



Advocacy coalitions in rural revitalisation: The roles of policy brokers and policy learning

Vivian H.Y. Chu¹, Winnie W.Y. Law², Jessica M. Williams³

The Centre for Civic Society and Governance, the University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Advocacy coalition framework
Rural revitalisation
Policy broker
Collaborative governance

ABSTRACT

Vibrant rural communities are an integral component of sustainable societies due to their ability to nurture and sustain ecological and cultural diversity. Yet changing social and economic processes have led to the break-down of rural communities. This paper demonstrates how collaborative forms of governance contribute to policy learning and so rural sustainability. An analysis of a case study on rural revitalisation using the Advocacy Coalition Framework and narrative analysis reveal how common misconceptions can hinder revitalisation efforts. The role of a policy broker is shown to be vital in the dissolution of these policy misconceptions. Emphasis is on policy brokering strategies, particularly the use of venue creation, issue (re)framing and knowledge co-production, which resulted in changing policy beliefs and so policy learning. As a result of stakeholder coalitions being inspired to reconsider their beliefs, the alignment of policy goals became possible and the effects of imbalanced power relations mitigated.

1. Introduction

The capacities of vibrant rural communities to nurture and sustain ecological and cultural diversity makes them an integral component of sustainable societies. These communities comprise interconnected biophysical and social components, constituting a social-ecological system. Challenges embedded in the interactions between changing social and economic processes and local contexts call for collaborative forms of governance to achieve policy learning and so rural sustainability. Analysis of a rural revitalisation case reveals how misconceptions impeded policy learning and development.

This paper explains how the dissolution of these misconceptions were achieved with the aid of a policy broker. Emphasis is on the brokering strategies, which led to changing policy beliefs and policy-oriented learning. As stakeholder coalitions' beliefs were reconsidered, the possibility of aligning policy goals was opened-up and the effects of imbalanced power relations mitigated. The case study is premised upon revitalisation efforts of a village in Hong Kong, Lai Chi Wo (LCW). These efforts resulted in LCW's rural cultural landscape being awarded the Special Recognition for Sustainable Development by UNESCO in 2020. Despite challenges, this cross-sector endeavour continues to cultivate a sustainable rural community.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) is employed to investigate the role of a policy broker in influencing the beliefs between coalitions who had reached a policy stalemate. The coalitions' beliefs assumed conflicting policy narratives, which needed resolution to allow for productive policy learning. Brokering strategies were interpreted in relation to common policy advocate strategies, the effect of which could be explained as shifting policy beliefs and policy learning within and across the coalitions. This paper contributes to the knowledge regarding policy subsystem dynamics, particularly in resolving stalemates between advocacy coalitions and the policy brokers' role in changing stakeholders' policy beliefs and achieving policy learning. This is pertinent as despite the framework's popularity, the role of policy brokers, shown here to be influential, remains under-theorised.

1.1. Rural revitalisation

Due to globalisation and urbanisation, the abandonment of rural villages is prevalent amongst developed and rapidly developing regions. Rural depopulation leads to the collapse of dynamic interdependent relationships between human activities and the natural environment, resulting in environmental degradation and the loss of cultural assets (Li et al. 2019).

¹ ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2397-4970

² ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2081-7002

³ ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2948-7548

Recently, awareness of sustainability values embedded in rural communities amongst academics and practitioners has prompted calls for their revitalisation. Government revitalisation efforts, in the form of planning policies and subsidies to encourage growth, are often ineffective as they lack engagement with local populations and efforts to strengthen social capital (Liu and Li 2017). Bottom-up approaches demonstrate better results, where multi-stakeholder collaboration is identified as a common factor for success (e.g. UNDP 2013). However, problems of accountability and power are inherent to bottom-up approaches (Woods 2011).

2. The advocacy coalition framework

The ACF (Sabatier 1988, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993) is designed to simplify complex public policy processes. The ACF has three major theoretical foci: advocacy coalitions, policy-orientated learning and policy change (Koebele 2016). The framework contains the assumptions that: policy subsystems are the primary unit of analysis, a long-term perspective is necessary for understanding subsystem affairs, the actors involved in policy systems may be aggregated into coalitions and policy designs are interpreted as translations of coalition beliefs (Weible et al. 2011).

The policy subsystem includes the substantive issue, territorial domain and those who shape the subsystem's affairs. Subsystems are semi-autonomous while also nested and interdependent, they usually involve some degree of authority to alter behaviour and shape outcomes. Relevant actors are those attempting to influence the subsystem's affairs (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013). Advocacy coalitions are groups of actors who share core policy beliefs and coordinate their behaviour. They emerge as actors form alliances to translate their beliefs into policies and practices, competing against groups who subscribe to different belief systems (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013).

Actors in a subsystem can partake in coalition activity to combat threats to collective action (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Actors holding similar beliefs can form coalitions to reduce transaction costs and coordination can vary between weak (where actors modify their behaviour to achieve shared goals or information exchange) or strong coordination (where action plans are jointly developed and executed) (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013). Policy subsystems are composed of one to five coalitions who compete for resources, access to venues and influence on policy formulation (Weible et al. 2009a, 2009b and 2009c).

Policy beliefs are fundamental to the ACF as the formation of an advocacy coalition rests on shared beliefs (Mockshell and Birner, 2020). Policy beliefs are the implicit theories regarding how to achieve certain goals, views on effectiveness of policy instruments, value priorities and perceptions of important causal relationships (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1994, Majone 1980). As such, they are causal drivers for political behaviour (Weible et al. 2009b).

There are three belief categories under the ACF, the most broad and stable category, deep core beliefs, represent “fundamental normative and ontological axioms” (Sabatier 1988:144). The next level are policy core beliefs, which comprise basic strategies and policy propositions for achieving core beliefs in a political subsystem. The final level of beliefs is narrower in scope but the most changeable and consists of secondary aspects that are instrumental decisions and informal processes aimed at implementing the policy core (Sabatier 1988, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, Jenkins-Smith Hank and Sabatier., 1999, Sotirov and Memmler 2012). In a policy subsystem, coalitions with similar beliefs interact and coordinate to influence policy (Elgin and Weible 2013, Weible 2009b). Actors are more likely to change their secondary beliefs to meet collective goals, while maintaining their deep and policy core beliefs (Koebele 2016).

The ACF has been applied to a range of situations and geographies, its main application is in environmental and energy policy (Weible et al. 2009a, 2009b and 2009c) and developed, western democratic systems (Li and Weible 2021). The framework has, however, proven useful in the

Asian context (e.g. Li and Weible 2021, Jang et al. 2016, Lu, 2015, Zhou et al. 2021). Despite its common application to environmental issues, the ACF has not been widely applied to rural policy, notable exceptions includes re-theorising advocacy coalitions' beliefs in the rural-policy subsystem in France and Sweden (Luxon 2019) and farmland problems in China (Zhou et al. 2021).

As such, the ACF is proven in analysing governance issues where competing values and interests are present. Hong Kong's colonial legacy and position as a Special Administrative Region of China, places it in a relatively unique governance situation and makes the ACF, with its ability to span the Western and Eastern political systems, highly suited. The ACF's applicability to environmental and land policy issues makes it suited to rural policy.

2.1. Policy learning

Policy-oriented learning is the “enduring alternations of thought or behavioural intentions that result from experiences and which are concerned with the attainment or revision of the precepts of the belief system of individuals or of collective” (Jenkins, Smith and Sabatier 1994:182). Policy-oriented learning, which results from “experience and/or new information” (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993: 42,) that alters belief systems in the policy subsystem is a causal mechanism for policy change.

The ACF outlines four factors in explaining policy-orientated learning. First is the institutional structure, or the attributes of professional forums (Jenkins-Smith 1990). These are venues of discussion involving subsystem actors and are structured by different institutional arrangements. They can involve open or closed participation rules and are based on common analytical training and norms (Chu and Lee 2019). They are held to encourage learning between coalitions, particularly when they involve experts from all coalitions, are dominated by professional norms and involve a respected policy broker (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013, Hysing and Olsson, 2008).

Similarly, the level of conflict between coalitions is significant for policy learning (Jenkins-Smith 1990, Weible 2008). Low levels of conflict usually means little cross-coalition learning as opposing coalitions are focused on more pressing issues. Little learning also occurs in situations of high conflict, as coalitions are focused on defending their positions and refuting their opponents' claims. Situations where there is enough conflict to attract the attention of rivals but not enough to result in entrenched positions are held to be conducive for cross-coalition learning (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013).

The attributes of the stimuli or data that prompts learning, such as scientific or technical information, actors and events, are also influential. The more intractable issues in the subsystem are, the more uncertainty and disagreement about the scientific and technical aspects of the issues, the less cross-coalition learning is believed to occur (Jenkins-Smith 1990, Weible and Norstedt 2013). Similarly, the attributes of individuals, which include their belief systems, resources and network contracts are influential.

As such, policy learning is likely to occur in situations of lower levels of conflict, agreement on facts and theories and professional fora where coalition members are governed by generally accepted rules and norms (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993). Policy learning is unlikely in adversarial or intractable subsystems (Weible et al. 2009a, 2009b and 2009c).

2.2. Policy brokers and brokering strategies

When policy beliefs conflict among coalitions, a policy broker may be required to mediate and facilitate cross-coalition policy learning (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1994, Jenkins-Smith et al. 2014). Policy brokers are policy actors whose priority is to help opponents reach agreement (Weibel and Jenkins-Smith 2016). They aim to keep the level of conflicts within an acceptable limit and find reasonable solutions

(Sabatier 1993). Due to this, policy brokers tend to advocate for a more centrist position between coalitions, similar to the role of public agencies and scientists (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

Policy brokers provide arenas for trust-building, knowledge generation, collaborative learning, preference formation and conflicts resolution among actors (Hahn et al., 2006; KimDung et al., 2016). They are typically involved where advocacy coalitions' beliefs and policy positions are in competition (Ingold and Varone, 2012, Sabatier 1988). Little attention, however, is afforded to how policy brokers contribute to policy learning, what strategies they employ and to what end (Ingold and Varone, 2012, Lu, 2015). This paper, investigates how a policy broker utilises strategies in the rural context. Strategies such as venue creation, issue (re)framing and knowledge co-production appear significant in building trust, aligning goals, mediating conflicts and balancing power relations, which contributed to cross-coalition learning and so rural revitalisation.

Policy venues are "institutional locations where authoritative decisions are made concerning a given issue" (Baumgartner and Jones 1993:32) and possess their own actors, who represent different policy goals and interests. Different venues possess different opportunities and obstacles for actors trying to effect policy change. Coalitions may strategically select policy venues that they feel will be the most advantageous when presenting policy issues, known as venue shopping (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Where existing policy venues are unsuitable alternative(s) may be strategically created (Lam and Chan 2017). By selecting or creating policy venues, policy brokers can encourage learning and collaboration between competing coalitions (Chu and Lee 2019).

Another strategy is issue framing where events are interpreted and constructed so that they appeal to potential participants and decisions makers (Pralle 2006). Actors can strategically use and shape narratives to (re)frame issues making their preferred policy choices appear self-evident while removing others from the agenda. (Bacchi 2000, Lam and Chan 2017). How issues are framed influences the weight given to information streams and can be an influential brokering strategy (Lu, 2015). In situations of policy conflict, knowledge integration may be facilitated by a policy broker to locate an acceptable solution. Integrating knowledge provide a basis for developing a new level of understanding of the problem, known as knowledge co-production (Armitage et al., 2011) and is a potential outcome of effective learning.

Issue framing and knowledge integration can help reduce uncertainty and provide common understandings, which facilitate policy learning between coalitions who have reached a stalemate. The role of policy brokers in creating a more collaborative policy subsystem and facilitating cross-coalition policy learning contributes to developing the first hypothesis. That a policy broker can facilitate policy learning between competing advocacy coalitions through the strategies of venue creation, issue framing and knowledge co-production (H1).

2.3. Policy change

Policies can be conceptualised hierarchically under the ACF. Changes in the policy core aspects of the subsystem are changes in policy components that span, and are salient to, a policy subsystem. These are major policy changes, while a minor change is a change to a policy component that deals with a part of a subsystem, or technical components of a policy (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013, Sabatier 1998). Minor changes are changes in the means of achieving goals whereas major changes are changes in goals (Li and Weible 2021).

Aside from policy-orientated learning, policy change, or lack of change, is explained under the ACF by advocacy coalitions' activities and the exploitation of internal or external events (Li and Weible 2021). External or internal events to the policy subsystem relate to whether they are likely to be outside or within the control of the subsystem actors (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013). Advocacy coalitions' activities can result in policy change, namely through negotiated agreements, which are

influenced by factors such as a hurting stalemate, leadership, consensus, the importance of empirical issues, trust and a lack of alternative venues (Sabatier and Weible 2007). A hurting stalemate is considered the most influential factor for instigating negotiations between coalitions. This occurs when both coalitions perceive the status quo as unacceptable and cannot access alternative venues for achieving their objectives (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013).

None of these pathways are considered sufficient in producing policy change, tracing one of these paths from occurrence to policy change is another underdeveloped area of the ACF (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013). Here, the policy-orientated learning path is explored through the policy broker's role and the subsequent impact of this process of policy learning on policy beliefs and change. This leads to our second hypothesis (H2), that policy learning facilitated by the policy broker can result in policy change.

3. Research design and methodology

This case study focuses on the efforts surrounding the *Living Water and Community Revitalisation: An Agricultural-led Action, Engagement and Incubation Programme at Lai Chi Wo* ("the Programme"). This study incorporates the analysis of narratives into the ACF to identify coalition beliefs and examine how a policy broker facilitated policy learning in rural revitalisation.

3.1. Lai Chi Wo: the policy subsystem

While reviving rural communities requires all-round support to fulfil the interdependent aspects of sustainability, this support had been piecemeal or lacking in Hong Kong SAR. Although typically known as a global metropolis, only 25.1% of the SAR is characterised as urban or built-up land (Planning Department 2021), while 586 Indigenous villages are located in its rural areas (Electoral Affairs Commission 2014).

Corresponding to the dwindling local agricultural sector in the 1960s-70s, many villages experienced drastic population decline. As a village of about 1km², LCW, once generated sufficient produce for its few hundred villagers (Chick 2017). Guided by principles of sustainable and wise-use of natural resources for self-sufficiency, the village maintained a closely interdependent relationship with the environment. This equilibrium crumbled when villagers emigrated overseas or to urban areas, seeking a better standard of living

The value of rural communities as part of a sustainable society had, prior to 2017, been neglected by the government. Several departments are responsible for different aspects of rural affairs or countryside management and there is a lack of coordination and communication between the departments and villagers. Different sectors, both within and outside of the government, have attempted to project diverging visions for the future of rural communities. Innovative and comprehensive efforts that integrate a spectrum of interests and goals were necessary but absent. Fig. 1

The formation of the Hong Kong Countryside Foundation (HKCF)⁴ in 2011, a Programme partner, provided impetus for the revitalisation of LCW. The Foundation invited actors from various sectors to discuss possibilities for the village, generating momentum for revitalisation (Interviewees 1, 2 and 3). Upon securing funding, the LCW Programme was launched in October 2013 managed by the Programme team, The University (HKU). Phases I and II of the Programme were implemented from 2013 to 2017. Further funding allows HKU to continue its efforts until 2022.

The Programme occurred against the backdrop of wider policy debates, which inform the conflicting stance between Indigenous villagers and green groups. These debates concern two policies: the Small House

⁴ The HKCF Ltd. is a charitable and not-for-profit organisation of a public nature.

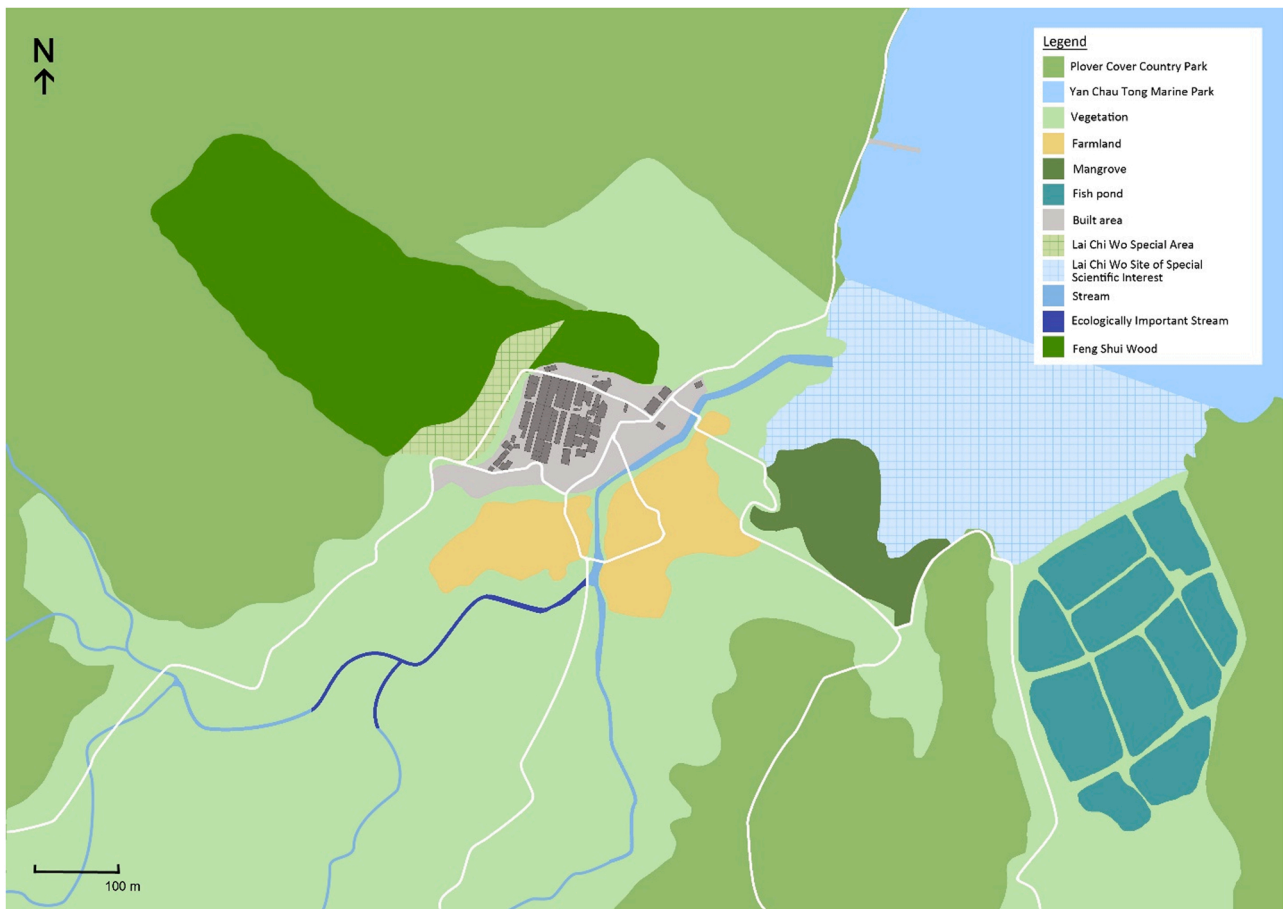


Fig. 1. Map of Lai Chi Wo showing the village and surrounding area.

Policy (1972) and the Country Parks Ordinance (1995). The former specifies that male Indigenous villagers have the right to build a house on land within their village at a concessionary premium once they turn 18 years old. As an open-ended policy, with increasing number of applicants, it causes concern about encroachment on country parks. The lack of planning permission compounds the issue as it results in haphazard village development and sprawl (Hopkinson et al., 2003).

This is coupled with problems relating to the designation of country park boundaries, where villages and agricultural lands were excluded creating pockets of land known as enclaves. Their management received severe public scrutiny in 2010 when one of them, Tai Long Sai Wan, was sold for private development and stripped (Legco, 2017, WWF 2014). While this was not an isolated incident, enclaves had been damaged by developers since 1997, it garnered significant attention due to its scenic nature and public popularity (WWF 2014). The loopholes left under these policies have resulted in strong opposition from green groups and conservationists arguing for greater zoning protection in country parks, while villagers staunchly uphold the policy, claiming it protects their traditional rights. LCW being one of these enclaves makes these debates relevant to understanding the dynamics between the coalitions.

The LCW subsystem, therefore, contains an array of actors including government departments (including the Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Home Affairs Department), Indigenous villagers both within Hong Kong and abroad, green groups and environmental organisations as well as academics, researchers and interest groups. Several advocacy coalitions formed around beliefs about the village’s future.

Environmentalists advocating for conservation and minimal intervention made up the environmental advocacy coalition. This group included actors such as *Designing Hong Kong*, *WWF Hong Kong*, *The*

Conservancy Association, *Hong Kong Birdwatching Society* and outspoken individuals. They came together around the policy beliefs that country parks, and the village enclaves, require more stringent zoning and greater protection. The second coalition, in opposition to the first, consisted mainly of the local village community, who voiced a desire to maintain their rights to development in their villages.

3.2. Data collection

Data collection occurred from 2012 to 2020 and consisted of interviews with stakeholders of the Programme (Table 2a) and documentary evidence from 2005 to 2020. Interview data was triangulated with the documentary evidence in Table 2b.

The interviewees shared their knowledge and experience on the process of initiating and implementing the Programme. The relevant policy narratives of the actors involved in the LCW policy subsystem, were extracted through a detailed reading and coding process.

Table 1

Summary of advocacy coalitions, their roles and policy beliefs at the commencement of the LCW Programme.

Advocacy coalition	Actors	Role(s)/policy beliefs
Indigenous villagers	Local villagers, villagers living abroad (later joined by interested individuals)	Cultural right to use the land, including for development/ restoration and profit
Environmental	WWF, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, Designing Hong Kong, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, The Conservancy Association	Highly cautious. Conservation first, human use should be limited

Table 2a
Interviews conducted.

Actor group	Position in/relation to the Programme	Interviewee no.	Year of interview
LCW Programme	Principal investigator	1	2017, 2018, 2019
	Senior project manager	2	2017, 2018, 2019
	Co-investigator (ecology)	3	2020
	Ecological team	4	2017
	Ecological team	5	2017
	Ecological team	6	2017
	Expert in hydrology	7	2017
	Researcher in hydrology	8	2017
	Expert in hydrology	9	2017
Villagers	Village chief	10	2017
	Village chief	11	2017
	Indigenous villager	12	2017
	Indigenous villager	13	2017

Table 2b
Documentary data collected.

Type of document analysed	Dept./organisation	Source
Government	Planning department	Meeting minutes General papers
	Environmental Protection Department	Website
	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	Information booklet (Law et al. 2017)
	Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs	Papers
LCW Programme	Legislative Council	Policy address (2017)
	The University Policy for Sustainability Lab	Meeting minutes Reflective documents Progress report Information book Funding proposal Final report
		News report
Media	South China Morning Post	News report
	China Daily	News report
	Clear the Air news	Green group blog

Interviews and documents were coded by examining discursive techniques employed, particularly how issues were framed, actors or events positioned and the presence of certain rhetoric or jargon.

This process identified the major narratives of the advocacy coalitions, revealing their policy beliefs. These beliefs were then tracked by identifying changes in the narratives of coalitions' over the course of the study. This was done through following meeting documents and media/press releases and interview. Representatives from the policy broker had to be interviewed several times as there was a paucity of documentary evidence regarding their internal decision making processes and strategy development. Multiple interviews were not required with the other actors due to the richness of their accounts or the comprehensiveness of the documentary data collected.

3.3. Data analysis: narratives and process tracing

The advocacy coalitions and their beliefs are revealed by identifying the narratives they employ when interacting within the policy subsystem. Narratives distil complex issues into manageable problems. They contain a set of ideas that provide an account of an interpretation of a physical and social phenomenon (Hajer 1995). Narratives unify actors in a certain way and mould how they discuss, think and produce knowledge on an issue (Bakker 1999).

While the role of policy beliefs is fundamental to the ACF, it does not generally consider how language is utilised to express or change policy beliefs and so facilitate policy learning (Mockshell and Birner, 2020).

Policy narratives are strategically constructed and can be used to measure policy core beliefs as “stakeholders use words, images, and symbols to strategically craft policy narratives to resonate with the public, relevant stakeholders, and governmental decision makers, with the aim of producing a winning coalition.” (Shanahan et al., 2011: 536, McBeth and Shanahan 2004). Narrative strategies, embedded in the policy narratives of competing advocacy coalitions, can be used to expand or contract the policy subsystem or impede policy learning. As such, the acceptance of a new narrative could facilitate policy learning according to the ACF, even if variables such as scientific information remain constant (Shanahan et al., 2011, Mockshell and Birner, 2020).

Process tracing techniques were employed to complement narrative analysis due to the linear nature of the strategies utilised by the policy broker, which lends itself to case based longitudinal methods (Gerring and McDermott 2007, Collier 2011, Mahoney 2010). The timeline of events and policy processes are maintained so that shifts in narratives can be observed and related to changes in decisions and subsequent actions. As such, the significance of changes in narratives, and so changes in policy beliefs, due to the strategies employed by the policy broker can be identified and inferred as causal mechanisms in enabling a collaborative rural revitalisation process.

To test the validity of the argument that policy brokers, and the strategies they employ, are crucial in bringing about policy learning and changing policy beliefs amongst conflicting coalitions, our hypotheses are developed to determine causal inference. The causal linkages between the policy broker and the strategies adopted are first examined (H1). These strategies then led onto the outcomes, the second part of the causal linkages, between the brokering strategies and policy learning and changing policy beliefs (H2).

The advocacy coalitions are identified by locating where different actors were involved and their narratives at the start of the case study (2005–2012). Those that conformed to similar narratives were classified as belonging to the same coalition (Zhou et al. 2021). The narratives of the coalitions are examined prior to the introduction of the policy broker, during the brokering process and at the end of the Programme to determine if policy learning has occurred based on if there was a change in policy beliefs. As policy learning and policy processes occur best in collaborative policy subsystems (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993, Weibel and Sabatier 2009), it is important to cultivate such an environment. Following, evidence of changes in the policy subsystem from disengaged or conflicting towards greater collaboration could be considered an auxiliary trace for process tracing (Mahoney 2012). If policy beliefs are influenced by the brokering process, trace evidence may also be found in the wider policy subsystem, notably in the government's rural policy agenda.

4. Lai Chi Wo and the road to rural revitalisation

This paper argues that two sets of misconstrued paradoxes created difficulties for cross-sector collaboration. Firstly, the creation of sustainable societies has been plagued by perceptions of nature conservation and human activities being at odds. The second relates to views of the incompatibility of scientific and local knowledge. Through coding interviews, relevant policy narratives, and so policy beliefs, of advocacy coalitions in the LCW policy subsystem were identified (Table 1). An in-depth analysis of this case study reveals that the policy broker used strategies to create the conditions and support a shift in the beliefs of different coalitions and enable a collaborative rural revitalisation process.

4.1. Pre-intervention policy narratives: Coalitions in opposition

Goal alignment is necessary to ensure that various interests and policy objectives of different actors are directed towards a collective outcome (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015a). This is challenging when coalitions have different backgrounds and policy objectives. Nevertheless,

it is important as goal alignment stimulates trust-building (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015a; Johnston et al., 2011) and removes impasses, enabling policy progression.

Prior to the Programme, the policy beliefs of the coalitions prevented a consensus on the future of LCW. This was evident in their conflicting narratives. Nature conservation and development were generally considered to be mutually exclusive and competing goals. Partly on this basis, isolated intentions were proposed to harness the cultural, social or environmental resources at LCW.

Green groups were lobbying the government for greater protection of country parks, including limiting village activities and the areas available for village development and/or expansion (TPB, 2011, TPB 2014a, 2014b). Even where there was support for agricultural activities, extreme scepticism hindered efforts to pursue agricultural revitalisation (Interviewees 1 and 2). Specifically, agricultural activities around LCW were linked with the Small House policy and associated road infrastructure, which were considered 'unacceptable' (TPB, 2013). This coalition was concerned about 'conserving the integrity of the natural setting of the area', which they placed in opposition to village development (TPB 2014a, 2014b).

This stance was exacerbated by the wider context. The Tai Long Sai Wan incident resulted in the government reviewing whether to increase the protection of enclaves by including them under the country park system in 2011. Rather than better protecting enclaves, those that contained private land are given large 'Village type development' zones. This places them more at risk of being developed at the expense of the ecological and cultural environment. Since then, at least four more enclaves have experienced ecological destruction (WWF 2014).

Consequently, green groups are strong advocates for decreasing the zoning given to Village type developments in favour of Green Belt or Conservation Area status. Conversely, the villagers argued that the government should respect their entitled rights and more land should be designated to meet their future small house demand (TPB 2014a, 2014b). The villagers felt their traditional rights were being infringed (Wong et al., 2015, Interviewees 10 and 11). At Town Planning Board meetings, they stated that government policies were 'leaning towards nature conservation', which 'deterred village development' and that the Indigenous villagers should be treated as the 'major stakeholders'. More strongly, they held that the 'moral standard of Hong Kong had been declining and there were examples of injustice in Government policies which had affected social harmony' (TPB 2014a, 2014b) and that 'private properties should not be used to achieve nature conservation objectives' (TPB 2014a, 2014b). This narrative upholds the Indigenous villagers' belief that nature conservation inhibits their rights to develop but also harks to a deeper mistrust of the government and 'outsiders'.

Lacking a coordinator between them, the two coalitions' relatively narrow and differing policy objectives, as well as severe mistrust, deterred communication. Their core policy beliefs were at a stalemate, which had been ongoing since at least 2009. Neither had shown any intention of negotiation, likely due to the normative issues and mistrust involved, so policy change through a negotiated agreement was unlikely (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Rather, they were talking 'past' each other through government forums (e.g. Town Planning Board discussions 2009–2013).

Meanwhile, the government was intrigued by the village's potential but uncertain of the way forward and demonstrated no intention to assume leadership. Its review of the country parks system in 2011 and subsequent failure to appropriately address the issue of village development in country parks (WWF 2014), are evidence that while there was the potential for policy change to occur, there was not a sufficient shift in policy beliefs nor were external events considered sufficiently pressing. Consequently, more was required to instigate policy change.

The villagers and the government also held diverging views on the management of the village stream (designated as an Ecologically Important Stream in 2005). Traditionally, villagers annually dredged the stream's reservoirs and used the sand to build or repair their houses,

bunds and riverbanks. The transition of the stream's management responsibility from the villagers to the government did not initially create problems as the village was mostly deserted. The revitalisation of agricultural activities, however, was hampered by the risk of flooding caused by fallen bunds and accumulated silt, reducing the stream's capacity. While villagers consider it necessary to continue their traditional management practices to address these issues, the government remained inactive.

The government commonly utilised scientific rhetoric and arguments in its narratives to justify the protection of the village stream (Interviewees 1 and 2) and by doing so disregarded the role of local knowledge in its management (TPB 2011). They adopted narratives emphasising the ecological importance and species richness of the area (Chick 2017), which was incompatible with the villagers' local use and management of the stream. This is despite evidence of the need for integration of localised and/or traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge in the management of local habitats (Davidson-Hunt and Michael O'Flaherty, 2007; Makondo and Thomas, 2018). This aligned with the environmental coalition's belief that more stringent zoning is required to limit human use. The government's failure to recognise the value of local knowledge contributes to a power mismatch between villagers and the government and jeopardises the effectiveness of cross-sector collaboration in resolving problems.

The bureaucratic nature of the government resulted in inaction. While the government generally supports revitalisation, it often shifted responsibility or refused to act to prevent drawing complaints from the public or green groups (Interviewee 3). For example, the villagers took the issue of flooding to AFCD and the District Office but were met with repeated rejection due to concerns that green groups or the public would object to interference to an ecologically sensitive stream (Interviewees 1 and 2). It is possible that their apparent stubbornness to leave the stream untouched was a convenient façade for inaction, being accused of 'turning a blind eye' in similar matters (Green Sense 2016). The task of shattering this façade was undertaken by the policy broker.

4.2. The policy broker's role and strategies

The advocacy coalitions' conflicting perceptions had to be transformed by the policy broker for the realisation that environmental protection and community revitalisation could be harmonised and to value local knowledge (Akgün et al., 2015; Takeuchi, 2010; Yokohari and Bolthouse, 2011).

Here, the policy broker included experts and scientists in ecology, hydrology and rural planning from HKU. This group was, at times, joined by partner organisations such as the HKCF and the Conservancy Association, who have an interest in the revitalisation and management of rural resources. The broker's affiliation with HKU meant it was perceived as prestigious and more neutral. Prominent individuals, such as the lead ecologists belonging to another Indigenous village and the involvement of a former Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, helped build trust by bridging the divide between traditional and local knowledge and furthered the broker's scientific and culturally sensitive reputation (Williams et al. 2021). Due to the cultural sensitivity involved with LCW and the conflict between the coalitions' knowledge and perspectives regarding the village's development, the policy broker could not just take a scientific role to bridge the coalitions. Involving rural affairs scholars and an Indigenous villager alongside experts and scientists was essential to the policy broker's neutrality and centrist position (Williams et al. 2021).

4.2.1. Building trust and aligning goals

For the Programme to progress, trust had to be built between the broker and the advocacy coalitions. This process was first initiated by the HKCF, and then taken on by HKU, who identified the conflicting policy beliefs in the subsystem, brought in partner organisations and engaged with the Secretary for the Environment. HKU also undertook

the task of building trust with villagers and green groups. The Programme's environmental affiliations led some villagers to fear that collaboration would remove their right housing rights (Interviewees 10 and 11). Conversely, environmental groups were concerned that, while HKU's intentions may be genuine, they might be used by the villagers to further alternative agendas (Interviewee 3).

Lacking appropriate venues, the Programme created new ones in the form of formal seminars, forums and liaison meetings as well as informal daily communications. They were conducted and mediated by HKU, who is well respected within the Hong Kong community. Through these venues trust is built and joint understandings are produced providing neutral grounds for discussions between experts and those involved on-the-ground in the subsystem. These venue attributes have been demonstrated to encourage cross-coalition learning (Hysing and Olsson, 2008). For example, HKU organised a forum in 2015 to enable constructive dialogue with interested groups. The forum was organised in response to concerns about rural land use and private development and so those with strong views against revitalising LCW. HKU invited these activists, along with local farmers, green groups, relevant industries, key partners and other interested parties to the meeting to explain the Programme's intentions and emphasis on sustainability (Interviewees 1 and 2). It provided an opportunity for stakeholders to engage in discussions about the Programme, which helped to gain wider community support and endorsement.

As the villagers began to appreciate that the vitality of their community could be enhanced and interest in revitalisation increased, environmental groups' expressed concerns regarding the potential environmental impact (Interviewees 1, 2 and 3). These groups criticised the government for "giving up control" and conceding to development pressures, arguing that the LCW area should be zoned as a 'Conservation Area' to reflect its ecological value, protect the Ecologically Important Stream and "better conserve the integrity of the natural settings of the area" (TPB 2014a, 2014b, Chi-Fai 2013). When the Programme began to clear agricultural lands, HKU had to allay concerns from green groups who feared the environment was being damaged (Chang 2016).

Early in the Programme, HKU arranged multiple liaison meetings with green groups and the Drainage Services Department to discuss the Programme's plans of reintroducing agricultural activities and respective mitigation measures (Interviewees 1, 2 and 3). Then, experts in ecology, hydrology and geography were engaged in researching the area and monitoring agricultural impacts on mangroves⁵. Extensive environmental assessments were conducted, going beyond what is required for an EIA (Interviewee 3). HKU made their assessment findings available to these groups and at the last meeting they explained how they cleared the vegetation "to prove that we were doing it properly" (Interviewee 3). This was all crucial in building trust and demonstrating that the green groups could be reasoned with through scientific information and evidence (Interviewees 1 and 3).

Issue framing became a crucial strategy during proposal development as HKU underwent a period of scope (re-)definition to capture the objectives of different coalitions under the Programme. While there were, originally, three streams of interests (proposed by the village governing body, the government and environmentalists), the Programme was finally framed under an integrated approach of whole catchment environmental management and community rebuilding (Interviewees 1 and 2). HKU demonstrated how an external organisation can effectively unite different policy goals by reframing issues so that they fall under a comprehensive vision. Subsequently, many participants reported that their perception of sustainable living and rural community

⁵ A hydrology study was conducted to monitor the impact of agricultural activities on mangroves through a sedimentation study. Adopting a whole catchment approach, the research provided credible evidence to demonstrate that sedimentation can be mostly attributed to heavy rainfall and floods, rather than agricultural activity.

has positively changed. One villager was quoted saying that the "Programme has helped me appreciate the interdependence between human beings and the natural environment" (2017:29).

The Programme's ability to engage ecologists to ensure the protection of sensitive ecosystems while preserving the villagers' local rights and heritage was essential in bridging the divide. Their narratives reframed the issue to stress the relationship between the land and the people and the balance that previously existed, broadening understandings. For example, ecological surveys were conducted to 'restore nature-friendly agriculture' and to 'reach dynamic equilibrium between field and its surroundings' as well as the desire to 'revive the relationship between the land and the people' by enhancing the pride and sense of belonging of the villagers, to maintain a 'self-sustaining economy' (Chang and Sylvia 2016). Different stakeholders, including the rural committee, local villagers, environmentalists and researchers, reconciled the dichotomised relationship between nature conservation and development. HKU employed venue creation and issue framing as brokering strategies to build trust between coalitions and facilitate policy learning.

While much of the mistrust between villagers and outsiders was dissipated by the Programme, some core policy beliefs appear unchanged. The Programme made progress in shifting the deeper 'us' versus 'them' beliefs commonly held amongst the Indigenous villagers. One villager expressed that the increase in outsiders to the village was a 'good thing' and that they are not 'too worried' about the newcomers clashing with the villagers (Interviewee 11). This belief, however, has not been completely changed as the villagers' discourse still contain narratives against 'outsiders'. One states that they hope "outsiders will not encroach on Indigenous villagers' livelihood and rights" especially, that they refrain from business that would cause "vicious competition" (Interviewee 11). So, while softened, this deep-seated belief amongst the villagers that they need to protect themselves against outsiders remains. Significantly, however, the deeper beliefs regarding the direction of village development has changed. The original support for urbanisation-style development is replaced by the acceptance and support of sustainable development, which precludes developers. This is a huge shift as several villagers previously considered developer-led development as the only alternative to desertion (Interviewee 1).

Similarly, while the green groups' reservations about the Programme have eased, they considered it to be a 'one off' and not representative of rural/village revitalisation projects in general (Interviewee 3). Their deeper policy beliefs, therefore, have not been shifted. Nonetheless, secondary beliefs have changed, which made the implementation of the Programme possible. As one villager wryly put it, "even environmentalists are open to negotiations" (Interviewees 10 and 11). While this alludes to the divide between the villagers and green groups, it also indicates a new willingness to cooperate. Explicitly, the Programme was described as acting as a 'bridge' between the villagers and the environmentalists, allowing trust to be built (Interviewees 10 and 11).

4.2.2. Managing conflicts

Differences in perceptions and interests of the advocacy coalitions mean that throughout the collaboration/revitalisation process emerging issues and circumstances are likely to prompt conflicts. The policy broker's role in supporting conflict resolutions is, therefore, important. The management of water resources offers examples of how the policy broker supported conflict resolution, addressing friction (i) between the farmers over irrigation, (ii) between conservation and agricultural revitalisation regarding the use of the stream and (iii) between government, villagers and experts on the prevention of flooding.

At the village level, the farmers' disagreed over shared irrigation channels. There were concerns regarding free-riding and how to manage mutual resources. The farms share responsibilities for managing infrastructure and equipment and so the Programme developed a facility sharing community. The community is encouraged to take collaborative action to resolve problems, including the pooling of manpower for

maintenance work. Regular community farmer meetings are held, which provide a decision making platform, venue for scheduling maintenance works and resolving disputes (Interviewee 2). Thus, the Programme was able to create a venue for farmers to meet and share their knowledge to create a common collaborative management approach for the irrigation system.

Another conflict originated from the villagers' lack of understanding of what the classification of an ecologically important stream entailed and the related government regulations, the government and green groups' lack of understanding of what traditional practices entail, and expert(s)' opinion on the ecological impact of such practices. Hence, HKU learnt traditional practices from Indigenous villagers and explained the regulations and ecological value of the stream (Interviewees 1 and 2). A key strategy of HKU was to remedy the lack of dialogue while creating a venue to facilitate policy learning on an equal footing.

To resolve the conflicts surrounding the management of the stream with the government and green groups, HKU created a series of venues for different coalitions to engage in knowledge co-production. HKU utilised their network to contact the Drainage Services Department, which prompted engineers to visit the village to investigate the causes of a flooding incident in May 2014 (Interviewees 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9) and to organise a multi-stakeholder meeting. The meeting was joined by other government departments and offices, villagers and a green group. The policy broker sought an expert, who was invited to engage with villagers to learn about their traditional stream management approach and to assess its ecological impact. This process, confronted the government's zero-intervention stance towards the stream with the knowledge co-produced between the villagers and expert (Interviewees 1 and 2).⁶ It is based on this mutual understanding, relevant coalitions can embark on the path of collective problem resolution and build their capacity for joint action.

This cross-sectoral meeting and site visits to share the villagers' traditional river management knowledge aided the policy broker's role in tackling unequal power relations. It catalysed the formation of a cross-departmental working group within HKU. Scholars from Civil Engineering, Biological Sciences, Geography and Social Sciences collaborated to study the hydrology and the physical environment in the LCW basin by applying scientific understandings to traditional practices. A member of this group explains, "If we do not dredge the stream, the channel will naturally be choked with silt. Therefore, it is necessary to dredge the stream. However, won't this move harm ecology? Yes, it will, but the damage is recoverable. The ecosystem has a high ability to restore itself as long as everything is done in an orderly and appropriate manner" (Interviewee 7). Bringing in respected experts alleviated the imbalance of power between the villagers and the government.

The policy broker questioned taken for granted beliefs and introduced alternatives, employing narratives that bridged the disparate beliefs of the coalitions to build trust and enable collaboration. The broker sought expert opinion on the credibility of the government's narrative with the result that it was destabilised, which served to strengthen the villagers' position. The broker also helped the villagers to understand the ecological importance of the stream and purpose of the regulations, which shifted their understanding by reframing their traditional management approach to one that addresses the needs of the village and maintains the stream's ecology. Consequently, both sides realised that human and ecological needs could be achieved simultaneously.

Lacking the organisational structure and experience possessed by other sectors, local actors often struggle to exert their stance systematically or negotiate effectively with their counterparts. This was apparent at LCW, particularly prior to the revitalisation process. The arenas

created through HKU's efforts provided opportunities for villagers to accumulate experience and develop skills to negotiate with the government and green groups. Table 3

5. Discussion and conclusions

The paper unfolds the transformation experienced by different advocacy coalitions as a policy broker encouraged them to question their assumptions. As learning occurred, the interests and perspectives of coalitions became more aligned and power mismatches were mitigated. A key factor in this process was the support and facilitation of the policy broker. Due to the prevalence of the misconstrued beliefs and their centrality in cross-sector environmental management, findings from this case study could inspire practitioners and researchers working in other contexts.

Through process tracing, the hypotheses were explored and demonstrated as valid. Notably, the coalition's narratives are shown to change after the introduction of the policy broker. There is also evidence of goal alignment through increased and continued dialogue between the coalitions as well as an increase in trust and understanding thanks to the broker's strategies.

This paper makes a crucial addition to the literature by explaining how policy brokers contribute to policy learning and tracing a path of policy-oriented learning to policy change. Both of which are under-theorised in the ACF literature (Weible and Nohrstedt 2013). This study has identified the introduction of narratives to bridge beliefs and reconcile differences between the advocacy coalitions to facilitate policy learning in the rural revitalisation process. Initiating the development of a list of key strategies adopted by policy brokers, this study has identified strategies such as the creation of venues for bringing together and building trust between different actors in a cooperative environment,

Table 3
Timeline of the LCW case and key contextual events.

Year	Event
1950s-2000s	Abandonment of farmland and rural villages in Hong Kong
1972	Introduction of Small Housing Policy
1976	Introduction of Country Parks Ordinance (amended in 1995)
2010	Tai Long Sai Wan incident
2011	Government review of enclaves zoning in country parks Formation of the Hong Kong Countryside Foundation
Point of intervention	– Introduction of a policy broker 'HKU'
2013 - 2017	Commencement of the LCW Programme (4-year). HKU implements initiatives to revitalise natural and cultural capital including agricultural rehabilitation, rediscovery of community and cultural resources. HKU organised regular meetings with: – partner organisations (every 3-4 months) – local community members, including Indigenous villagers active at LCW, new settlers and those who work in LCW (frequent and regular, approximately once a month)
2014	HKU attends LCW Indigenous villagers' annual meeting every year. Flooding incident. HKU engaged experts and Drainage Service Department, meeting and site visits held. HKU launched environmental baseline monitoring.
2017	HKU cross-departmental working group to study the hydrology and physical environment of the LCW basin. Government policy address proposed to revitalise rural areas based on the LCW model and announces funding and the establishment of the Countryside Conservation Office.
2017 - 2022	HKU launches 'HSBC Rural Sustainability' to continue revitalisation efforts at LCW with new socio-economic models that go beyond environmental conservation and extend efforts to nearby villages.
2019	UNDP's Equator Initiative recognised the Indigenous Hakka community of LCW as a finalist for the Equator Prize 2019 Village Nature-based Solutions Database.
2020	LCW Rural Cultural Landscape wins UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation's Special Recognition for Sustainable Development.

⁶ The assessment was made with the condition that it is done during the right season and within a controllable scale.

creating a collaborative policy subsystem. This demonstrates the potential relevance of incorporating concepts of issue framing and venue shopping in future research adopting the advocacy coalition framework, especially if there is evidence of a policy broker present. In this case, the policy broker coordinated amongst the different coalitions to alleviate concerns and introduced narratives that reframed issues, turning previously competing concepts into complementary policy goals and facilitated knowledge co-production.

The acceptance of the broker's role and narratives led to shifts in the advocacy coalitions' beliefs, allowing for policy learning and policy goals alignment – in this case agricultural land has been revived, a (near) abandoned village is vibrant and government policy now embraces such projects. The change in narratives through the brokering process not only supports the hypotheses but also demonstrates the significance of a policy broker in situations where advocacy coalitions hold conflicting policy beliefs. It was also found that aside from policy change through broker-led policy-orientated learning, there is no evidence of other means of policy learning occurring. While external events had the potential to lead to policy change, they ultimately had limited impact on policy and failed to resolve the dispute.

To further illustrate the importance of paying attention to policy brokers in future research, this paper finds that strategies implemented by policy brokers not only contribute to shifting policy beliefs and triggering policy learning, they can also catalyse social momentum for wider policy change. Though this paper has focused on the policy process of the LCW rural revitalisation, the efforts made by the policy broker led to wider policy learning and major policy change. This is evident in the government's narratives. Since the Programme's success, the government has incorporated narratives of rural 'revitalisation' into its policies and statements (EDP, LC Paper, Policy address 2017). Prior to the Programme, 'revitalisation' rarely appeared in the same context as agriculture or rural policies and attempts to manage village enclaves in 2011 had failed to resolve the issue. Human and environmental needs are now included together in the government's narratives, no longer being positioned in opposition, and the introduction of a new fund and organisation, the Countryside Conservation Office, is evidence of the government's changing policy beliefs. This is particularly significant when compared to the government's actions in 2011, where there is no evidence of policy learning or a change in policy beliefs. Rather, an external event (public outcry to the loss of ecological habitats) led to the potential for policy change that never materialised.

These new measures were announced in the 2017 Policy Address, which recognised that revitalisation initiatives at LCW had been positively received and supported by the villagers and the wider community. The address also states that one of the two priorities for the Countryside Conservation Office is to "take forward the planning of enhanced effort on countryside revitalisation in (Lai Chi Wo, 2017: 250). This is evidence of major policy change as it represents a shift in the government's largely apathetic and reactionary stance to the proactive goal of reviving and protecting these villages. This demonstrates that while policy brokers make an effort to shift policy beliefs and trigger policy learning, these could have a rippling effect, which eventually lead to substantial policy change.

By delving into the broker's interventions and its role in facilitating policy learning this study goes beyond considering the four key factors for policy-oriented learning separately, rather, it considers how they relate to one another through incorporating the actions of the policy broker. As such, a nuanced understanding of policy-oriented learning is generated to enrich existing knowledge. For example, despite the coalitions holding entrenched conflicting deep and policy core beliefs, a change in the secondary beliefs of both advocacy coalitions, through venues of discussion constructed by the policy broker, has allowed the village to open to communities of interest and embark on new economic ventures. This has facilitated the village in becoming better integrated with the wider Hong Kong social-ecological system and ensure its sustainability in the modern world (Williams et al. 2021).

In terms of the rural context, by integrating scientific and local knowledge, the policy broker ensured that village culture was safeguarded and the natural ecological resources of the area were adequately protected and managed, easing concerns from both sides and striking the essential balance between nature conservation and human use. By delving into the two key hindrances for cross-sector collaboration and examining the processes through which they were addressed, this paper has provided an explanation of the mechanisms through which policy brokers were able to facilitate collaboration dynamics and policy learning amongst competing coalitions. Through this study, the authors encourage researcher to consider the role and strategies adopted by policy brokers within the ACF, with the hope that they will gain insights in the study of collaborative governance and policy processes in general.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Vivian H.Y. Chu: Conceptualisation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Investigation, Formal analysis. **Winnie W.Y. Law:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Resources, Project administration, Funding acquisition. **Jessica M. Williams:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: The authors are employed by the University of Hong Kong, who was in charge of and received funding for the Living Water and Community Revitalisation: An Agricultural-led Action, Engagement and Incubation Programme at Lai Chi Wo and the HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme, the study of which this article is based.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Rural Sustainability Programme team for making their wealth of resources available to the researchers. In particular, they would like to express sincere gratitude to Prof. Wai-Fung Lam for his insights and comments and Ms. Katie Chick for sharing her invaluable first-hand experiences and for commenting on the manuscript as well as all the interviewees for their time and participation. The authors would also like to express their appreciation to HSBC for its funding and support of the Living Water and Community Revitalisation: An Agricultural-led Action, Engagement and Incubation Programme at Lai Chi Wo and the HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme grant number is AR180016.

References

- Akgün A, A, Baycan, T, Nijkamp, P, 2015. Rethinking on sustainable rural development. *European Planning Studies* 23 (4), 678–692.
- Armitage, Derek, et al., 2011. Co-management and the co-production of knowledge: Learning to adapt in Canada's Arctic. *Global environmental change* 21 (3), 995–1004.
- Bacchi, Carol, 2000. Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education* 21 (1), 45–57.
- Bakker, Karen, 1999. The politics of hydropower: developing the Mekong. *Political Geogr.* 18 (2), 209–232.
- Chang, Sylvia. 2016. Getting back to grass roots China Daily Hong Kong 15th November (http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hkedition/2016-11/15/content_27376656.htm).
- Baumgartner, Frank, Jones, Bryan, 1993. *Agendas and instability in American politics*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Chick, H.L., 2017. The significance, conservation potential and challenges of a traditional farming landscape in an Asian metropolis: a case study of Lai Chi Wo, Hong Kong. *Journal of World Heritage Studies (Special issue)*, 17–23.
- Chi-Fai, Cheung. 2013. "SCMP: Plover Cove Country Park Expansion Could Lead to Showdown" Clear the Air [news blog] (<http://news.cleartheair.org.hk/?p=7669>).
- Chu, Vivian, Lee, Anna, 2019. Institutional Obstacles and Opportunities for Policy Entrepreneurship in Cross-Border Environmental Management: a case study in China's Greater Pearl River Delta region. *Asian Geographer* 1–19.

- Collier, David, 2011. Understanding process tracing. *S. Political Science & Politics* 44 (4), 823–830.
- Davidson-Hunt J, I, O'Flaherty, R, 2007. Researchers, indigenous peoples, and place-based learning communities. *ociety and natural resources* 20 (4), 291–305.
- Elgin, Dallas J., Weible, Christopher M., 2013. A stakeholder analysis of Colorado climate and energy issues using policy analytical capacity and the advocacy coalition framework. *Rev. Policy Res.* 30 (1), 114–133.
- EPD(Environmental Protection Department of HKSAR).
- Emerson, K, Nabatchi, T, 2015. Evaluating the productivity of collaborative governance regimes: A performance matrix. *Public Performance & Management Review* 38 (4), 717–747.
- Gerring, John, McDermott, Rose, 2007. An experimental template for case study research. *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (3), 688–701.
- Hahn, Thomas, Olsson, Per, Folke, Carl, Johansson, Kristin, 2006. Trust-building, knowledge generation and organizational innovations: the role of a bridging organization for adaptive comanagement of a wetland landscape around Kristianstad, Sweden. *Human Ecology* 3 (4), 573–592.
- Hajer, Maarten, A., 1995. *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford University Press.
- Hopkinson, Lisa and Mandy, L.M. Lei, 2003. *Rethinking Small House Policy*, Civic Exchange.
- Hysing, Erik, Olsson, Jan, 2008. Contextualising the advocacy coalition framework: theorising changing in Swedish forest policy. *Environ. Politics* 17 (5), 730–748.
- Ingold, Karen, Varone, Frédéric, 2012. Treating policy brokers seriously: evidence from the climate policy. *J. Public Admin. Res. Theory* 22 (2), 319–346.
- Jang, Sojin, Weible, Christopher M., Park, Kyudong, 2016. Policy processes in South Korea through the lens of the advocacy coalition framework. *J. Asian Public Policy* 9 (3), 274–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17516234.2016.1201877>.
- Jenkins-Smith, Hank C., Sabatier, Paul A., 1993. The Dynamics of Policy-Oriented Learning. In: Sabatier, Paul A., Jenkins-Smith, Hank C. (Eds.), *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press, Boulder, CO.
- Jenkins-Smith, Hank C., Sabatier, Paul, 1994. Evaluating the advocacy coalition framework. *J. Public Policy* 14 (2), 175–203.
- Jenkins-Smith, Hank C., Nohrstedt, Daniel, Weible, Christopher, Sabatier, Paul, 2014. The advocacy coalition framework: Foundations, evolution, and ongoing research. In: Sabatier, Paul, Weible, Christopher (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Third ed. Westview Press, Boulder, CO, pp. 183–223.
- Jenkins-Smith Hank, C., Sabatier, Paul, 1999. The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Assessment. In: Sabatier, Paul (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process*. Westview Press, Boulder, CO, pp. 117–166.
- Jenkins-Smith, Hank. 1990. *Democratic Politics and Policy Analysis*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Koebele, Elizabeth. 2016. Using the Advocacy Coalition Framework to Understand Collaborative Policy Processes. Prepared for the 2016 Western Political Science Association Conference San Diego, California March 24–26, 2016.
- Law, Winnie, Katie Chick, Sianna Yiu, Debra Ling, and Angel Ngan. 2017. *Vivifying Lai Chi Wo: Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme Four Year Review and Outlook*. Policy for Sustainability Lab, Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong.
- Li, Wei, Weible, Christopher, 2021. China's policy processes and the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Stud. J.* 49 (3), 703–730.
- Johnston W, E, et al., 2011. Managing the inclusion process in collaborative governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21 (4), 699–721.
- KimDung, Nguyen, Bush R, Simon, Mol PJ, Arthur, 2016. NGOs as bridging organizations in managing nature protection in Vietnam. *he Journal of Environment & Development* 25 (2), 191–218.
- Lam, Wai-Fung, Chan, Kwan Nok, 2017. Policy advocacy in transitioning regimes: Comparative lessons from the case of harbour protection in Hong Kong. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 19 (1), 54–71.
- Li, Yuheng, Hans, Westlund, Yansui, Liu, 2019. Why some rural areas decline while some others not: an overview of rural evolution in the world. *J. Rural Stud.* 68, 135–143.
- Liu, Yansui, Li, Yuheng, 2017. Revitalize the world's countryside. *Nat. News* 548 (7667), 275.
- Lu, Wilbur, B.Y., 2015. Why do policy brokers matter? A lesson for competing advocacy coalitions. *J. Admin. Sci. Policy Stud.* 3 (2), 33–51.
- Luxon M, Emily, 2019. What do advocates know about policymaking? Revealing process in the Advocacy Coalition Framework. *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1400088>.
- Majone, Giandomenico, 1980. Policies as theories. *Omega* 8 (2), 151–162.
- McBeth, Mark K., Shanahan, Elizabeth A., 2004. Public opinion for sale: the role of policy marketers in greater yellowstone policy conflict. *Policy Sciences* 37 (3), 319–338.
- Makondo C, C, Thomas S, D, 2018. Climate change adaptation: Linking indigenous knowledge with western science for effective adaptation. *. Environmental science & policy* 88, 83–91.
- Mockshell, Jonathan, Birner., Regina, 2020. Who has the better story? On the narrative foundations of agricultural development dichotomies. *World Development* 135.
- Pralle, Sarah, 2006. *Branching out, digging in: Environmental advocacy and agenda setting*. Georgetown University Press.
- Sabatier, Paul, 1988. An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein. *Policy Sci.* 21, 129–168.
- Sabatier A, P, 1993. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press, Boulder.
- Sabatier, Paul, Jenkins-Smith, Hank (Eds.), 1993. *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press, Boulder.
- Sabatier A, Paul, Weible M, Christopher, 2007. *The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications*. In: Sabatier, Paul (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd. Westview Press, Boulder, CO, pp. 189–222.
- Shanahan, Elizabeth, Jones, Mark, McBeth K., Mark, 2011. Policy narratives and policy processes. *Policy Stud. J.* 39, 535–561.
- Sotirov, Metodi, Memmler, Michael, 2012. The advocacy coalition framework in natural resource policy studies—recent experiences and further prospects. *For. Policy Econom.* 16, 51–64.
- TPB (Town Planning Board of HKSAR) 2011. “Minutes of 979th Meeting of the Town Planning Board held on 8.4.2011” The Government of Hong Kong SAR (https://www.info.gov.hk/tpb/en/meetings/TPB/Minutes/m979tpb_e.pdf).
- TPB (Town Planning Board of HKSAR), 2013. “Minutes of 1047th Meeting of the Town Planning Board held on 6.12.2013” The Government of Hong Kong SAR.
- TPB (Town Planning Board of HKSAR), 2014. “Draft Lai Chi Wo, Siu Tan and Sam A Tsuen Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-LCW/C Preliminary Consideration of a New Plan” The Government of Hong Kong SAR.
- TPB (Town Planning Board of HKSAR), 2014. “Minutes of 1057th Meeting of the Town Planning Board 2014” The Government of Hong Kong SAR.
- United Nations Development Programme. 2013. *Community-Based Sustainable Land Management: Best Practices in Drylands from the Equator Initiative*. New York, NY: UNDP.
- Takeuchi, K, 2010. Rebuilding the relationship between people and nature: the Satoyama Initiative. *Ecological research* 25 (5), 891–897.
- Weible M, Christopher, 2008. Expert-Based Information and Policy Subsystems: A Review and Synthesis. *Policy Studies Journal*. *Policy Studies Journal* 36 (4), 615–635.
- Weible M, Christopher, Jenkins-Smith, Hank, 2016. The advocacy coalition framework: An approach for the comparative analysis of contentious policy issues. *Contemporary approaches to public policy*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Weible, Christopher, Nohrstedt, Daniel, 2013. The advocacy coalition framework: coalitions, learning and policy change. In: Eduardo, Aralar, Fritzen, Scott, Howlett, Michael, Ramesh, M., Wu., Xun (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*. Routledge, London, New York, pp. 125–137.
- Weible, Christopher M., Sabatier, Paul A., 2009a. Coalitions, science, and belief change: comparing 40 adversarial and collaborative policy subsystems. *Policy Stud. J.* 37 (2), 195–212.
- Weible, Christopher M., Sabatier A., Paul, McQueen, Kelly, 2009b. Themes and variations: taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Stud. J.* 37, 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00299.x>.
- Weible, Christopher M., Sabatier, Paul A., McQueen, Kelly, 2009c. Themes and variations: taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework. *Policy Stud. J.* 37 (1), 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00299.x>.
- Weible, Christopher M., Siddiki, Saba N., Pierce, Jonathan J., 2011. Foes to friends: changing contexts and changing intergroup perceptions. *J. Compar. Policy Anal. Res.* Pr. 13 (5), 499–525.
- Williams, Jessica M., Chu, Vivian, Lam, Wai-Fung, Law., Winnie W.Y., 2021. *Revitalising Rural Communities*. Springer Briefs on Case Studies of Sustainable Development. Springer, Singapore.
- Wong, Olga and Ernest Kao, 2015. “Lai Chi Wo enclave sets pace for revival of Hong Kong villages – but need to ease regulations is apparent” *South China Morning Post* 22nd June (<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/1824699/lai-chi-wo-enclave-sets-pace-revival-hong-kong-villages>).
- WWF. 2014. *Fixing the Holes: The need to repair Hong Kong's country park system*. Country Park Enclaves Investigation Report. WWF Report.
- Woods, Michael, 2011. *Rural Geography: Processes, Responses and Experiences in Rural Restructuring*. SAGE Publications, London.
- Yokohari, M, Bolthouse, I, 2011. Keep it alive, don't freeze it: a conceptual perspective on the conservation of continuously evolving satoyama landscapes. *Landscape and Ecological Engineering*, 7 (2), 207–216.
- Zhou, Xiaoping, Li, Xiaotian, Kong, Wei Song Xiangbin, Lu, Xiao, 2021. Farmland transition in China: an advocacy coalition approach. *Land* 10, 122.
- Planning Department Land Utilization in Hong Kong 2020, 2021–. (Accessed 1 June 2022).
- The Electoral Affairs Commission of HKSAR A List of Existing village, Indigenous Village, Composite Indigenous Village and Market Town, 2014–. (Accessed 23 October 2020).
- Green Sense Tai Po Green Belt, over 10 years violation of the original use for open storage & construction waste storage, 2016–. (Accessed 1 June 2022).