

# Understanding and managing water transitions: a policy science perspective

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# Objectives/ questions

## Objectives:

- To gain a better understanding of the role of agency in water transitions
- To help transition managers in developing successful strategies

## Questions:

- How to account for water transitions?
- What strategies may agents use to realize water transitions?
- What strategies may be used to block or hinder transitions?

# Transitions $\leftrightarrow$ Policy change?

- Policy science perspective
- Focus on government policies
- Focus on national level
- Transition = major policy change

# Major policy change

- Change at the level of overarching goals (Hall)
- Large scale departures from the past: new issue definitions or policy images (Baumgartner and Jones)
- A new policy path (North, Pierson)
- New policy core beliefs (Sabatier)

# Policy change: the role of ideas

New (competing) value priorities, problem perceptions, and policy preferences

- Policy belief system (Sabatier)
- Policy image (Baumgartner and Jones)
- Policy frame (Schön and Rein)
- Policy discourse (Hajer)
- Policy theory (Hoogerwerf)

# Policy change: the role of agency

Ideas have to be developed, articulated and inserted into the political debate

- Social movements (Benford and Snow)
- Advocacy coalitions (Baumgartner and Jones)
- Epistemic communities (Haas)
- Shadow networks (Olsson)

# Policy change: opportunities

Agents need opportunities to get accepted their ideas

- Windows of opportunity (Kingdon)
- Focusing events (Birkland)
- Opportunity structures/ multiple venues (Baumgartner and Jones)
- Focusing projects (Lowry)

# Strategies of transition management

1. Develop new ideas
2. Build coalitions and sell ideas
3. Recognize and exploit windows of opportunity
4. Recognize, exploit, create and/ or manipulate the multiple venues in modern societies
5. Orchestrate and manage networks



# Conclusions

- Rich variety of conceptualizations of policy stability and change
- Distinction between minor and major policy change
- Transitions are related to the emergence of new ideas;
  - which have to be carried by individuals or groups;
  - who have to exploit opportunities

# What is to be done (at least..)

- Further exploring the relationship between transitions and major policy change
- Empirical research on the role of agency in water transitions:
  - What types of agents are change agents?
  - Which (combination of ) strategies do they use?
  - In what order/ sequence are strategies used?
  - What skills do policy entrepreneurs need to be successful?