

## 10. Policy entrepreneurs and agenda setting

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Policy entrepreneurs are individuals who exploit opportunities to influence policy outcomes to increase their self-interests – without having the necessary resources required for achieving this goal alone. They are not satisfied with merely promoting their self-interests within institutions that others have established. Rather, they try to influence a given reality to create new horizons of opportunity using innovative ideas and strategies. These persistent individuals use innovative ideas and non-traditional strategies to promote desired policy outcomes. Whether they come from the private, public or third sectors, one of their defining characteristics is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputations and sometimes money – in the hopes of a future return.

Agenda setting is a crucial part of policy entrepreneurship. The policy agenda is a list of issues and priorities that receives serious attention from groups and individuals in and out of government. It is “that set of items explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision makers” (Cobb and Elder, 1983, p. 86). Successful policy entrepreneurs invest a great deal of effort in garnering attention for their proposed policies. Defining problems and placing their proposed solutions to them on the political agenda are among the main challenges policy entrepreneurs face. Nevertheless, even when they are successful in these endeavors, experienced policy entrepreneurs know that they must keep up the pressure to formulate policies in the direction they desire, legitimize them, facilitate their implementation and promote their evaluation.

Thus, while agenda setting is not the only element of policy entrepreneurship, it is perhaps the most crucial and important stage in the process, which involves translating ideas into feasible policies. Given that agenda setting is the basis for any change in public policy, establishing a solid agenda that has a reasonable chance of succeeding is crucial in determining whether or not the entrepreneur can proceed to the next step: investing resources to promote and ultimately change public policy.

Unlike many of the other chapters in this book, this chapter underscores the importance of *individual* agency as a promoter of policy outcomes. Entrepreneurship prompts us to move beyond mainstream notions of institutions in equilibrium. Understanding and explaining the role of individuals within broader socio-economic structures is becoming an

increasingly common focus in social science literature. While policy entrepreneurs are not always involved in policy changes that occur worldwide, in many cases one cannot fully understand or explain policy outcomes without considering the role of policy entrepreneurs in setting agendas that result in new policy outcomes.

Intuitively, people believe that individuals can make a huge difference in politics and policymaking. While many policy scholars view entrepreneurs as central figures in this drama, others in the disciplines of political science and public policy have been somewhat reluctant to acknowledge their role. Only by providing sufficient examples of their importance will we be able to support our argument about the pivotal role that policy entrepreneurs play in political life.

In order to provide a better grounding for the above, the second section of this article outlines the history and intellectual development of the concept of policy entrepreneurship. The third section presents a categorization of the characteristics, strategies and motivations of policy entrepreneurs. Finally, the fourth section focuses on policy entrepreneurs and agenda setting.

### POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP: HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

As decades of research worldwide have established, policy entrepreneurship matters. However, the literature on public policy and administration uses the term “entrepreneurship” in a variety of different ways. Thus, there is not always a common understanding of what policy entrepreneurs actually are or common agreement about their definition. Entrepreneurship, which comes from French, was first used in economics, specifically in Richard Cantillon’s book *Essay on the Nature of Trade in General* published in 1755. Cantillon’s entrepreneur was an individual who exercised judgment in the face of uncertainty in business involving exchanges for profit. The term soon entered British and German writing (Hebert and Link, 2012). While various perspectives and disciplines including public policy have embraced the idea of entrepreneurship since then, the *act* of entrepreneurship has probably existed since the dawn of humanity – long before the term first appeared in literature. For example, the Bible and other ancient texts from various cultures are filled with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial strategies.

Although entrepreneurship is considered a critical element of the economic system, the concept has been defined in myriad ways (Blaug, 2000; Hebert and Link, 1988; Swedberg, 2000), but the entrepreneur figures

as the prime agent of economic change (Schumpeter, 1994 [1942], p. 83). While for some scholars, innovative activities are more important than activities that stabilize the market or management activities, for others the reverse is the case. Moreover, while some economists argue that individuals are the main engineers of entrepreneurship, others maintain that it is the province of groups and organizations. Thus, there is neither a common understanding of what entrepreneurs actually are or common agreement about their definition.

This lack of common agreement and understanding among scholars is also evident in our discipline. The notion of entrepreneurship entered the public policy and administration literature more than three decades ago. Since the 1980s, scholars have used this idea to explain various case studies and policy results. Many scholars use concepts such as political entrepreneur (Dahl, 1961; Schneider and Teske, 1992), institutional entrepreneurship (Campbell, 2004; DiMaggio, 1988), public entrepreneurs (deLeon, 1996; Ostrom, 2005; Schneider, Teske and Mintrom, 1995; Schnellenbach, 2007), policy entrepreneurs (Crow, 2010; John, 2003; Kingdon, 1995 [1984]; Mintrom, 1997), evolutionary policymaker (Witt, 2003), civic entrepreneur (Leadbeater and Goss, 1999), social entrepreneurship (Mair, Robinson and Hockert, 2006), entrepreneurial leadership (Oliver and Paul-Shaheen, 1997) and executive entrepreneur (Roberts and King, 1991) to provide a new perspective on various phenomena related to politics and administration. However, the literature often uses the same concepts to explain different phenomena, making it difficult to define, measure and understand policy entrepreneurs clearly.

The term "entrepreneur" was probably first introduced into the political science vocabulary by Robert Dahl (1961, p. 6), who claimed that this political leader is the crucial agent of change and "is not so much the agent of others as others are his agents." Initially, the concept of entrepreneurship appeared to be more dominant as part of the discussion about interest groups. Salisbury (1969, 1984) defined entrepreneurs as individuals who attempt to supply collective goods to the members of interest groups in exchange for personal or political profits. These individuals are the leaders or organizers of the group. Entrepreneurs may be willing to bear the costs of organizing and maintaining the group because of the enhanced influence and credibility they could acquire that could not be obtained by acting alone. Such entrepreneurs recognize the disproportionate costs they will bear relative to other group members but still move forward because the net benefits for them of creating the group remain positive (Schneider, Teske and Mintrom, 1995).

Similarly, Moe (1980, pp. 37–39) defined a political entrepreneur as an individual who sees the potential for a group and is able to sufficiently

satisfy selective member demands to create an organization capable of pursuing collective benefits. Moe emphasized the communication link between the interest group entrepreneur and the membership, arguing that this link could become useful to other individuals and that the entrepreneur could charge a fee for access to it (Moe, 1980, p. 40). In this vein, Wilson (1973, 1980) suggested that the activities of interest groups depend on whether the costs and benefits of a policy are concentrated or distributed. He maintained that when benefits are distributed and costs are concentrated, entrepreneurial politics are required for the group to realize its goals (Wilson, 1980, pp. 357–394). Eyestone (1978) described how influential and highly organized interest groups compete with each other to get issues and solutions on the agenda, and Cobb and Elder (1981) stressed the ability of entrepreneurs to mobilize public opinion. Other scholars identified lobbyists (individuals who represent the group and serve as a communication link between the group's members and the government) as interest group entrepreneurs (Ainsworth and Sened, 1993).

Some discussions focused on innovation and entrepreneurship in public administration (Downs, 1976, p. 15). Here public entrepreneurs are described as bureaucrats who want to reorganize and improve governmental services and reinvent government, and include the notion of "entrepreneurial government" (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). This discussion called for a new public management, one that would be more assertive, risk taking and dynamic, responsive to its citizen-clients and outcome-oriented. On the individual level, managers were encouraged to become more entrepreneurial and play a more pivotal role in organizational change. Thus, Roberts and King (1991, p. 147) explained that public entrepreneurship is the process of introducing innovation – the generation, translation and implementation of new ideas – into the public sector. In many cases, these entrepreneurs are described as individuals who use actions to expand institutional or personal power (Downs, 1967; Lewis, 1984; Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980; Ramamurti, 1986). The public entrepreneur not only recognizes valuable opportunities but also succeeds in leveraging the resources required to realize them (Bernier and Hafsi, 2007, p. 498; Koehn, 2009, p. 420; Luke, 1995, p. 150).

Policy entrepreneurship was established as a theoretical concept mainly in John Kingdon's (1995 [1984]) influential work. Kingdon's framework considers the role of the individual within the policy process and explains why change occurs (or does not). Based on the "garbage can" model of organizational decision-making developed by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) and March and Olsen (1976), Kingdon (1995 [1984]) presented his policy streams model. According to this model, policy results can best be understood as the joining of some core elements of the policy

process aligned in particular ways in time and space. The model is based on three distinct but complementary streams (processes) in policymaking: the stream of problems, the stream of policies and the stream of politics. It is the uniting of these streams at a given time and in a given context that allows a particular issue to be turned into a policy. The success of a new policy thus depends on individuals and collective actors resolving coupling problems and presenting solutions that work in a particular situational context (Sætren, 2009). Given a window of opportunity (a limited timeframe for action), policy entrepreneurs play a key role in connecting the streams by linking the problem with the solution. They are skilled and resourceful actors who unite the three streams together – problems, policies and politics – during open windows of opportunity (Ackrill, Kay and Zahariadis, 2013). Thus, they are willing to invest their resources in return for the implementation of future policies they favor (Kingdon, 1995 [1984]). Since Kingdon's initial work, the notion of policy entrepreneurship has become increasingly common in the literature on public policy and administration, offering a new perspective on various phenomena related to these areas (Mintrom, 2000; Roberts and King, 1996; Schneider and Teske, 1992).

Scholars suggested that Kingdon's model needed more conceptual and theoretical elaboration, and at that point was largely based on limited empirical evidence. For example, some maintained that policy entrepreneurs not only open up windows of opportunity with regard to policy change but also knit together a network to make policy agendas happen (Oborn, Barrett and Exworthy, 2011). Others argued that effective policy change is likely only when "big" windows in the center match "little" windows locally and that given the complexity of such a task, it is unlikely that this conjunction could be facilitated by a single individual (Petchey, Williams and Carter, 2008). Instead, a coalition of entrepreneurs would be required (Oborn, Barrett and Exworthy, 2011).

The research on policy entrepreneurship during the last decades reveals that this phenomenon is not limited to a specific policy area, a formal institutional context or an informal institutional setting such as culture. While it is reasonable to assume that entrepreneurship would not be welcome in dictatorships or traditional societies, this assumption does not receive support in the literature. A systematic review of the literature shows that while most of these individuals are indeed active in democracies, policy entrepreneurship also exists in monarchies and dictatorships, although it is not always specifically defined as such (Greenwood, 2007). Moreover, policy entrepreneurs come from various groups, sectors and affiliations. The case studies in the literature reveal that these individuals may be governmental or non-governmental players, they may belong to no specific group or sector (in

terms of, for example, gender or religion) and they may not necessarily be considered part of the political elite (Arieli and Cohen, 2013).

Policy entrepreneurs have proven to be significant in various policy areas such as public education (Mintrom, 2000; Mintrom, Salisbury and Luetjensm, 2014), child support (Crowley, 2003), energy policy (Cohen and Naor, 2013), environmental policy (Rabe, 2004), health care policy (Cohen, 2012; Oliver and Paul-Shaheen, 1997), disposal of radioactive waste (Ringius, 2001), anti-corruption policy (Navot and Cohen, 2015) and foreign affairs (Arieli and Cohen, 2013; Macdonald, 2013). They play a role in many countries (Ackrill, Kay and Zahariadis, 2013), including Australia and New Zealand (MacKenzie, 2004; Mintrom, 2006), the UK (Petchey, Williams and Carter, 2008), Sweden (Guldbbrandsson and Fossum, 2009; Reinstaller, 2005), Israel and Jordan (Arieli and Cohen, 2013), Spain (Gallego and Barzelay, 2010), China (Zhu, 2008), India (Rutledge, 2012), Turkey (Ugur and Yankaya, 2008), Italy and Greece (Tsarouhas, 2012) and the US. The notion of entrepreneurship sheds light on fundamental issues in public policy such as stability and social change (Mintrom and Norman, 2009), the relationship between agency versus structures (Beeson and Stone, 2013) and the nature of rationality in public choices (Bendor, Moe and Shotts, 2001).

#### **POLICY ENTREPRENEURS: CHARACTERISTICS, CATEGORIZATION, STRATEGIES AND MOTIVATIONS**

As noted earlier, policy entrepreneurs are political actors who seek changes that shift the status quo in particular areas of public policy (Mintrom, 2013), but do not have the resources needed to accomplish this goal on their own. Therefore, they try to exploit opportunities that arise by enticing others to join them. Rather than simply promoting their self-interests within existing institutions, they use innovative ideas and strategies to create a new reality.

In addition to creating the agenda for the changes they envision, they also try to block changes proposed by others. However, they need an opportunity to exercise their entrepreneurship, the goal of which, it is reasonable to assume, is promoting changes in policy that result in the political outcomes they want. Thus, it is also reasonable to assume that these entrepreneurial activities seek to change the status quo rather than preserve it.

Cohen (2012) identified three main characteristics of policy entrepreneurship:

1. The desire to increase personal interests as a result of activity whose purpose is to influence policy outcomes. Hence, policy entrepreneurs will try to influence public policy to promote their goals.
2. A lack of resources needed to influence policy outcomes in the common, expected ways. Hence, entrepreneurs will always suffer from a lack of resources.
3. The existence of an opportunity to influence policy outcomes.

Self-interest is one of the primary motivating forces of policy entrepreneurs. Just as entrepreneurs in the business arena seek to maximize their benefits, policy entrepreneurs never ignore their self-interests. Hence, policy entrepreneurs will usually not invest their resources without hoping to receive a future return. In addition to ideologically based motivations, entrepreneurs who are (or intend to become) politicians will probably act primarily to improve their chances of election, whereas entrepreneurs who are bureaucrats will seek to ensure that the results of their actions will serve their interests in terms of increasing their stature and administrative power. Note that benefits may derive both from the change itself (the results obtained) and from the actual activity (even if the results obtained are less than ideal in the eyes of the entrepreneur). Thus, when entrepreneurs recognize the activity itself as being in their interests, they deem it appropriate to compromise on the nature of the results of the change even if these outcomes are not ideal.

Based on Kingdon's work, Mintrom and Norman (2009, pp. 652-654) identified four elements that are central to policy entrepreneurship. These factors can be classified further into two groups: attributes and strategies.

#### Attributes:

- Displaying social acuity, meaning that the entrepreneurs are well versed in the social-political context in which they are interacting and demonstrate high levels of social acuity in understanding others and engaging in policy conversations. Thus, they can identify windows of opportunity (Kingdon, 1995 [1984]) for introducing innovative policy within the existing social order.
- Defining problems, which refers to the act of problem description involving how people relate specific problems to their own interests. Viewed in this way, the definition of policy problems is always a political act.

#### Strategies:

- Building teams, which underscores the fact that policy entrepreneurs are team players. Their real strength comes from their ability

to work effectively with other players in the policy arena. Thus, they operate within a tight-knit team composed of individuals with various knowledge and skills who are able to offer mutual support in the pursuit of change, as well as use their personal and professional social networks to create a political coalition to challenge the status quo (Schneider and Teske, 1992, p. 742).

- Leading by example, meaning that the policy entrepreneur often takes actions intended to reduce the perception of risk among decision-makers. When they lead by example – taking an idea and turning it into action themselves – the entrepreneurs signal their genuine commitment to improved social outcomes.

Policy entrepreneurs are not necessarily found in any specific location (Kingdon, 1995 [1984], p. 122; Mintrom and Vergari, 1996, p. 422). Hence, the exact position of policy entrepreneurs in the policymaking process is unimportant (Mintrom, 1997). Like their business counterparts, policy entrepreneurs are identifiable primarily by the actions they take rather than by the positions they hold. Policy entrepreneurs may be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations. However, much as in the case of a business entrepreneur, their defining characteristic is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputations and sometimes money – in the hope of a future return (Kingdon, 1995 [1984], p. 122).

#### Types of Entrepreneurs

Policy entrepreneurship, like many other human activities, represents a complex, interrelated social process in which many activities occur concurrently and in which the conditions for action are only partly under the control of the actors being studied (Roberts and King, 1991, p. 158). We can characterize any activity by individuals who exploit an opportunity to influence public policy for their own benefit, in the absence of the resources required for accomplishing this goal alone, as policy entrepreneurship regardless of the position held by the activist. Hence, policy entrepreneurs exist in the public, private and third sectors.

#### Public administration policy entrepreneurs

These individuals are mainly politicians and bureaucrats from the central and local government. They hold formal positions at intermediate organizational levels such as department and unit heads, parliament members and even ministers. Their motivations are based on maximizing the efficiency and impact of their units by identifying various opportunities.

By doing so, they also succeed in increasing their personal stature and influence in the organization. Hence, they concentrate on enhancing their status through a pragmatic approach of contributing to various reforms and improving the quality of life for society. Recently, Arnold (2015) has suggested that these types of policy entrepreneurs may even be from the street level. Therefore, bureaucrats who implement policy can sometimes be policy entrepreneurs.

#### **Private sector policy entrepreneurs**

Policy entrepreneurs in the private sector are not merely business entrepreneurs. Rather they are business people, usually affiliated with large- and medium-sized businesses, who try to influence or change policy outcomes to serve their interests. Their entrepreneurship arises from perceptions about business opportunities, benefits and costs. These entrepreneurs focus on promoting interests based on initiatives and interactions to maximize their personal economic benefits.

#### **Third sector policy entrepreneurs**

These entrepreneurs are individuals associated with non-government organizations (NGOs) or even non-affiliated local groups. Individual players will usually harness their familiarity with the problems and potential of specific needs to promote specific initiatives. By identifying and realizing opportunities for change, these entrepreneurs promote their organizational or personal agenda and also succeed in increasing their stature and influence in their organization or social environment.

The three categories of policy entrepreneurs demonstrate different characteristics and affiliations. Nevertheless, regardless of their category, policy entrepreneurs will always exploit an opportunity to influence public policy results for their own benefit in the absence of the resources required for accomplishing this goal alone. Therefore, they will always choose the degree of change that accords with their own self-interests and may even try to block attempts by others to make changes that do not work to their advantage.

### **THE ROLE OF POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AGENDA SETTING**

The agenda setting literature has long stressed the importance of policy entrepreneurs as change agents (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995 [1984]). The policy agenda is a list of the issues and priorities of concern to groups and individuals in and out of government. Nevertheless,

it is primarily politicians, as elected officials, who decide which issues will become agenda items and possible sources of policy change (Mintrom, 2000, p. 42). Policy entrepreneurs influence the terms of political debate by framing policy, defining problems and exerting significant influence over agenda setting. As Jones (1994, p. 26) explained: "the function of the policy entrepreneur is to frame an issue so as to move it over the threshold of attention of policymaking institutions."

While agenda setting is a crucial part of policy entrepreneurship, it is not the only stage in effecting policy change. Kingdon (1995 [1984]) argued that agenda setting and policy change emerge through a combination of the actions of the players in the policy arena and the operation of both formal and informal social processes. According to Kingdon, policy entrepreneurs often join the three independent streams by investing their resources to raise the profile of particular problems and policy innovations. In Mintrom's (2000, p. 43) words, they "hook" their solutions to various policy problems, thereby increasing the chances that specific issues will stimulate new policies. However, the fact that a given issue has gained agenda status merely tells us that a window of opportunity for policy change might be open (Dery, 2000). Even when they are successful in defining problems and ensuring that these problems receive serious attention from both the public and various decision-makers, experienced policy entrepreneurs know that they must keep the pressure on to see the process through from the formulation of the policy to its implementation and perhaps even its evaluation. Nevertheless, the first step in this strategy is to call attention to the issues in which they are interested and make sure they become part of the public agenda. Given that doing so is the most crucial and demanding task in policy analysis (Bardach, 1996), policy entrepreneurs invest many resources in this stage and time the promotion of their solution precisely.

The success of policy entrepreneurs in defining problems and agenda setting will influence the success of the strategies they use later to move their ideas to the stage of formal policy design. As Mintrom and Vergari (1996, p. 423) noted: "those who define policy problems carefully and make good use of networks of contacts will be better placed to make compelling arguments in support of their policy ideas. This can help them to assemble coalitions of supporters to help secure desired policy changes."

#### **What is the Formula for Changing the Agenda Successfully?**

Not all policy entrepreneurship ends with success. Moreover, success in changing the agenda does not guarantee that the suggested policy will evolve into a formal policy change. However, a review of the literature

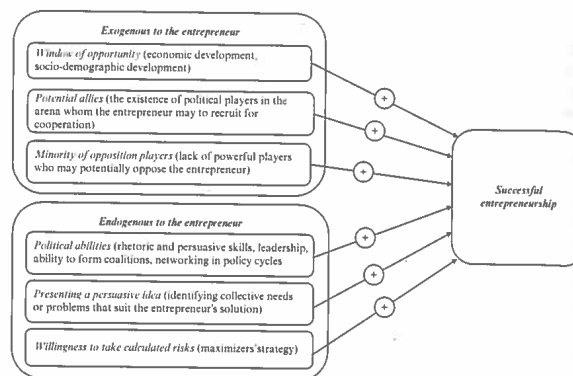


Figure 10.1 The formula for changing the agenda successfully

reveals several factors involved in successful policy entrepreneurship. We present these factors by suggesting six propositions regarding successful policy entrepreneurship. These propositions, illustrated in Figure 10.1, are based on our understanding that the key to the success of policy entrepreneurship lies not just in the entrepreneurs' attributes or strategies, the environmental conditions or windows of opportunities. Rather, success will always be a combination of these factors. The first three propositions refer to the structural conditions under which policy entrepreneurs work and the last three to their entrepreneurial attributes.

*Proposition 1: As the window of opportunity grows, the policy entrepreneur's chances of influencing public policy will increase.*

Perhaps the most important condition for successful policy entrepreneurship is the existence of an opportunity that offers entrepreneurs the chance to create value from the point of view of both timing and results. Such an opportunity may arise from developments in the political system (for example, a new political constellation in the policy arena), economic developments (for example, an economic crisis or growth), socio-demographic developments (for example, a change in the composition of the population leading to a change in public opinion) or a combination of opportunities.

*Proposition 2: As the number of potential allies with whom policy entrepreneurs can form a coalition increases, their chances of influencing public policy will increase.*

In order to succeed, policy entrepreneurs have to attract the support of key players in the policy arena, especially when factions opposing the change and favoring the preservation of the status quo are powerful. Consolidating a coalition in support of change could reduce risks. Furthermore, the more politically powerful the supporters, the easier it will be for the entrepreneur to recruit the resources needed to establish the new agenda and then move on to formal policy change. Hence, the existence of potential allies in the public policy arena with whom the entrepreneurs can cooperate may increase the chances of success. Of course, the existence of potential allies does not necessarily imply that they will form a coalition with the entrepreneurs. However, in most cases, their existence is a prerequisite for the success of the entrepreneurs' project.

*Proposition 3: As the power of opposition players in the policy arena decreases, the policy entrepreneurs' chances of influencing public policy will increase.*

A minority of powerful opposition players increases the chances that policy entrepreneurs will succeed in promoting the agenda they desire. Of course, when those who might potentially veto or block the entrepreneurs' ideas are not active in the arena of concern to the entrepreneurs, their task will usually be easier. However, given that policy entrepreneurs usually seek to change political results by influencing public policy processes, the lack of opposition to their proposals is usually wishful thinking. Hence, if a given policy arena has a small number of powerful opponents, we may assume that the entrepreneur's chances of success will increase. The greater the opposition to change, the more likely the entrepreneur will maintain that such a change will be socially beneficial compared to the existing reality.

The above three propositions concern the environment rather than the entrepreneur as an individual. However, the environment itself cannot explain the success of policy entrepreneurship, because it is ultimately people, not institutions or structural conditions, that make decisions. Hence, predictions about the success of the policy entrepreneur must take into account factors that are both endogenous and exogenous to the entrepreneur. Having considered the exogenous factors in the propositions above, the next three propositions will focus on the endogenous factors – the policy entrepreneur's ideas and characteristics.

*Proposition 4: As the policy entrepreneurs' political abilities increase, their chances of influencing public policy will increase.*

Given that, according to our broad definition, policy entrepreneurs do not have all of the resources needed to realize the goals of their entrepreneurial activity, it is clear that their success must be based on persuasion, pragmatism and willingness to compromise. In a democratic society, the willingness to compromise is a type of political ability.

Hence, the entrepreneur's rhetorical and persuasive skills, as well as their ability to form coalitions and network in policy cycles and circles, may be good predictors of success. Their skills in working with teams and interacting effectively with other players in the policy arena are also good predictors of success. In addition, their ability to lead by example is important for reducing the perception of risk among decision-makers. When policy entrepreneurs lead by example, the risk calculations of legislators can often switch from a focus on the consequences of action to a focus on the potential of action and the consequences of inaction. By setting an example, the policy entrepreneur makes the matter public and transparent.

Equally important, however, is the policy entrepreneur's ability to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential in the proposed agenda. They must be willing to relinquish the non-essential in order to succeed in influencing the public policy in the direction they desire. The non-essential in this sense refers, for example, to various elements related to policy change that the entrepreneurs do not consider likely to cause material damage to their interests. Policy entrepreneurs are therefore frequently characterized by their instrumental approach to policymaking – meaning that they are willing to compromise and concede the maximization of the social welfare if doing so will enable them to realize their personal goals.

*Proposition 5: The more persuasive the policy entrepreneur's ideas are, the better their chances of influencing public policy.*

Successful entrepreneurial action results from identifying the needs of significant groups in society and the political potential inherent therein in satisfying their needs. The better the policy entrepreneur's powers of persuasion and ability to convince others of the potential benefits of their proposals in addressing the needs of other players, the more likely their ideas are to be adopted. These needs can take the form of identifying dynamics different to those of the entrepreneur (for example, a conflict of interests between other players in the public policy or political arena) and exploiting these dynamics in effecting change. Such social acuity helps policy entrepreneurs identify windows of opportunity in the existing social order.

Hence, the more collective the needs or problems that can be addressed by the policy entrepreneur's solutions, the more likely their chances of success. Successful policy entrepreneurs relate specific problems to their own interests, define problems by presenting evidence in ways that suggest a crisis is at hand, find ways to highlight the failures of current policies and draw support from actors beyond the immediate scope of the problem.

*Proposition 6: As the policy entrepreneur's willingness to take a calculated risk relative to other players in the arena grows, the chances of influencing public policy will increase.*

The willingness to take a calculated risk may be a good predictor of the policy entrepreneur's success. Policymaking and agenda setting usually involve taking calculated risks. However, policy entrepreneurs are usually willing to make the maximum commitment possible and take more calculated risks than other players in the arena, increasing their chances of succeeding. In doing so, they indicate their responsibility for realizing the enactment of the public policy, thereby promoting their influence and reputation. Furthermore, to a certain extent and in a calculated manner, entrepreneurs can be expected to adopt strategies that may appear outwardly to entail greater risk than the entrepreneur estimates because the opportunity can produce greater benefits.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Many questions remain about policy entrepreneurs, regarding both how they change the agenda and how they promote this agenda to effect policy change. Mintrom and Norman (2009, pp. 654–658) maintained that this concept has yet to be broadly integrated within analyses of policy change. New insights have also started to emerge concerning the sequence of policy entrepreneurship over long periods of time, how the broader political climate can affect the context for policy entrepreneurs, how they frame problems and how they work with others. These questions affect not only the role of policy entrepreneurs in policy change but also their role in blocking the initiatives of others with regard to such change. Nevertheless, room remains for more conceptual development and empirical testing. Mintrom and Norman (2009) suggested two directions for fruitful future work. First, there is a need for closer study of the motivations and strategies of policy entrepreneurs. Second, the interactions between policy entrepreneurs and their specific policy contexts also merit more investigation.

We know that policy entrepreneurs are important in politics and policy,

but we know much less about exactly how they play their role. In any given instance of policy change, it is usually possible to identify an individual or a small team that appears to have been the driving force for action. However, in all such cases, the individuals, their motives and their ways of acting appear idiosyncratic. Thus, the study of these activities often reaches a dead end, because unique behavior is not a good basis for theorization and comparison with other cases. To break this theoretical impasse, policy entrepreneurship needs to be studied in a manner that pays attention simultaneously to contextual factors, to individual actions within those contexts and to how the context shaped these actions (Mintrom, 1997, 2000; Mintrom and Vergari, 1998; Schneider, Teske and Mintrom, 1995).

Another fruitful research direction is analyzing policy entrepreneurship comparatively through sectors and countries. Despite the recent interest in policy entrepreneurs, studies that focus on the comparative aspects of policy entrepreneurs are still lacking and the little comparative work that does exist mainly focuses on comparing countries (Hogan and Feeney, 2012; Meijerink, 2009; Meijerink and Huitema, 2010). Furthermore, most of the research on policy entrepreneurship involves single case studies. This paucity is quite surprising, because the potential theoretical and empirical contributions of such comparative studies are significant. Comparing policy entrepreneurs who are active in different policy domains offers two potential benefits. First, such an analysis may enrich the theoretical insights into policy entrepreneurs who operate in different policy arenas and under different structural conditions. Second, adding to the existing research insights into policy entrepreneurs may improve our understanding of the case studies on the empirical level. Hence, such comparisons may contribute to policy entrepreneurship theory and agenda setting, and also test the theoretical insights into policy entrepreneurship in various policy domains.

Another research direction involves utilizing quantitative tools in the study of policy entrepreneurship. Most studies about policy entrepreneurs are qualitative in nature. Indeed, given the special characteristics of policy entrepreneurship, quantitative research is not easy to conduct. In areas that have benefited from extensive study, researchers already have a good idea of what to ask, so quantitative approaches seem to suit their research goals. However, many insights into policy entrepreneurship have emerged only in the last decade. Thus, gathering a large amount of data and then analyzing it statistically may enrich our understanding of policy entrepreneurship and agenda setting, reduce bias (especially with regard to the researchers' interpretation of the data) and distance the researcher from the experiment and those involved in it. It may also give us a broader picture of entrepreneurship efforts, successes and failures.

Armed with extensive data, we may be able to determine in which policy domains policy entrepreneurship is most successful. Under which institutional arrangements are we likely to see more entrepreneurial strategies and why? Can we construct a typology of policy entrepreneurship? How is entrepreneurship connected with change? Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches in policy entrepreneurship research may prove to be a winning combination.

Finally, research into policy entrepreneurship should become more interdisciplinary. As deLeon (2006) has already suggested, one of the three defining characteristics of policy sciences is that they are multidisciplinary in their intellectual and practical approaches. Thus, studies of policy entrepreneurship may benefit significantly from analyzing this phenomenon using approaches from different disciplines and in collaboration with scholars from other areas. Examples include political psychologists, economists, sociologists and management scholars. Adopting such an approach may enrich our theoretical understanding of this phenomenon.

One of the most interesting questions to investigate is determining the policy entrepreneurs' contribution to social welfare. Is policy entrepreneurship normative and welcome behavior? The fact that one of their defining characteristics is their willingness to invest resources in hopes of reaping a future return and promoting their own interests may lead people to adopt a cynical attitude toward these individuals. Nevertheless, a review of the literature seems to imply that their actions benefit society, because whenever these individuals are active in promoting change, good things usually happen. As policy arenas become more and more dynamic, we may witness an increase in policy entrepreneurship worldwide. Hence, although there will always be exceptions, policy entrepreneurs will probably become driving forces that will strengthen the values of political participation and responsiveness.

Those who seek to effect change in response to policy problems try to recruit influential players to strengthen and influence the public policy arena. They are especially keen to attract people identified with an ideology that supports their needs. One practical conclusion that may be gleaned from the literature on policy entrepreneurship is that such a strategy in itself is not effective. To establish a value-based policy, it is necessary to refer to, seek and even create a system of incentives for influential politicians, bureaucrats and non-governmental decision-makers based not only on ideologies but also on their personal self-interests. In the practical political test, the ideological dimension itself could be the very aspect that lets down those who rely on it and only it.

Finally, policy entrepreneurship is here to stay. It is one of the forces that create significant changes in the institutional arrangements in all



societies. This phenomenon is very important, given that many institutional arrangements do not satisfy the public and do not always fulfill their promises. Institutions are instruments of stability, but as the environment changes, the nature of the interaction and solutions change with it. Therefore, we may expect to see more and more entrepreneurs who will play an increasingly dominant role in the design, implementation and even evaluation of public policy. Armed with new ideas and knowledge, these players will try to convince us how to react and which solutions to choose in an ever-changing reality.

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