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"Policy Analysis in Sport Management" Revisited: A Critique and Discussion

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Abstract

Published in the Journal of Sport Management in 1995, Laurence Chalip's "Policy Analysis in Sport Management" persuasively argued that effective sport managers should equip themselves with a particular set of critical policy analysis tools. Since that time, the study of sport policy has gained a strong foothold in the academic literature, but sport policy analysis is not often linked to managerial practice. This paper offers a critique and synthesis of a number of policy analysis frameworks (including Chalip's), and offers a refreshed set of robust and pragmatic analytical precepts that sport managers might employ to understand and influence policymaking. Following Chalip's original approach, this paper relies on an empirical case involving the development of national sport policy (the United States' Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act) to illustrate and support its broader arguments.

Keywords: sport policy, policy analysis, SafeSport

"Policy Analysis in Sport Management" Revisited: A Critique and Discussion

In August 2016, the *Indianapolis Star* began publishing its exhaustive reporting of the USA Gymnastics sexual abuse controversy (Kwiatkowski et al., 2016). Though much of the story that would unfold over the ensuing months revolved around Dr. Larry Nassar's crimes, the extent of the scandal—especially the possibility that other national sport federations as well as the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) might be implicated—prompted both houses of the United States Congress to initiate investigations (DeGette, 2019; Feinstein, 2016; Gardner, 2019; Shepardson, 2018). The saga tentatively concluded with the passage of the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (PL 115-126) (hereafter "the SafeSport Act") and the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 (PL 116-189), though questions persist about the efficacy of U.S. sport governance and Congress' role in regulating sport governing bodies. As U.S. policymakers and sport administrators grapple with these questions, the SafeSport Act provides a highly relevant case to analyze and discuss the sport policy process in the U.S. as well as the utility of policy analysis for sport managers. In this paper, we revisit the major theoretical and methodological contributions to sport policy research and integrate these approaches to analyze the policy process in relation to the passing of this legislation.

To be clear, our approach is inspired by Chalip's 1995 *Journal of Sport Management* paper, "Policy Analysis in Sport Management." This paper offered a five-part practitioner-oriented policy analysis framework and demonstrated the utility of the framework by applying it to the passing of the Amateur Sports Act. The aims of our paper are similar to Chalip's original study. First, we seek to use a range of policy analysis frameworks to analyze the policy process relating to the passing of the SafeSport Act. Although, as illustrated below, studies using one

analytical framework have generated important insights into the policy process, Sabatier (1999) encouraged the use of more than one theory because a) it avoids unsupported assumptions about the appropriateness of a particular theory, and b) it makes the researcher more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of a particular theory. The use of more than one theory may also sensitize the researcher to the suitability of a particular theory according to political and temporal context. Second, we seek to assess the utility of the policy analysis frameworks and elaborate an updated framework to support future sport policy analysis by sport managers. As is discussed more fully below, a range of meso-level frameworks have been applied to the analysis of sport policy and while many of the analyses have implications for management practice, those implications are often implicit. More explicit implications for practice come from research that— though often derived from broader meso-level frameworks—adopts a narrower focus on aspects of the policy process, such as implementation (Fahlén et al., 2015; May et al., 2013; O'Gorman 2011; Skille, 2008) and compliance (Donovan et al., 2002; Gray, 2019; Houlihan, 2014; Tan et al., 2020), or adopts a macro-level perspective such as feminist analysis (Shaw, 2013; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

"Modern sport," Chalip (1995) wrote, "is inextricably intertwined with government policymaking" (p. 1). Rather than remaining ignorant or maintaining a merely reactive stance, he suggested that sport managers might proactively navigate this relationship through lobbying ("direct efforts to influence government actions") as well as issues management (the goal of which is to "turn emergent issues into opportunities for, rather than threats to, the organization") (p. 3). These simple assertions are the fundamental premises on which the two arguments Chalip advanced are based: first, that sport managers working in both public and private organizations can benefit from the analysis of public policy, and second, that "interpretive and critical"

techniques are required for the analysis of sport policy (p. 2). For sport managers, understanding public policy and its impact on sport is just as—if not more—salient today than it was in the mid-1990s. In addition to the still-emerging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (which provided a glaring reminder of sport's social embeddedness), federal and state legislatures have demonstrated a reinvigorated interest in regulating sport at all levels, and are motivated by a correspondingly broad array of political concerns. As the intersection of "sport and politics" becomes more widely acknowledged, sport managers must be equipped with analytical tools that balance intellectual rigor, critical reflexiveness, and practical utility.

While Chalip's original model illustrated how practitioners might critically engage with policymaking, the maturation of sport policy as a subfield has generated a corresponding diversification of theoretical and methodological perspectives which supplement, extend, and sometimes challenge Chalip's original contribution. Our concern (indeed, a central motivation of this project) is that the intellectual development that has occurred in this area of inquiry over the past three decades has neglected the practitioner. In other words, while we may today have a better understanding of how the sport policy process works and more complete explanations for why particular outcomes are realized, it is not always entirely clear what sport managers (who are both directly affected by and positioned to influence sport policymaking) are supposed to do with this knowledge. Because it centers the needs and constraints of the practitioner, we find Chalip's framework to be a meaningful touchstone in addressing this concern. This paper commences with a brief overview of four key policy analysis frameworks, before moving on to provide a contextual overview of the passing of the SafeSport Act, and finishes with a discussion which applies and analyzes the utility of the framework with regard to the passing of the SafeSport Act and a discussion of the practical implications for sport managers.

Analytical Frameworks of the Policy Process

During the early 1990s, a number of general policy analysis frameworks were being developed at the same time that Chalip was developing his interpretive policy analysis framework for sport. Three of these general frameworks—the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET), and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)—have contributed significantly to both general and sport-related policy analysis literature (Birkland, 2005; John, 1998; Sabatier, 1999). Furthermore, when compared to other analytical frameworks (for example, The Stages Model), the MSF, PET and ACF offer more robust analyses insofar as they meet or exceed the requirements of four criteria which are the ability to: (i) explain both policy stability and policy change, (ii) examine the policy process in a holistic manner as opposed to discrete aspects of the policy process, (iii) have relevance or applicability across a range of policy areas, and (iv) facilitate a medium-term analysis of policy change (5-10 years) (Sabatier, 1999). The following sub-sections provides a brief overview of each of the four frameworks.

Chalip's Interpretive Policy Analysis Framework

Chalip juxtaposes the utility of a critical approach with the shortcomings of "the conventional policy analysis tool kit", which is traditionally understood to contain a limited selection of implements that draw upon a narrow range of social theories and typically prescribe the use of quantitative methods (p. 4). While useful in some cases, this analytical orthodoxy often leaves too much unexplained or unexamined. For many sport policy issues, a more incisive critique is necessary:

The analyst therefore seeks to locate the presuppositions of policymakers. The objective

is not merely to describe the logic of policy debates. Rather, the purpose is to identify

points of illogic, to facilitate criticism of the driving assumptions, and to locate

significant considerations that have been excluded from policy deliberations. Analyses of

this kind can, of course, serve the traditional (purportedly value-free) aims of policy

analysis—to enhance the quality of policy design (Weimer, 1993). However, these same

analyses can be useful in processes of lobbying and issues management. They provide the

requisite tools for identifying research needs and formulating argument strategies to be

applied to lobbying efforts and public opinion campaigns. In this sense, policy analysis is

an essential tool of sport management. (Chalip, 1995, p. 5)

If this is the preferred method of effective sport policy analysis, as Chalip contends, then the

practitioner-analyst must be equipped with the proper analytical instrument.

Such an interpretive approach requires the analyst to locate and critique policy frames (p.

9). Frames are "abstractions that designate the concepts and categories that can be appropriately

brought to bear during policy formulation", and are located by applying a framework composed

of four additional elements: legitimations, focusing events, problem definitions, and problem

attributions (p. 5). The relationship among these elements is depicted in Figure 1. Legitimations

and focusing events together provide the motivation for and limits to action, while problem

definitions and attributions serve to further focus and circumscribe the policy discourse through

the generation of specific diagnoses. Once these four elements have been identified, the analyst

can reconstruct the policymakers' decision frame, producing a comprehensive conception of

their "presuppositions" and creating an opportunity for further critique. For Chalip, this two-

pronged critique involves analyses of "frame content" and "frame exclusions", where analyzing

frame content involves examining the constituent pieces of the frame and the linkages among

them for logical and empirical coherence, and where analyzing frame exclusions involves a

consideration of the information and stakeholders left out or ignored during the policymaking

process (p. 10).

<Insert Figure 1 about here>

Sotiriadou and Brouwers (2010) used Chalip's model to good effect to generate insights into the

sport policy process in Australia and Chalip (1996) applied a revised version of his model to the

analysis of New Zealand sport policy. Importantly, Chalip's model is not concerned with

policymaking as an empirical phenomenon *per se* and does not aspire to complete explanatory

precision. Instead, it seeks to develop for the practitioner the ability to identify failures or

missteps in the policymaking process as well as to imagine policy alternatives (presumably,

alternatives that would serve the interests of sport organizations), emphasizing the thoughts and

actions of policymakers as the key variables that influence policy outcomes. In this sense, it is

distinct from the following three analytical frameworks.

Multiple Streams Framework

The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) developed by Kingdon (1984) explores the

relationship between three sets of interrelated factors contributing to policy agenda setting. In

contrast to the dominant rational actor paradigm of other approaches, the MSF emphasizes

ambiguity, complexity, and randomness in policymaking (Houlihan, 2005). Kingdon (1984)

classified the causal factors contributing to policy formation into three streams which run parallel

through the policy system: a *problem stream* consisting of the issues which have been identified and require attention, and two secondary streams encompassing prospective solutions to the problem: the *policy stream* and the *politics stream,* independent of the other streams and primarily concerned with politics and public opinion (see Figure 2). The MSF asserts that policy formulation is a result of the confluence of these streams at specific stages in time, rather than being dependent on the power of interests (John, 1998).

<Insert Figure 2 about here>

In addition to the three streams, Kingdon (1984) noted the importance of policy windows which are a result of the three streams coinciding or being coupled at critical moments. These are generally viewed as rare occasions that enable lobbyists and other actors involved in the policy process to divert attention to their specific problems and/or to their favored policy solutions. There are two types of policy windows, those that open in the policy stream and those that open in the politics stream (Kingdon, 1995, p. 168). A window that has been created by a problem triggers a search for suitable ideas in the policy stream, where the definition of the problem may be in progress at the same time. A policy window opened in the politics stream implies that ideas relating to problems are being presented. The final part of the model gives attention to policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 1995). These agents are highly influential in the policy process, proposing solutions to problems, assembling opinions, and influencing institutions to ensure their initiative is well-distinguished (Zahariadis, 2007). Importantly, in contrast to other frameworks presented here, the inclusion of the policy entrepreneur attempts to rebalance structure and agency and allows for a more detailed analysis of agency and its impact on the policy process.

The MSF has been widely applied by sport policy researchers: by Houlihan and Green (2006) in their study of physical education policy, Carmargo et al. (2020) to analyze funding of sport in Brazil, Zheng et al. (2019) to analyze sport policy in China, and Poulton (2020) to study anti-Semitism in English football. Sotiriadou and Brouwers (2010) and Chalip (1996) applied the MSF to the analysis of Australian and New Zealand sport policy, respectively, with a more explicit concern to generate recommendations for policymakers.

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

The case-based approach to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) advanced by Baumgartner and Jones (1991, 1993) sets out a theoretical framework for understanding change in multifaceted social structures such as public policy. PET characterizes policymaking as a process that typically experiences long periods of stability punctuated by sudden shifts that may lead to profound changes in policy. The theory posits that policy tends to remain static and changes slowly and incrementally due to the conditions of the policy field, specifically "the interplay among institutions, interests, and attentiveness" (True et al., 2007, p. 158). PET emphasizes the central role of bounded rationality, policy communities, and agenda setting, and the ways in which they influence processes of policy stability and policy change. While not as widely adopted as MSF, there have been a number of insightful applications of PET to sport policy and management. Among the most notable are Ritchie and Jackson (2014), who applied PET to Canadian anti-doping policy, and Lindsey (2020), who used the theory to analyze sport policy in England.

Critically, PET rejects the notion of comprehensive rationality where policymakers aggregate and compare costs and benefits to choose the best solution (Birkland, 2005). Instead, the framework emphasizes bounded rationality where policymakers are considered "prisoners to

their limited attention spans, and the key governor of the allocation of attention emotion" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 3). Policymakers are typically unwilling or unable to attend to the range of issues requiring attention, therefore they must choose which issues to ignore and which issues to address (Cairney, 2011). Consequently, over time, we see many policies remaining stable or experiencing limited incremental change and a smaller number of policies receiving intense periods of attention, which can bring about new ways of understanding the issues and new methods for addressing them.

Additionally, the PET framework views policy as being generated and managed by a network or community, usually involving a closed circle of experts, bound by stable relations across the community and maintained on the basis of broad consensus on the nature of the policy problem together with a few alternative actors having any interest in the issue (Jordan & Maloney, 1997). The interactions across the policy community and the relationships that are created may be further strengthened if actors' beliefs and values cultivate a distinct policy image which represents the very "manner in which a policy is characterized or understood" (True et al., 2007, p. 176). In these circumstances, issues that are deemed to be contradictory or irrelevant to existing policies will be ignored, thus strengthening the dominance of existing policy and perpetuating an incrementalist approach to any changes in policy. Further, the policy community and dominant policy image can reinforce a negative feedback cycle, creating friction and restricting the extent to which external factors influence changes in policy. Over time, these factors may combine to bring about a policy monopoly, reinforcing the position and power of the dominant interests and further limiting the influence of outside forces (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991).

Finally, the issue of agenda setting illuminates the differing levels of attention (from government, media, and the public) to specific issues and the reasons why attention rises and falls (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Here, attention is influenced by perceptions of the significance of the issue, the prejudices of the audience, and the ability of stakeholders to bring attention to an issue at the expense of another issue (Cairney, 2011). Oftentimes, agenda setting and public attention is activated by a crisis, a focusing event, or by interest groups promoting alternative issues. While the significance of crises or focusing events may warrant immediate attention and relatively prompt change, shifts in attention promoted by interest groups may lead these groups to venue shop, that is, to identify other influential institutions that may be interested in and responsive to their issue (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Ultimately, crises, focusing events, and other competing issues may be effective in creating a positive feedback cycle that dramatically changes the policy agenda and eventually brings about major changes in policy (Baumgartner, 2013).

Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is probably the most widely adopted framework for the analysis of sport. Applications of the framework include Phillpots' (2013) analysis of policy change in English school sport, Green and Houlihan's (2004) analysis of change in Canadian sport policy, and Chen's (2015) study of elite sport policy in Taiwan. The ACF is based on three "foundation stones" (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993): (i) a macro-level view that policymaking occurs amongst specialists in a policy subsystem and that their behavior is affected by relatively stable parameters and external events; (ii) a micro-level view of the individuals involved in the policy subsystem based on their beliefs; and (iii) a meso-level assumption that the most effective way to analyze the behavior of myriad actors is to cluster

them into "advocacy coalitions." Figure 3 illustrates the key components of the ACF framework.

It shows the role of advocacy coalitions within the policy subsystem and the interrelationship

with factors exogenous to the policy subsystem that directly or indirectly shape the constraints

and opportunities affecting the policy community (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

<Insert Figure 3 about here>

The majority of policymaking occurs within the policy subsystem as a result of

negotiations among actors (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). However, an actor's behavior can

be influenced by two sets of exogenous factors, one fairly stable (e.g., basic distribution of

natural resources, fundamental sociocultural values and social structure, the basic constitutional

structure) and the other dynamic (e.g., changes in socioeconomic conditions, changes in the

governing coalition, policy decisions from other subsystems). The policy subsystem

encompasses a collection of actors from various institutions and at various levels, all of whom

seek to influence decisions in a specific policy domain. Typically, policy subsystems contain two

to five competing coalitions comprised of actors grouped around similar policy-oriented beliefs

(Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Policy subsystems are characterized by their size, policy area, and the

plethora of actors involved from interest groups, media, academia and various levels of

government (Kingdon, 1995; Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Importantly, the ACF assumes

individuals to be "rational utility maximizers" and more likely to ignore information that does

not accord with their key beliefs (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Belief systems are relatively stable

and can be resistant to change (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Critically, when forming

coalitions, individuals will seek others who share similar beliefs, helping to galvanize support for

their cause and create greater cohesion within coalitions (Houlihan, 2005). At the same time, this greater cohesion amongst actors can stimulate and intensify greater levels of conflict amongst competing coalitions (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). In such situations, conflicting strategies may be mediated by policy brokers whose concern is to find a reasonable compromise (Parrish, 2003, p. 9). Consensus is most likely to be reached if the broker ensures that each advocacy coalition's core beliefs and values remain unthreatened or unchanged. Ultimately, the ACF hypothesizes that policy actors will utilize a set of resources to initiate strategies that may influence future policy, although the degree of detail related to types of resource was an area previously underdeveloped (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Examples of such resources include the formal legal authority to make decisions, public opinion, information (particularly intelligence regarding the problem and how to address it), mobilizing lobbyists and the attentive public together to advocate and demonstrate on particular issues, financial resources (to fund research, think tanks, and possibly program development), and skillful leadership (Kelman, 1984; Sewell, 2005). In sum, the ACF identifies a total of four paths to major policy change: policy-oriented learning (e.g., using experience and information from previous policy), external perturbations and shocks (e.g., socioeconomic conditions or disaster), internal shocks (e.g., the perceived inadequacies of a coalition or through the redistribution or drawing in of political resources such as financial or public support), and negotiated agreements (e.g., formal dispute resolution where agreements involving policy change are developed by previously "warring" coalitions) (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 205).

Contextual Overview: The Passing of the SafeSport Act

Enacted on February 14, 2018, the SafeSport Act was a legislative response to credible and overwhelming evidence of USA Gymnastics' and the USOPC's inadequate responses to

allegations of widespread sexual abuse of young female gymnasts. By the time the bill was signed into law by President Donald Trump, "at least 368 gymnasts [had] alleged some form of sexual abuse at the hands of their coaches, gym owners and other adults working in gymnastics," a number described by *Indianapolis Star* reporters as "likely an undercount" (Evans et al., 2018). As the case evolved, media coverage tended to focus on Dr. Larry Nassar, whose victims numbered in the hundreds (Rahal & Kozlowski, 2018), as well as his longtime employer, Michigan State University. However, Congress' attention remained squarely focused on the organizations under its purview, which included not only USA Gymnastics and the USOPC, but also the U.S. Center for SafeSport, a Denver-headquartered organization that had, largely in response to the USA Gymnastics scandal, hastily evolved from a USOPC "program of sexual assault education and prevention in various Olympic sports" into a standalone regulatory entity (Moskovitz, 2018).

In specific terms, the SafeSport Act 1) clarifies the reporting requirements for individuals representing national governing bodies (NGBs), as well as the allowable civil penalties that survivors of abuse might seek, and 2) federally authorizes and codifies the responsibilities of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Much like the Amateur Sports Act, the SafeSport Act's redistribution of authority was a rare instance of direct congressional intervention in U.S. sport governance (United States Center for SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017, S. 1426, 115th Cong., 2017). The following section applies and evaluates the utility of the four policy frameworks in analyzing the SafeSport case. To be clear, the data presented in the following sections should not be taken as a comprehensive account of the abuse scandal or Congress' response to it. Rather, we identify the components of the analytical frameworks in order to develop the subsequent critique and synthesis.

Discussion

The goal of this section is twofold: first, to critique the four policy analysis frameworks addressed herein, and second, to include a discussion of the practical implications and the overall value of such frameworks for sport managers and the sport management field. The evaluation of the four frameworks will be aided using Sabatier's (1999) four criteria for policy analysis: (i) the ability to explain both policy stability and policy change, (ii) to examine the policy process in a holistic manner as opposed to discrete aspects of the policy process, (iii) to have relevance or applicability across a range of policy areas, and (iv) to facilitate a medium term analysis of policy change (5-10 years)[i].

Evaluating the Policy Analysis Frameworks

On first sight, Chalip's framework is distinct and different from the MSF, PCT, and ACF insofar as it implicitly prioritizes policy change over policy stability. This focus on change is evident in the scope and definitions of the five elements that make up the framework and the lack of any explicit attention to policy stability. For example, Chalip's framework draws attention to the focusing event of policy (e.g., Nassar's abuse of young, female gymnasts), the problem that is driving policy (e.g., to eliminate the opportunities for abusers to exploit vulnerable athletes), the legitimacy of Congressional intervention (e.g., to protect children and to hold sport to account for failing to appropriately address abuse in sport), attribution (e.g., the need for new policy attributed to misaligned or underspecified structures of authority), and the general framing of the case (e.g., good versus evil).

However, while Chalip's framework considers the role of differing stakeholders and addresses the importance of lobbying in the policy process, it is limited in the attention that it gives to social conditions and structures and how these conditions may influence agency. In

contrast, the MSF gives direct attention to structural considerations and institutionalized power (Houlihan, 2005) as well as emphasizing agency through the capacity of individuals to progress or resist policy changes and to appropriately utilize policy windows (Houlihan & Green, 2006). The MSF illuminates the coupling of problems, policies, and politics, and the role of policy entrepreneurs and key agents outside of Congress (e.g., Rachel Denhollander, Aly Raisman, and the significant number of survivors who testified or spoke publicly about their experiences of abuse).

The PET framework explicitly addresses policy stability and change, and, in the case of sport policy in the U.S., accentuates the tendency for long periods of policy stability largely due to the bounded rationality of the policy field, the multifarious priorities of Congress (with sport being historically low on the political agenda), together with the historically embedded institutional arrangements for U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport, as set out in the Amateur Sports Act.

Policy stability and change are central features of the ACF. Dominant coalitions maintain policy stability through a sustained commitment to deep core and policy core beliefs alongside the inertia that is evident in the majority of public policy arenas. Thus, an analysis of Olympic sport in the U.S. would, from a stability perspective, underline deep core beliefs such as the positive social value of sport together with policy core beliefs such as the free market logic underscoring the Congressional decision to grant the rights of the Olympic marks (and the associated revenues), within the U.S. context, to the USOPC. The explanation of policy change is more complex, with the ACF emphasizing change as a function of the competition that exists between coalitions in the policy subsystem and the ways in which the subsystem is influenced by a range of exogenous events and the policy-oriented learning that occurs across coalitions

(Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Thus, the ACF illuminates how normative values and beliefs relating to U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport governance were fundamentally challenged, not only by the scale of historical abuse across multiple sports, but also by the role that key sport administrators played in concealing the abuse, and consequently the need for the legislature to introduce new regulatory policy predicated on the challenges to the traditional belief system (i.e., trusting sport organizations to prioritize the safety and interests of their young athletes). The ACF also demonstrates, at least early on, the differing coalitions in the policy arena. Here, there was one dominant coalition made up of gymnasts and former gymnasts working alongside the Women's Sport Foundation, media, and legislature to influence policy change. Another coalition can be seen to be represented by the former leadership of the USOPC (CEO Scott Blackmun and Head of Performance Alan Ashley), USA Gymnastics (CEO Steve Penny), and other sport representatives who initially defended their position and their failure to report the allegations, choosing instead to focus on the relatively narrow issue of reporting structures rather than the deeper issue of governance structures and the role of marginalized athletes' involvement in decision-making processes.

Sabatier's (1999) second criterion relates to the potential of the framework in providing a holistic analysis of policy. Chalip's policy framework is comprehensive in addressing specific elements that are highly relevant to new policy or to changes in policy. In this sense, the framework can be said to provide a practical analysis of the core components that may be seen as critical or highly influential in the making of policy. Clearly, Chalip's framework encompasses concepts that overlap with those contained in other frameworks, in particular the MSF and its attention to problems, frames, and focusing events. However, it is also clear that when compared to these frameworks, Chalip's approach does not offer explicit attention to actors, institutions,

and context, all of which play a critical role in facilitating or constraining the policy process

(Cairney, 2011).

       In contrast, these factors are an explicit feature of the other frameworks addressed here.

For example, the MSF articulates the messiness of the policy process by demonstrating how

independent streams consisting of issues (problems, such as abuse in U.S. Olympic sport),

solutions (policies, such as new laws requiring certain actions), and the reasons why certain

issues and solutions may be selected (politics, as in the bipartisan agreement that child protection

in Olympic sport needs strengthening) come together to create an opportunity for change.

Against this backdrop, the MSF draws attention to key actors (policy entrepreneurs) who help to

couple the streams, disrupt institutional norms, and facilitate policy change. Despite these

strengths, the MSF has limitations, including: an overemphasis on agenda-setting, ignoring other

stages of the policy process (e.g., implementation), under-theorizing how power influences the

politics stream (Houlihan, 2005), and giving limited consideration to the context–policy

relationship and the ways in which context shapes policy ideas and decisions (Ackrill et al.,

2013).

       Similarly, the PET is weaker in the direct attention that it gives to context and the ways in

which this influences policy. However, it has strength in the emphasis given to the role of actors

with a clear focus on the policy community (e.g., USOPC, NGBs of sport), other actors (e.g.,

current and former athletes, Congress) who challenge institutional norms (e.g., the autonomy of

US Olympic and Paralympic sport), and the dominant policy image to instigate changes in policy

(e.g., the creation of the SafeSport Act).

       The ACF, with its emphasis on actors, institutions and context, has been found to offer a

broader frame of analysis than other policy analysis tools (Houlihan, 2005). In particular, the

ACF is both broad and specific in the attention that it gives to concerns relating to actors,

institutions, and context. For example, the ACF illuminates the multifaceted nature of the policy

subsystem with actors clustered into competing coalitions, with varied beliefs and resources at

their disposal and differing strategies to influence policy, the decisions of governing authorities,

the institutional rules of the subsystem, the influence that these elements have on policy

outcomes and impacts, and ultimately, the ways in which policy learning (taken from the entire

process) may influence future policy beliefs, resources, strategies, and decisions. Further, the

ACF draws specific attention to the dialectical relationship between context and the subsystem

insofar as relatively stable parameters (such as the constitutional structure, sociocultural values,

and the basic attributes of the problem) and external events (such as crises, changes in public

opinion, and changes in socioeconomic conditions) influence the subsystem and are, in turn,

influenced by the subsystem. Thus, the holistic nature of the ACF would not only illuminate the

beliefs, resources, and strategies of competing coalitions in the creation of the SafeSport Act, but

also the broader contextual considerations that influenced the policy process. These contextual

considerations include relatively stable features such as the free market capitalist norms that

underpin U.S. society and Congressional decision-making, the ways in which dominant political

ideas have shaped governmental intervention in sport over time (not to mention the horrific and

insidious nature of the problem), and external events such as the power associated with the

courtroom testimony of survivors, the survivors' social media posts calling out the failures of

sport leaders, and the changes in public opinion (and ultimately Congressional opinion) on the

degree to which U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport organizations should be trusted to prioritize

the safety of young athletes. On the final two criteria, the MSF, PET and ACF have been applied

more extensively to a range of policy fields and specifically to sport policy than the Chalip

framework, with the ACF being most commonly applied across different policy arenas (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) and the MSF and ACF approaches being the most commonly applied to sport (Houlihan, 2005). Finally, with their focus on a broader range of components to consider policy stability and change, the MSF, PET, and ACF are better placed to offer a medium-term (5-10 year) analysis of the policy process.

In sum, this evaluation of policy frameworks (summarized in Table 1) is important insofar as it enables an analysis of policy that goes beyond a mere description of the logic of policy (Chalip, 1995). It enriches our understanding of the policy process (how it works and why it works as it does), it supports lobbying efforts to push for new policy or drive policy change, and it can enhance analysis for policy insofar as policy efforts may be evaluated or decisions assessed against set criteria to aid policy learning and develop more effective policy (Henry & Ko, 2015). These arguments take on even greater significance when the sport manager considers the growing interest of government and state agencies in the systemic and corporate governance of sport (Houlihan, 2005), including the government's interest in sport in the U.S as evidenced by recent policy developments including the SafeSport Act of 2017, Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act of 2019, and the Empowering Olympic and Paralympic Athletes Act of 2020.

<Insert Table 1 about here.>

Practical Implications: The Value of Policy Analysis Frameworks to Sport Managers

Sabatier and Weible (2007) argued convincingly that the complexity of the policy process requires tools such as the MSF, PET, and ACF to support a comprehensive analysis. However, while these frameworks may be considered robust academic tools, they are not without

complexity (Schlager, 2007) and usually require extensive explanation and training (Cairney &

Heikkila, 2014), meaning that the majority of sport managers would not likely find them to be

the most practical or accessible frameworks to support policy analysis. Here, the practical utility

and parsimony of Chalip's framework can be seen as a particular strength. However, pragmatism

should not be the sole reason to compromise and justify a partial analysis of policy. A more

compelling argument is to balance pragmatism with the deeper insights offered by the MSF, PCT

and ACF, by drawing on multiple tools of analysis and emphasizing the value of theoretical

pluralism (Cairney, 2011; Van der Heijden, 2013). Consequently, we adapt ideas initially

presented by Cairney & Heikkila (2014) and Houlihan (2005) to identify five key components

that we argue provide a comprehensive yet pragmatic framework to analyze policy stability and

change in sport (see Figure 4, below).

The first component draws attention to the range of **key actors** involved in the policy

environment and ultimately to change in the policy environment. In particular, it is important to

identify three key groups of actors who were instrumental in the framing of the problem and for

advocating the need for change.

- First, the *media*, in particular, the *Indianapolis Star* (and following its initial
  investigations, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*), in raising public
  awareness of abuse and reporting on the legal proceedings that followed. While the
  Star's reporting on the general scandal—reporting that implied USA Gymnastics' long-
  term negligence in responding to claims of abuse and misconduct—as well as the
  allegations against Nassar began in the late summer of 2016, the federal policy response
  began in earnest shortly after the story was amplified by national media in early 2017.
  On February 19, the highly rated CBS News program *60 Minutes* aired an emotionally

charged segment that, like the *Star*'s reporting, strongly implied that Nassar's crimes were allowed to continue because of longstanding governance failures within the sport of gymnastics. The report featured visceral interviews with three former gymnasts as well as soundbites from attorney John Manly and Senator Dianne Feinstein, the latter of whom alluded to forthcoming legislation that would address "the problem in the reporting of sexual abuse complaints" (CBS News, 2017; Feinstein, 2017).

- Second, *the victims and survivors* (the current and former athletes) played a critical role in supplying the judiciary and legislature with comprehensive firsthand evidence of the numerous cases of abuse and of the insidious behavior of leaders in USA Gymnastics and the USOPC.

- Third is the *legislature*. Here, the work of the Senate's Judiciary Committee and Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CST) Committee was pivotal in formally investigating the abuse of athletes in U.S. Olympic sport and the nature of the response from U.S. Olympic sport organizations. The Judiciary Committee's hearing on March 28, 2017 probably generated more headlines—Olympic medal-winning gymnasts Jamie Dantzscher and Dominique Moceanu both testified about their experiences of abuse in sport—and was more narrowly focused on the gymnastics scandal (*Protecting Young Athletes from Sexual Abuse,* 2017). The CST Committee's hearing roughly two months later was arguably more substantive. Featuring witnesses from the fields of athletic training, neurology, and anti-doping, it probed more foundational questions of athlete health and safety. Despite the hearing's broad scope, the majority of questions were directed to the Center for SafeSport's CEO, Shellie Pfohl, who stressed the Center's independence while also acknowledging that it lacked the resources and authority to

adequately investigate cases and enforce decisions (*Current Issues in American Sports*, 2017). Following these investigations, the bipartisan leadership of and bipartisan support for new legislation culminated with the signing of the SafeSport Act into law on February 14, 2018. The initial legislation, introduced in the Senate by Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and in the House by Susan Brooks (R-IN) with several cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, focused on clarifying and strengthening the reporting obligations of sports official (Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act, S. 534, 2017; Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act, H.R. 1973, 2017), but was later amended to formally recognize and delegate responsibilities to the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Crucially, the initial funding proposal for the Center ($1 million per year for the first four years of its operation) was stripped out after it was ruled to be subject to Congress' self-imposed earmark moratorium that began in 2011 (164 Cong. Rec. H636, 2018; Wong, 2011).

From a pragmatic standpoint, a fourth group of actors, including key sport organizations such as USA Gymnastics and the USOPC, would be the "sport managers" for which an analysis of sport policy would ostensibly be beneficial. Initially, these actors failed to keep their athletes safe, failed to report the allegations of heinous crimes to law enforcement and failed to appropriately frame the problem or advocate the need for change. The role these organizations played in initiating a policy change underscores the importance of resisting the temptation to adopt an "objective" or "neutral" position and instead engage in deliberately reflexive analysis.

The second component sheds light on how actor behaviors and interactions are shaped by **institutions,** such as the rules, norms, and practices of a particular policy environment. Here, the predominant rules of Olympic sport in the U.S. relate to both the international and domestic

level. At the international level, the Olympic Charter and, in particular, the importance placed on the autonomy of sport is a clear foundational rule that guides the governance of Olympic sport in the U.S. Here, the autonomy doctrine specifies that Olympic sport must remain free to govern its own affairs with limited external interference (IOC, 2020). At the national level, the Amateur Sports Act confirms the USOPC as the governing authority for all Olympic and Paralympic sport in the U.S. In short, the Amateur Sports Act served the purpose of delegating the responsibility for national sport development to the USOPC and NGBs, thus reinforcing sport's authority to govern its own affairs with limited, if any, oversight or intervention. Additionally, the IOC's principle of autonomy together with the Amateur Sports Act make it far more pragmatic for the USOPC and others (USA Gymnastics) to frame the issue as primarily one of reporting weaknesses rather than more deeply set issues of sport governance.

These national and international rules galvanize a normative view that not only permits but promotes practices and decisions that lack any independent oversight or counsel. To be clear, in contrast to this position, we argue that independent oversight offers a greater probability of a more objective assessment of the environment, a more appropriate identification of priority concerns in the environment, and the recommendation of an appropriate course of action. Historically, practices in Olympic sport commonly suffer from a conflict of interest as a result of the dichotomous function that sport organizations play in the regulation and promotion of their sport. These responsibilities require sport organizations to make daily decisions that are in the interests of the brand and leveraging revenues, while at the same time, making decisions that safeguard the sport and ensure that it is safe and fair for athletes.[ii] While the foundational institutions that guide actor behavior in U.S. Olympic sport did not create the problem of athlete abuse, they did—at least initially—permit a wholly inappropriate response to the problem which

has raised serious questions concerning the integrity of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport system.[iii]

      Networks and the administrative arrangements represent the third component of the analytical framework, focusing specifically on the relationship and interaction between key actors in the policy environment. Here, it is noteworthy that policy change was initiated by a range of actors representing a relatively loose network who largely reside outside of the more formal network of agents who had responsibility for the safety and welfare of athletes. For example, early on in the case, it was the athletes, galvanized by the leadership and legal work of former gymnast and present-day lawyer Rachel Denhollander, that led the charge. Subsequently, Congress, under the direction and leadership of Senators Feinstein, Moran and Blumenthal, buttressed the case to ensure a comprehensive investigation and the development of new legislation. The interactions and set of arrangements that ultimately brought about change were predicated on a lack of trust in the Olympic sport system. This lack of trust emanated from the reports from victims and survivors concerning the elite sport culture and their treatment as elite athletes, the evidence of inaction of the USOPC and USA Gymnastics in response to the abuse scandal, and the historical reports of inaction from a range of Olympic sport organizations over the past four decades (Hobson & Rich, 2017).

      The fourth component underlines the importance of **ideas and beliefs**, in particular the fundamental set of ideas that shapes definitions of policy problems and potential solutions. Here, institutionalized autonomy across the Olympic system creates a problematic pattern of behavior. First, autonomy discourages government from interfering in the governance of sport. Second, governments or other political units create alternative means by which funding (e.g., private sector sponsorships) can be distributed to successful sports. Third, sports pursue and seek to

perfect "no compromise" systems and processes to maximize medal wins in international sport

and thus continue to receive funding from organizations that depend on the positive exposure

brought on by success. This dominant belief has perpetuated a sporting arms race and

contributed to a problematic elite sport culture where athletes have, in some cases, been viewed

as a means (that is, a part of the overall machinery) to achieve certain ends. This culture has been

reinforced by a pattern of resource allocation that invests heavily in the elite sport system and far

less in the athletes that are critical to it. Clearly, since the Congressional investigations and a

change in leadership, the USOPC is working diligently to recast a new mission to empower

athletes and to promote and to protect athlete rights, athlete safety, and athlete wellness (USOPC,

2019).

<Insert Figure 4 about here.>

The fifth component comprises socioeconomic and political **context** together with key

events (such as scandals, crisis, technological advancements) that shape the policy process. In

this regard, we argue that both the *Me Too* movement and the ongoing push to hold governing

authorities to account were presumably both important macro level influencers that contributed

to the development of new policy. Also, in any analysis of U.S. sport policy, it is important to

underline how any notion of sport autonomy is exacerbated in the U.S. context where a

preference for free-market capitalism and small government restricts the extent to which sport is

subject to scrutiny from government. Obviously, federal structures in the U.S. do intervene in

sport (as illustrated above). However, this intervention typically follows major crises or scandals

rather than leading or intervening in sport to minimize and prevent such problems. More

importantly, the dark and disturbing nature of the scandal and the distinct lack of response from sport were, in and of themselves, significant events that alone would justify the need for substantial policy change.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the dialectical relationship between the five key components of policy analysis as reflected by the two-way arrows in Figure 4. These arrows do not infer a causal relationship between components, but merely serve to reflect the central premise of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), insofar as structural and agental relationships share a dialectical nature whereby context, events, structural arrangements, and institutions shape and are shaped by ideas, beliefs, inteactions and behaviors. For example, we see evidence of this in the ways in which key events (e.g. Congressional inquiry) are influenced by individual behavior (e.g. testimonies of key witnesses) and the ways in which these events shape ideas, beliefs and administrative arrangements. Similarly, we can observe how institutions (e.g. the autonomy of sport) may influence certain key events, actors and/or ideas and beliefs (e.g. key actors deciding not to report information for criminal investigation) as well as how key events, actors and/or ideas and beliefs (e.g. former athletes demands for the overhaul of US Olympic sport) may disrupt or change institutions (e.g. the passing of the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic and Amateur Athlete Act, 2020).

While this paper has focused on the application of the analytical framework to the Safe Sport Act case, we argue that it has utility in analyzing other sport policy issues, including those in which consensus concerning the need for policy (and the nature of such policy) is less definitive, such as anti-doping, the economic rights of intercollegiate athletes, the participation rights of transgender athletes, and the hosting of mega-events. For these issues, the framework provides a robust yet pragmagic approach that allows practitioners to easily grasp the

interdependencies among the various components, as well as to explore more nuanced

considerations of power and influence (e.g., the degree to which media coverage influences state

legislators vis-à-vis transgender athletes' participation in high school sports).

Of course, the model leaves unspecified what, exactly, sport managers might do with any

insights generated through its application. On this question, Chalip's (1995) suggestions—issues

management and lobbying—remain relevant options through which sport managers might exert

direct influence over the policymaking process. The model also provides leaders of sport

organizations, especially those that might not be positioned to influence policymaking, the ability

to anticipate and proactively respond to policy shifts that affect their day-to-day operations or

longer-term strategic approaches. Given the centrality of strategy development and

implementation in sport management research and curricula, the incorporation of practitioner-

driven policy analysis into all facets of the planning process (from defining organizational

purpose to industry analysis to value chain modeling) is, for most organizations, a potentially

beneficial step, provided such analysis can be generated parsimoniously and inexpensively. The

model's utility can and should be the subject of future sport management research, a topic we

take up more explicity in the final section of this paper.

Concluding Remarks

Attempts to clarify and reconcile sport management's academic boundaries and practical

contributions are not new, but have recently become more nuanced (and perhaps more strident;

cf. Mills, in press; Newman, 2014). These (re)considerations of the field's scope echo the

longstanding premise that sport management must acknowledge and embrace sport's social

embeddedness. Part of this project includes understanding the ways in which sport shapes and is

shaped by public policy. Chalip's (1995) "Policy Analysis in Sport Management" developed a

blueprint for incorporating the study of sport policy into the broader field of sport management in a way that was—and is—both academically rigorous and practically useful. Since this article's publication, the subdiscipline of sport policy studies has blossomed, bringing more elaborate and incisive frameworks to bear on our understanding of sport policymaking. While this has served to academically legitimize this area of inquiry, much of the sport policy literature has neglected the practitioner. As a consequence, the average sport manager's policy analysis toolkit is, at best, undersupplied. In the spirit of Chalip's original article, we have endeavored to distill and synthesize the most prominent analytical frameworks in the sport policy canon into a set of factors that sport managers at all levels might find relevant and valuable to their work.

The utility of the model advanced in this paper remains, at this stage, theoretical. While it aspires to practicality, future research in this area can better elaborate and refine the model's capacity to support sound sport management practice. Any research that more explicity examines how practitioners do and use policy analysis (for better or for worse) is certainly needed, but three specific approaches seem most potentially fruitful. First, observational inquiry can provide a more complete picture of the degree to which organizations across all sectors of the industry are proactively involved in the policymaking process. It is common knowledge that the largest and most influential organizations (professional teams and leagues, national governing bodies, etc.) engage in lobbying efforts and/or maintain "government relations" units, but beyond this, relatively little formal study has examined these sorts of practices (due in part to the fact that they are often, by design, shielded from the public eye). Second, the model introduced above could be used to guide more precise studies of the ways in which organizations gather, make sense of, and use information about sport policymaking. In general, the driving question here would be, "For organizations that perform and use policy analysis, does the model accurately

reflect the nature of those activities?" This sort of research would stand to more fully elaborate the model's components as well as the relationships among them. Finally, an experimental approach might use the model as either an evaluative measure (to assess current policy analysis practice within an organization) or a treatment variable (to test the efficacy of the model against a control group). This preliminary research agenda serves as a needed complement to ongoing efforts that currently utilize the other analytical frameworks discussed herein, and will add value to both the field's research canon (by more fully centering the sport manager's use of policy analysis) as well as its contribution to sport management practice.

Left unresolved, perhaps, by the preceding analysis is the issue of the appropriate practitioner's perspective when performing policy analysis. Chalip (1995, p. 5) argued cogently for the adoption of a critical stance (allowing the analyst to interrogate "the presuppositions of policymakers"), one that would generate the most incisive, and thus most useful, conclusions. By viewing the policymaking process from a somewhat objective standpoint, the practitioner could better resist the temptation to accept sport policy as the inevitable outcome of an efficient and effective process. This is certainly a valuable approach if the goal is to identify when and how practitioners might manipulate the creation of sport policy, and it is one that is shared, at least implicitly, by the other frameworks discussed herein. However, the adoption of a critical perspective does not, in itself, completely address the question of how the practitioner's own diverse and conflicting interests play upon their role in the policymaking process. As the SafeSport case demonstrates, it is entirely possible for the interests of practitioners and policymakers to align in ways that produce policies that benefit those particular groups, but arguably fail to serve the interests of sport in a broader sense. These issues exist in any organizational setting, of course, in which resources are limited and interests are conflicted, and

resolving them satisfactorily is a persistent challenge that requires a delicate mixture of rational and ethical sensibilities. They are worth acknowledging in this context if only to underscore the limitations of policy analysis as a tool for improving sport and sport management, regardless of the particular perspective the analyst adopts.

While the future of sport and sport management is perhaps more uncertain today than it was in 1995, the fundamental reality at the heart of Chalip's "Policy Analysis" remains relatively unchanged: sport exists in (not apart from) society, and is thus affected by public policy. As stewards of sport, effective sport managers must be attuned to this relationship, and when possible, seek to influence it in ways that enhance sport's ability to contribute to individual and community development. A greater awareness of the components and mechanisms that comprise the policymaking process can help practitioners to leverage sport's relationship to society, rather than bemoan the "intrusion" of social and political issues. In so doing, sport organizations might find themselves better able to resist the logic of competition and performance that has arguably contributed to outcomes ranging from the suboptimal to the tragic.

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[i] While we apply all four criteria, the nature and detail of (i) and (ii) demand a more comprehensive and detailed response insofar as they address the extent to which the frameworks address policy stability and change or address policy in a holistic manner whereas (iii) and (iv) address more straightforward issues concerning relevance and the ability to facilitate a medium-term analysis.

[ii] The regulatory and promotional functions of sport governance are evidenced in the missions and goals of most Olympic sport organizations.

[iii] This inappropriate response is demonstrated by the USOPC's failure to report the USA Gymnastics case to federal law enforcement or to conduct any internal investigation of the matter. These missteps were confirmed through the independent investigation conducted by Ropes & Gray LLP (McPhee & Dowden, 2018) and have been a central tenet of survivors' testimony in court as well as in various Congressional hearings.

Table 1

Policy analysis frameworks: Key variables, emphasis, and application to SafeSport

| Framework	Key variables	General point of emphasis	Summary of application to SafeSport
IPA	Focusing event(s) Problem definition Legitimizations Attributions Frame(s)	To analyze existing policy in order to identify policy failures and policy alternatives	Demonstrates the need for new policy due to misaligned or underspecified structures of authority
ACF	- External context/events - Stable environmental parameters - Opportunity structures - Short-term constraints - Resources of actors - Coalitions - Competing coalitions -beliefs/values - Competing coalitions – resources - Competing coalitions - strategies - Decisions, Rules, Outputs, Impacts	The role of policy subsystems and coalitions, their values, resources and strategies and effect of structural context on influencing policy decisions, rules, outputs and impacts.	Illuminates how changing context and how actors' beliefs, resources and strategies triggered changes in rules and series of policy developments.
PET	- Bounded rationality - Policy communities - Agenda setting - Policy stability/policy change	The influence of bounded rationality on policy stability and change	Accentuates long periods of policy stability with the role of key actors to challenge institutional norms and bring about policy change
MSF	- Problem stream - Political stream - Policy stream - Policy windows - Policy entrepreneur - Policy decisions	Policymaking is ambiguous, complex and random – largely a result of the confluence of problem, political and policy streams	Reveals the coupling of problems, policies and policies and the role of policy entrepreneurs in driving policy change

Figure 1

Chalip's (1995) policy analysis framework
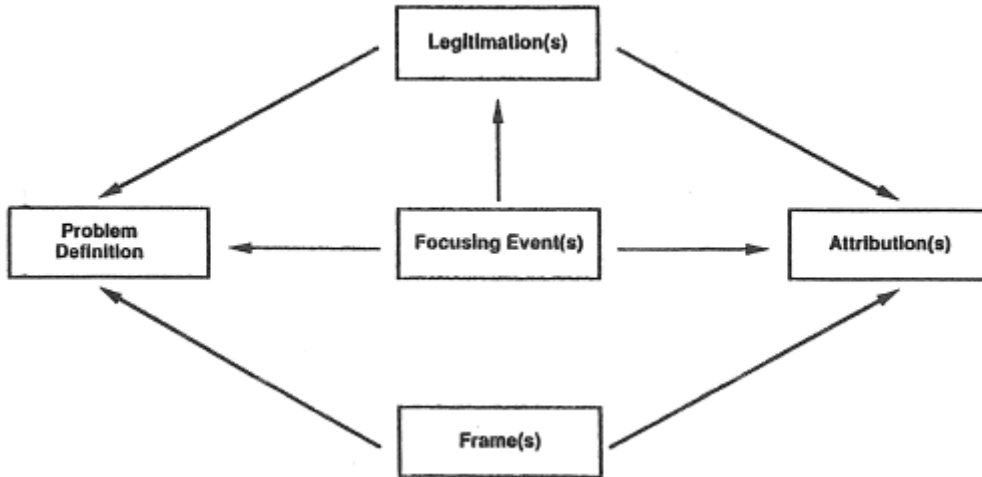
Figure 2

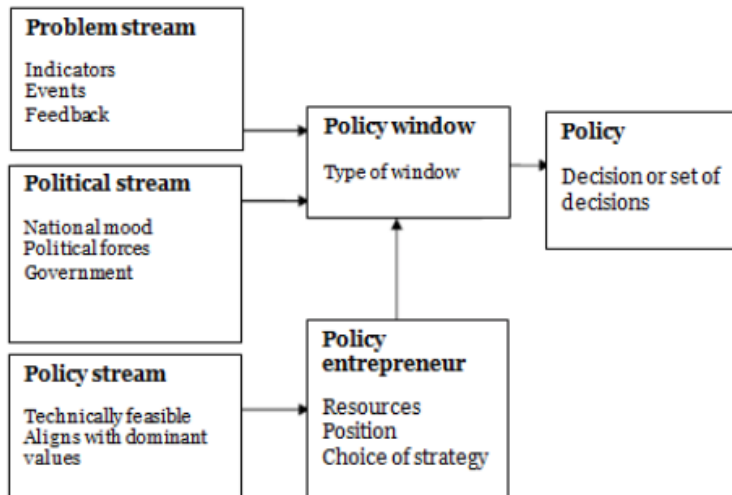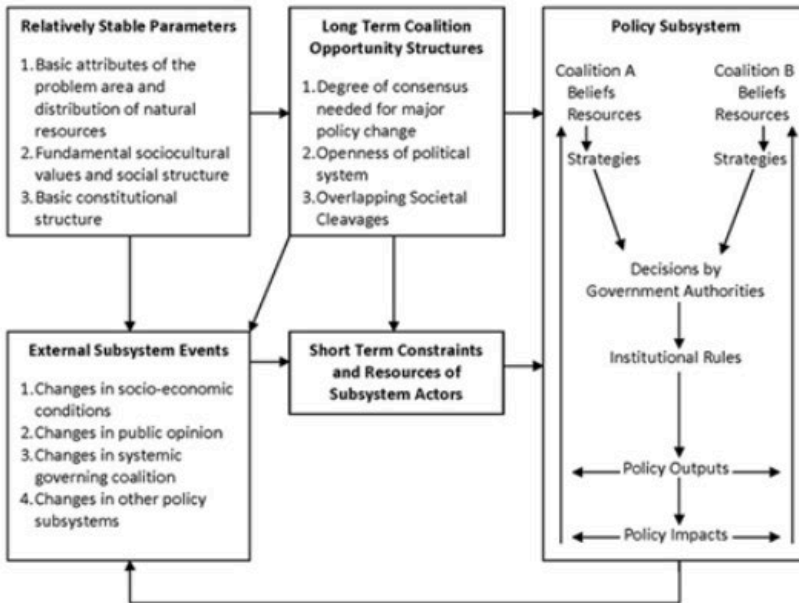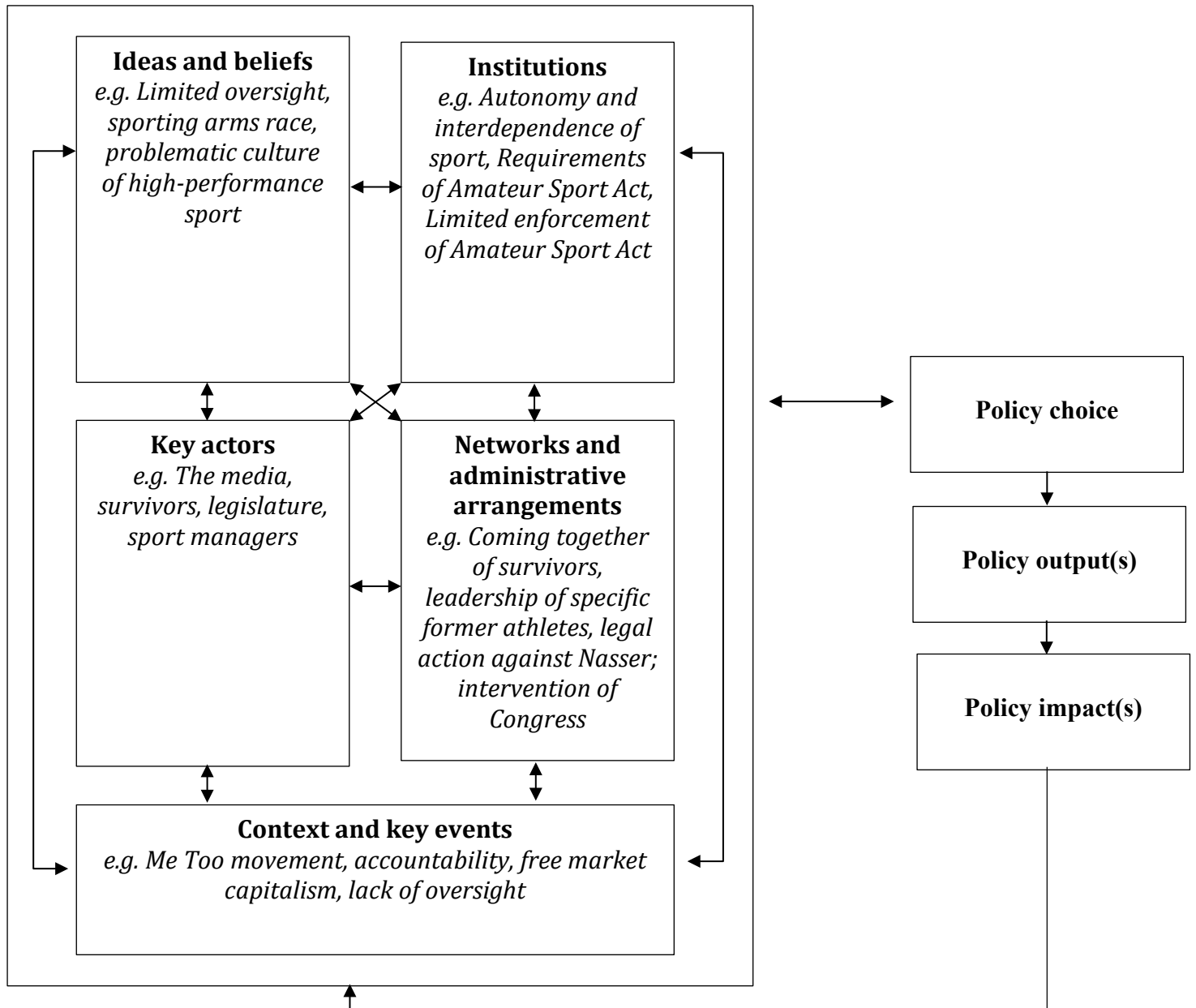*Multiple Streams Framework (Zahariadis, 2007)*

Figure 3

Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier & Weible, 2007)

Figure 4

The five key components of policy analysis as applied to SafeSport

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