit them to their favor (Mintrom and Vergari 1996). While theorists confirm the importance of coalition exploitation and policy entrepreneurship in the wake of perturbations, it is less clear from the literature what it takes for these efforts to be successful. It has been argued, for instance, that an explanation is missing on how coalition leaders ‘seize the moment’ and take advantage of external events to advance their core beliefs in policymaking (Goldfinch and ‘t Hart 2003; Alink et al 2001). Hence, ‘skillful exploitation’ remains a relatively underdeveloped concept where it is unclear what characteristics would increase the likelihood for policy change (Zohlnhöfer 2009).

The third mechanism identified by the ACF is that an event makes members of a dominant advocacy coalition reconsider their policy core beliefs through learning. Overall, however, the ACF emphasizes that policymakers are likely to stay committed to preexisting beliefs even in the face of a crisis that challenges those beliefs. Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993, 47) argue, for instance, that knowledge challenging existing wisdom about problems and solutions emerges primarily over time and not as the effect of a single external perturbation. In fact, “it is exceedingly unlikely that members of a coalition will change policy core beliefs voluntarily” (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 198). When new information does emerge, it is likely to be screened out since most coalition members resist information suggesting that their policy core beliefs are invalid or unattainable (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, 123).

Policy Subsystem and Contingent Conditions for Policy Change
There is some level of agreement among theorists that characteristics of policy subsystems are important when assessing prospects for policy change. The argument is that policy subsystems display fundamental structural differences, primarily in terms of openness and the level of interest group participation, creating different conditions for policy-learning and change, which in turn has implications for the analysis of the crisis-policy change relationship.

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1 A dominant coalition is one that supports a single policy image that reflects a high degree of belief compatibility among members, facilitates coordination among members, and is without an organized opposition. Additionally, the ACF treats shocks and learning essentially as two separate paths to policy change. An alternative interpretation suggested by the literature is that shocks and learning are also interrelated, which follows from the emphasis on crisis-induced policy learning (see e.g. Birkland 2006; Busenberg 2001; Thomas 1999). The implication, as already recognized by the ACF, is that learning might lead to policy change in two different ways: (i) by the gradual accumulation of knowledge over time, or (ii) by the sudden emergence of new insights brought on by the occurrence of some shock to the subsystem (see Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999).
Howlett and Ramesh (1998, 475) argue that a policy subsystem in any given sector “reveals a great deal about its propensity to respond to changes in ideas and actors, and is therefore a good indicator of both the nature (‘normal’ or ‘paradigmatic’) and tempo (‘gradual’ or ‘rapid’) of policy change likely to occur in that sector.” The decisive factor is level of openness in a subsystem to new actors and ideas. The implication is that to explain cross-case variations in terms of crisis-induced policy changes, what matters is the type of subsystem being hit. This observation, however, is to be contrasted with the assertion that policy network characteristics are not able to deploy any explanatory power. According to this view, much work that seeks to attribute the explanation for policy change to underlying network structures fails to establish hypotheses linking the nature of policy networks to outcomes of the policymaking process (Börzel 1998).

The ACF assumes that the behavior of subsystem actors is partly conditioned by a set of stable exogenous factors, including basic attributes of the problem, basic distribution of natural resources, socio-cultural values and structures, and basic constitutional and institutional structure. These factors rarely change and do not by themselves provide impetus for policy change within a subsystem. They do, however, affect the distribution of resources and constraints within which advocacy coalitions operate (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 193). Some crises have de-stabilizing effects on the structural features of any given policy area by challenging the institutional integrity, including institutionalized values, structures, and processes, in that area (Alink et al. 2001, 290). Crises may furthermore change the conditions for venue access, by opening up new channels for participation and influence for some actors while shutting others out from the policy process (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Pralle 2006). Thus, acknowledging the basic organization of a subsystem is important to understand the effects of crises on subsystem politics.

The specific set-up of a policy subsystem, in terms of the number of coalitions and the patterns of interaction, has implications for policymaking dynamics in the wake of crisis. With respect to the number of coalitions, Birkland (2006, 176) notes that the presence of one coalition is more likely to increase pressure on government agencies to learn about hazards than in policy areas where no major coalition is present. An example of the former is the earthquake domain in the United States, which had an organized policy community that pressured government to more active measures for mitigation. According to Birkland, this stands in stark contrast to the hurricane domain where the absence of a cohesive advocacy coalition led to less pressure to learn from and mitigate the effects of hurricanes. Likewise, Birkland notes that the occurrence of two or more coalitions can potentially accelerate the process of crisis-induced learning since policy ideas might already be available. His analysis of policymaking in the homeland security domain furthermore confirms the importance of coalition competition and redistribution of resources as important drivers for policy change. This is illustrated by the
September 11 attacks that gave national security advocates resources to overcome opposition to controversial legislation such as the Patriot Act (Birkland 2006, 177).

**Subsystem Types and Modes of Coalition Interactions**

Previous research proposes, albeit not unanimously, that the specific set-up of the coalition structure within a policy subsystem is one important precondition for policy change in the wake of crisis. In addition, the level of conflict within a policy subsystem as measured by the level of belief system compatibility provides another important factor. The basic logic is that the intensity and breadth of conflict between coalitions within a policy subsystem will influence the way in which a crisis will affect subsystem affairs (Nohrstedt 2009).

A typology of subsystems is provided by Weible (2008), who makes a distinction between unitary subsystems (single coalition, high intra-coalition belief compatibility), collaborative subsystems (cooperative coalitions, intermediate inter-coalition belief compatibility), and adversarial subsystems (competitive coalitions, low inter-coalition belief compatibility). Based upon this typology, it is hypothesized that conditions for policy-oriented learning vary across different subsystems; whereas high levels of intra-coalition learning are expected in all types, it is hypothesized that inter-coalition learning is more likely in collaborative subsystems than in adversarial subsystems (Weible 2008, 628; see also Kriesi et al. 2006). The distinction between these types of subsystems is important to explain crisis-induced policy change, primarily by predicting plausible causal mechanisms that might come into play.

As long as crises affecting unitary subsystems do not lead to the emergence and establishment of new coalitions that are formed to challenge a dominant coalition, they are not likely to be followed by competitive or conflictual modes of interaction among proponents of different policy positions. Therefore, to understand crisis-induced policymaking in unitary subsystems, it is reasonable instead to turn attention to the conditions for policy-oriented learning or defection among members of the dominant advocacy coalition.

In collaborative subsystems, crises provide input to preexisting consensus-based institutions where coalitions share access to authority. When dealing with collaborative subsystems, policymaking is likely to follow several plausible trajectories. One likely effect of a crisis is that coalition structure remains undisturbed, which paves the way for consensus-seeking. Another possibility is that crises provide access to key venues or other political resources to new actors, which in effect might lead to the formation of a new and aversive minority coalition challenging the core beliefs of preexisting coalitions (Pralle 2006). In consequence, the advent of a crisis alters the predominant mode of interaction from collaboration to confrontation.
Finally, with respect to adversarial subsystems it is possible that a crisis will deepen and intensify belief system incompatibility and the level of confrontation between subsystem actors espousing different policy beliefs. Typical cases include nuclear power accidents and incidents, which at least temporarily tend to deepen conflict between opponents and proponents of nuclear energy power. Compared to other types of subsystems, adversarial subsystems are also more prone to politicization and politics of blaming related to causes and implications of crises, which – it has been hypothesized – undermine efforts to crisis-induced policy learning and change (Dekker and Hansén 2004; Boin and ’t Hart 2003). These suggestions are consistent with the observation in previous ACF research that the level of conflict provides an important contextual variable that helps in explaining policy learning in general (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993, 49) and crisis-induced policy change in particular (Nohrstedt 2008, 274).

When assessing the policy implications that might result from a crisis and the explanatory role of subsystem politics, subsystem boundaries per se might become subject to uncertainty and debate. When applying the ACF, the initial step is to determine subsystem boundaries by documenting belief systems and patterns of coordination among regular participants in policymaking (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993; Weible 2007). However, these boundaries might not be easily discernible in practice. In some cases, the implications of a crisis on subsystem affairs become subject to debate between competing advocacy coalitions. The underlying reason, again, is the strategic use of crisis narratives or crisis ‘frames’ by advocacy coalitions, which are employed in attempts to advance policy objectives (Stone 1989; McBeth et al. 2007).

An illustrative example is the Swedish reaction to the 1986 Chernobyl disaster (Nohrstedt 2008). In the debate that followed after the accident, which caused significant levels of radioactive fallout in Sweden, the anti-nuclear power coalition called for immediate shut-down of Swedish reactors, thus framing the accident largely as a domestic energy policy issue. Pursuing an alternative narrative, the pro-nuclear power coalition shifted focus to other alternative policy areas, including civil contingency planning as well as environmental policy. One lesson emerging from this case is that it is not always definite which subsystem is being hit by a crisis, which depends on persistent attempts by subsystem actors to impose different frames regarding the causes and consequences for policymaking.

**Coalition Strategy and Learning in Response to Crisis**

While the debate concerning the importance of subsystem characteristics for policy change continues, substantial attention is also given to more volatile conditions and the behavior of subsystem actors. Minority coalitions, as mentioned above, comprise actors espousing beliefs other than those vested in preexisting policy programs supported by a dominant coalition and who therefore advocate alternative policy solutions. Minority coalitions strive to
form alliances and to mobilize political resources to obtain greater influence in the policymaking process. The ACF, therefore, assumes that minority coalitions can be expected to capitalize on the occurrence of a crisis by intensifying efforts to achieve greater influence.

Given that the replacement of the dominant coalition as an effect of crisis is a rather infrequent scenario, minority coalitions “seldom develop a majority position through the raw exercise of power. Instead, they must seek to convince other actors of the soundness of their position” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 45, emphasis in original). Efforts to rally support go hand-in-hand with mobilization of coalition resources, which involves intensified efforts to influence public opinion, strategic use of information, and the creation of an attractive vision for the coalition (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 203). In adversarial subsystems, these efforts are likely to encourage countermobilization by competing advocacy coalitions pursuing alternative visions, akin to what Boin et al. (2008, 286) label “framing contests.” The ACF ultimately contributes to the explanation of the emergence of such framing contests with reference to policy beliefs as perceptual filters and the rigidity of those beliefs. Primarily, preexisting normative and perceptual beliefs provide the principal guide for advocacy coalition members in times of uncertainty since they are the “lens through which actors perceive the world” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, 131). In the aftermath of crisis, different coalitions are therefore likely to compete with each other over the prevalent interpretation concerning causes and implications.

Similar to other public policy theories and frameworks, the ACF is less precise when it comes to explaining the outcomes of such framing contests. Thus, given the occurrence of a crisis, under what conditions do policy alternatives pursued by minority coalitions prevail? Inferring from comparative case-study research, Boin et al. (2009) hypothesize that the effects of crises on policy are mediated by (i) the room for maneuver to deny performance deficits or policy failure; (ii) preexisting policy conflicts, which open opportunities for opposition forces to question existing policies; and (iii) the timing of a crisis vis-à-vis a forthcoming election. Additional insights are offered by the policy entrepreneurship model, which explains influence with reference to certain individual capacities and skills. Kingdon (1995, 180-81), for instance, argues that for a policy entrepreneur to be successful (in terms of achieving agenda status or enactment) he or she should have some claim to a hearing, political contacts or negotiating skills, and patience to be persistent. Another quality frequently cited in the policy entrepreneurship literature is coalition-building skills and the capacity to rally political support for certain

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2 Exceptions include crises that coincide with and affect the outcome of elections. For example, even if it was not the sole cause, many attributed the 2004 electoral defeat of the Spanish government party *Partido Popular* to the handling of the terrorist bombings in Madrid three days before the elections.
policy solutions (Mintrom and Vergari 1996; Mintrom and Norman 2009). From this perspective, entrepreneurial qualities are an important resource for any coalition seeking influence in the wake of a crisis. In another vein, Kaarbo (1998) argues that minority groups can resort to various action strategies increasing the likelihood for gaining influence. In addition to strategic framing, other strategies involve promises of rewards or threats of imposing costs and manipulation of decision procedures.

Moreover, why certain policy problems and solutions gain prominence in policymaking following a crisis is intimately related to the dynamics of crisis-induced policy learning. Policy change, however, does not always follow from policy-oriented learning if understood as revised beliefs in the face of new information or evidence (cf. Birkland 2006). First, policy changes initiated after any crisis rarely elevate new policy problems or solutions. A more likely scenario is that they serve to reintroduce a focus on pre-existing problems and solutions by opening windows of opportunity for certain actors to push for their problems and solutions (Keeler 1993; Kingdon 1995; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977). It has been suggested, for example, that many reforms proposed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States to rectify shortcomings in US counterterrorism were in fact already on the intelligence policy agenda well before the attacks took place (Birkland 2006). Second, particularly in the context of blaming and accountability, policymakers might set a course for more ‘symbolic’ policy changes that seek to ensure swift political closure of destabilizing events. Such changes are not the result of revised problem perceptions or beliefs concerning the superiority of novel policy solutions but rather attempts to demonstrate decisiveness in times of political turbulence and accountability.

As previously noted, one mechanism linking external shocks to policy change is policy-oriented learning within the dominant coalition. The logic underlying the role of crisis-induced learning is rather straightforward and suggests that an event might stimulate reassessment and plausibly change of policy-oriented beliefs. Accordingly, incumbent policymakers initiate policy change because they revise their beliefs about problems and solutions. A possible case in point is the decision by Congress after the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster to pass legislation imposing a double-hull requirement for oil tankers. Another example following the recent financial crisis is the US Senate’s passage of new financial reform legislation imposing new restrictions on financial firms and banks. In both these cases, policy changes resulted from revised perceptions regarding the root causes of crisis and the necessity of reform to reduce the odds of similar crises in the future. This type of “within coalition learning” (Sabatier 1987) applies to minority coalitions’ responses to crises and helps explain the emergence or development of different modes of subsystem interaction. From this viewpoint, revised policy core beliefs emerge as a key mechanism explaining coalition defection in the wake of crisis. As argued above, policy subsystems are susceptible to change in the aftermath of crisis, which means that crises might alter patterns of interaction among
advocacy coalitions. Changes in patterns of interaction will ultimately depend on how coalition members respond to impetus in terms of maintaining, reinforcing, or revising policy core beliefs. Substantive revision in policy core beliefs might trigger coalition defection tilting the balance of power within the subsystem, or – if accompanied by new patterns of coordination – contribute to the formation of entirely new minority coalitions.

Following ACF’s model of the individual, it is predicted, however, that changes in the core aspects of belief systems are rare; since core beliefs serve as perceptual filters, they will screen out any information indicating that these beliefs are unattainable. Changes are therefore more likely in secondary instrumental beliefs. The view of policy beliefs being resistant to change is analytically problematic because it partly excludes, on logical grounds, the possibility of learning triggered by exogenous events (Dudley 2007, 409). In response, changes in the coalition structure might be caused by new “previously disinterested” actors joining preexisting coalitions (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 15) or, alternatively, forming an entirely new coalition. Members might also be motivated to leave a coalition for other reasons than adopting new core beliefs, e.g. lack of support for current strategies for advocating policy or in attempts to take advantage of possibilities of short-term gains (Riker 1962), which in consequence undermines the power-base of that coalition. On this basis, changes in advocacy coalition membership after a crisis can obviously occur for reasons other than revised policy core beliefs. One conclusion suggests that when defection occurs, external perturbations are a major cause (Jenkins-Smith et al. 1991, 876).

Meanwhile, it is important to recognize that minority coalitions’ aspirations to acquire greater influence do not necessarily mean they adopt a reformist approach to public policy. Similarly, dominant coalitions will not deterministically take on the role of status quo players (Boin et al. 2009, 101). According to the ACF, advocacy coalitions “strive to translate components of their belief systems into actual policy before their opponents can do the same” (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 196). In these struggles, minority coalitions might in fact end up resisting attempts by the dominant coalitions to initiate far-reaching changes or reforms instead of mobilizing resources to realize minority core beliefs. Intelligence reforms debated in many countries after 9/11 and other terrorist attacks illustrate this scenario, whereas civil rights groups have mobilized to prevent new legislation that would expand the mandate and capacity of intelligence agencies.

### Crisis Proximity and Subsystem Response

For several decades and with few exceptions, major events or shocks have been conceptualized as occurring “external” to policy subsystem boundaries rather than internal to its boundaries. The argument has been that subsystem policies and politics were deep-rooted in a stable state of equilibrium – only disreputable by some external event (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Crises occurring within the policy subsystem – deemed “internal shocks” – have
recently been hypothesized to involve different mechanisms and responses by subsystem actors (Sabatier and Weible 2007). While the external-internal dichotomy might be colloquially and academically convenient as a means to separate crises with different sources and triggers, we argue that this distinction has its limits. First, from the definition introduced above, crises represent periods of disorder and de-institutionalization, which are phenomenologically distinct from objective accounts of the origin of the threat (exogenous or endogenous). Second, events might become subject to strategic social construction or framing contests where advocacy coalitions employ persuasive tactics to impose meaning to events in terms of underlying causes, the success or failure of response, and the necessity of reform (Boin et al. 2009; Widmaier et al. 2007). In consequence, there is a need to be more precise with regard to specific parameters conditioning the impact of crisis on subsystem politics.

Any attempt to simplify the difference between types of crisis events requires simplification that will emphasize some factors while ignoring others. Crisis and disaster management research offers a variety of crisis typologies building on combinations of different defining features e.g., the object of threat, causation, level of predictability, and temporal extension (see Gundel 2005). Given our interest in crisis impacts on policy subsystem politics, we introduce a simple two-dimensional typology building specifically on the policy subsystem definition, which involves a policy domain, a geographic area, and a set of specialized actors attempting to shape subsystem affairs. From this subsystem definition, the key dimensions are geographic proximity and policy proximity (cf. Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997). For geographic proximity, a crisis might occur inside or outside of the policy subsystem. For example, the crisis associated with Hurricane Katrina was endogenous for the crisis management policy subsystem for Louisiana but exogenous for many other subsystems including those hurricane-centered crisis management policy subsystems for other states along the United States’ Atlantic coast and other crisis management policy subsystems with more general foci, as found in California.

Crises are also distinguished by policy proximity of the crisis in relation to the policy subsystem (Alink et al. 2001). Some crises “hit at the heart of existing policy domains, espousing deficiencies in regulatory or service-delivery arrangements” whereas others are more peripheral (Boin et al. 2009, 98). Policy proximity hence relates to the degree that policy subsystems share policy design components, such as a subsystem’s statutes, laws, and policies, including the instruments, ideas, and symbols therein. For example, Hurricane Katrina will more likely have an effect on other crisis management subsystems that prepare and mitigate for hurricanes than on disaster management subsystems that prepare and mitigate for earthquakes, all else being equal. Close policy proximity, however, does not necessarily imply close geographic proximity; for instance, a crisis management policy
subsystem in Louisiana is distinct from the environmental policy subsystem in Louisiana even though they share the same geographical area.

Policy subsystems are systems within themselves as well as subsystems of broader political systems. Thus, the crisis management policy subsystem in New Orleans is a subsystem of the State of Louisiana crisis management subsystem, which is a subsystem of a broader U.S. crisis management policy subsystem – these three subsystems could be distinguished by their geographic boundaries, relevant policy issues, and involved actors. The main point is that the distinction between crises with different origins affects how subsystem actors react and the likelihood for learning and policy change (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997, 285). Table 1 summarizes the distinction between crisis events by its two dimensions of policy and geographic proximity. The dimensions in Table 1 are on a continuum with blurred boundaries.

The existing literature that emphasizes external crisis as a driver for change generally assumes that the crisis is of sufficient magnitude, measured by the relative damage it causes to core societal values, to attract the attention of subsystem actors (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Less attention is being paid to the importance of geographical and policy distance for subsystem responses. Table 1 parses these dimensions more definitely. All else being equal, it is hypothesized that subsystem impacts from an immediate crisis with close geographic and policy proximity will exceed impacts from a vicarious crisis with distant geographic and policy proximity. Thus, the greater the geographic and policy proximities, the greater the impact of the crisis on a given subsystem in terms of the incentives it creates for policy action, including fear and increased attention (see Birkland 2006; Keeler 1993). This hypothesis builds on the logic that close geographic and policy proximity provide strong incentives for subsystem actors to mobilize resources to either preserve or challenge the preexisting policy order. On balance, close proximity will increase the likelihood for wide-spread perceptions and allegations of policy failure, resulting in mobilization of reformist-oriented coalitions and counter-mobilization of more conservative coalitions (cf. May 1992). More distant crises might provide strong impetus for change as well. As suggested by the literature on vicarious learning (e.g., Stern 1997) and policy transfer (e.g. Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; James and Lodge 2003), policy-proximate crises that are geographically distant enable some subsystem actors to learn the relevant policy lessons from the event to change the affairs of their subsystems. Likewise, geographic-proximate crises that are unrelated in policy might offer a redistribution of resources and new entries and exits of subsystem actors.

Two caveats are in order when addressing the importance of proximity for subsystem responses to crises. First, in some extreme cases, crises will
span across *multiple* subsystems and are therefore not confined to limited geographical and policy areas. Recent examples, such as the global financial recession and the spread of the swine-flu, clearly have implications spanning across several policy subsystems. Second, subsystem impacts emanating from vicarious crises are likely to be mediated by purposeful efforts by pro-change actors to narrow the policy distance by attempts to convince other actors that there is at least some level of overlap between problem definitions and policy design components. Learning across subsystem boundaries is hence triggered by information searches resulting in expected benefits of transferring lessons from events that unfold in adjacent policy areas (Mossberger and Wolman 2003).

**Pathway Scenarios Linking Crisis to Policy Subsystem Change**

Table 2 summarizes the arguments thus far into five sets of pathway scenarios linking crises with policy change or stagnation. The distinction among the five sets originates from the different subsystem types, the proximity of the crisis, and the logic of coalition response.

>INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE<

Given a null scenario that coalitions will ignore a crisis of any type, the scenarios in Table 2 assume that the impacts of a crisis will be conditioned by its proximity vis-à-vis policy subsystems of geographic and policy distance where immediate crises are hypothesized to have more substantial effect compared to vicarious crises. The relationship between proximity and subsystem impact is not straightforward, however. Primarily, crisis impacts are likely to be conditioned by the preexisting mode of interaction among coalitions in terms of the level of conflict or consensus in the policy subsystems. By introducing these scenarios, we adhere to the argument that variations in crisis-induced policy impacts can be partially explained by cross-sectoral differences in basic subsystem characteristics (Birkland 1997; Baumgartner and Jones 1991). Table 2 offers broadly based scenarios that imply a number of mechanisms linking crises and subsystem change or stagnation. We identify six such categories of mechanisms, adding to the three already identified by the ACF. These mechanisms, which are interdependent and posited to be theoretically important, include:

(i) *Redistribution of resources.* The degree that the crisis can be exploited to redistribute resources, examples including changes in coalition supporters through greater mobilization, changes in access to amiable venues and decision-making authority, changes in the allocation of private and public financial resources, shifts in the attention of scientific and technical experts, and shifts in the attention of the general public.

(ii) *Learning within the dominant coalition.* The degree to which dominant coalition members revise their belief system as a consequence of the crisis.
(iii) **Exploitation by a minority coalition.** The degree to which a minority coalition can skillfully exploit the crisis.

(iv) **Defection from a dominant coalition.** The degree to which members of the dominant coalition reconsider their policy core beliefs and defect through learning and belief change.

(v) **Framing contests.** The degree that the crisis can be framed as a threat to, or supportive of, coalition belief systems and policies of the policy subsystem.

(vi) **Policy entrepreneur(s).** The presence of one or more skillful policy entrepreneurs.

Combining the hypothesized pathways that link crisis and subsystem responses with plausible intervening mechanisms is an embryonic attempt toward constructing a more general theory of crisis-induced policy impacts. With a focus on the deliberate attempts by advocacy coalitions toward strategic framing of events and mobilization of resources, the ACF arguably reaches further than traditional ‘focusing events theories’ that explain policy change primarily as a result of agenda-setting (e.g. Kingdon 1995; Birkland 2006). Furthermore, the ACF offers important additions to social-constructivist approaches that depict crisis-induced policy dynamics in terms of ‘framing contests’ (Boin et al, 2009; Widmaier et al 2007), primarily by offering a way to reconstruct actor constellations and patterns of (pre-crisis) subsystem interactions. Yet, the fact remains that the list of causal processes and mechanisms described in this paper is by no means exhaustive and we encourage further theoretical and empirical research building on the ideas presented in here.

**Conclusion**

For decades scholars of policy processes have relied upon vaguely defined notions of crises and external shocks as the assumed primary driver of subsystem policy change. This paper argues for a re-conceptualization of crises into its fundamental components and for original theorizing of the mechanisms linking crises to various levels of policy subsystem change or – most importantly – to no change at all.

This paper identifies two main dimensions of crises in relation to a policy subsystem: policy proximity and geographic proximity. From these dimensions, four types of crises were introduced: immediate crises, policy-proximate crises, geographic proximate crises, and vicarious crises. Based upon a definition of crisis containing elements of disorder and de-institutionalization, subsystem impacts emanating from crises with close geographic and policy proximity are expected to exceed impacts from crises with distant proximity.

The predominant mode of interaction among coalitions in three different types of subsystems (unitary, collaborative, or adversarial) provides a basic condition that will mediate the effects of crisis in terms of stagnation or change. The mode of interaction, however, is volatile and susceptible to
coalition defection as the result of learning as well as to coalition strategies aiming at exploitation of political resources. In return, the occurrence of a crisis might radically alter the conditions for policymaking and change. Building from the insightful work of other scholars, this paper takes another step toward developing a more rigorous theory linking crises and subsystem dynamics. To continue this effort, future research agendas should consider the following items:

• Comparative studies of subsystem impacts from the four types of crises.
• A focus on mechanisms linking any type of crisis with various forms of subsystem impacts.
• Comparative studies of the relationship between crises and subsystem impacts across unitary, adversarial, and collaborative policy subsystems.
• Comparative studies of mature and nascent policy subsystems and crises.

Crises do not occur in a political-administrative vacuum; rather, they interfere with ongoing political and bureaucratic processes and debates in any given policy area. It has been argued here that the notion of a policy subsystem and notably the ACF offer a productive framework to come to terms with such periods of abrupt intervention. In addition to providing a guide for studying aspects of causality, previous ACF research offers an integrated methodological toolkit apt to the assessment of the impact of crises on subsystem politics and policymaking (see Weible et al. 2009). Influenced by these methodological guidelines, we suggest that efforts to clarify the policy impact of crises should involve the following analytical steps: (i) identification of subsystem participants and coalition members (on the basis of belief system structures and patterns of coordination); (ii) assessment of the dominating mode of interaction (unitary, collaborative, or adversarial); (iii) reconstruction of narratives employed by coalitions in response to crisis; and (iv) assessment of key resources and strategies used by pro-change and status quo oriented coalitions, respectively.
Table 1: Comparing Geographic and Policy Dimensions of Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close Policy Proximity</th>
<th>Close Geographic Proximity</th>
<th>Distant Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immediate Crisis</strong></td>
<td>Example: Hurricane Katrina for the Louisiana crisis management subsystem</td>
<td>Example: 9/11 terrorist attacks for European security subsystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic-Proximate Crisis</strong></td>
<td>Example: Southern California wildfires for the California public health subsystem</td>
<td><strong>Vicarious Crisis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distant Policy Proximity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Example: Swine-flu crisis for counterterrorism subsystem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. The ACF Flow Diagram (Sabatier and Weible, 2007)

Relatively Stable Parameters
1. Basic attributes of the problem area and distribution of natural resources
2. Fundamental sociocultural values and social structure
3. Basic constitutional structure

Long Term Coalition Opportunity Structures
1. Degree of consensus needed for major policy change
2. Openness of political system
3. Overlapping Societal Cleavages

Policy Subsystem
Coalition A
Beliefs
Resources
Strategies
Decisions by Government Authorities
Institutional Rules
Policy Outputs

Coalition B
Beliefs
Resources
Strategies

External Subsystem Events
1. Changes in socio-economic conditions
2. Changes in public opinion
3. Changes in systemic governing coalition
4. Changes in other policy subsystems

Short Term Constraints and Resources of Subsystem Actors

Policy Impacts
Table 2: Hypothesized Pathways from Crisis to Policy Subsystem Response

In **Unitary** policy subsystems, an immediate or policy-proximate crisis will lead to one of four policy subsystem responses:

(i) The dominant coalition will tone down the policy implications that potentially emerge from the crisis and/or attempt to interpret the crisis as supportive of the status quo thereby maintaining existing subsystem equilibrium or accepting minor policy change.

(ii) The dominant coalition will attend to the crisis, interpret the crisis as supportive of the status quo, and respond by instigating minor policy changes.

(iii) The dominant coalition will use the crisis as pretext to introduce major policy change, which is most likely to be accompanied by counter-mobilization of oppositional forces and the emergence of an adversarial subsystem.

(iv) A sufficient number of dominant coalition members will defect and/or new actors will enter the subsystem to form a rival coalition shifting the dominant mode of subsystem interaction from unitary to adversarial or collaborative.

In **Collaborative** policy subsystems, an immediate or policy-proximate crisis will lead to one of three policy subsystem responses:

(i) The cooperative coalitions will collectively alter their perception of subsystem causes and problems leading to minor or major policy change.

(ii) A crevasse will emerge between the cooperative coalitions, thereby shifting the subsystem from collaborative to adversarial.

(iii) Actors mobilize either into the subsystem or by defections from existing coalitions, to challenge the existing policies and thereby shifting the subsystem from collaborative to adversarial.

In **Adversarial** policy subsystems, an immediate or policy-proximate crisis will lead to one of four policy subsystem responses:

(i) Competitive coalitions will interpret the crisis as supporting their policy core beliefs, magnifying the polarization of coalition beliefs and the intensification of conflict;

(ii) Subsystem resources will be re-distributed giving one coalition the upper hand, leading to minor or major policy changes.

(iii) Subsystem resources will be re-distributed and one coalition will collapse creating one dominant coalition and the emergence of a unitary policy subsystem.

(iv) Subsystem resources will be re-distributed, competing coalitions will be unable to find venues amiable to their objects and perceive the status quo as unacceptable, a hurting stalemate will ensue, negotiations will commence, and the subsystem will shift from adversarial to collaborative.

Across all policy subsystem types, a geographic-proximate crisis will lead to one of three policy subsystem responses:

(i) A dominant coalition will emphasize policy distance and resist attempts by other coalitions to capitalize on the crisis to convince others of the need for policy change.

(ii) Adversarial and cooperative coalitions will interpret the crisis as supporting their policy core beliefs reinforcing the status quo.

(iii) Subsystem resources will be re-distributed or coalition members will defect as attention shifts to the crisis-centered subsystem.

Across all policy subsystem types and in exceptional cases, a vicarious crisis will lead to one of two policy subsystem responses:

(i) Cooperative and adversarial coalitions will attempt to narrow the policy distance by trying to convince other actors that the crisis has implications across subsystem boundaries.

(ii) Dominant coalitions will use the crisis as pretext for initiating policy change.
References


