Air Transport Policy for Mauritius – The Way Forward

By N. P. Mootien

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Abstract - The dichotomy in policy making regarding the hotel industry and air transport, makes it imperative for the government to formulate clear policy processes in order to avoid conflicting situations among stakeholders. This paper looks at the various issues regarding policy theories and examines the various theories that have made their mark in other countries. It has often been contended that the national carrier, the hotel industry and government have often been looking in different directions instead of coming up with consistent policies common to all stakeholders where all could deploy efforts to consolidate the tourism industry and at the same time contribute to economic growth.

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Several policy theories are available namely Policy Network Analysis (PNA), Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Prospects Theory, Power Elites Theory and Community organization Theory among others. Most of the above are analyzed and compared and the two theories that come close are the PNA and ACF with a preference for the latter for various reasons developed in the paper. Governments have to pay considerable attention to new policies in the implementation of an open sky policy and must assess its impacts so as to 'protect' their respective national carriers.

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I. Introduction

For almost half a century now, the Mauritian tourism industry has gradually developed in to one of the main pillars of the economy. The industry provides employment, foreign currency and 'spill over effects' and the multiplier effects characteristic of a buoyant economy. As a major tourist receiving country of this part of the world, it has one serious drawback which is distance from its main markets. Most of the tourists generating countries for its market are found mostly in
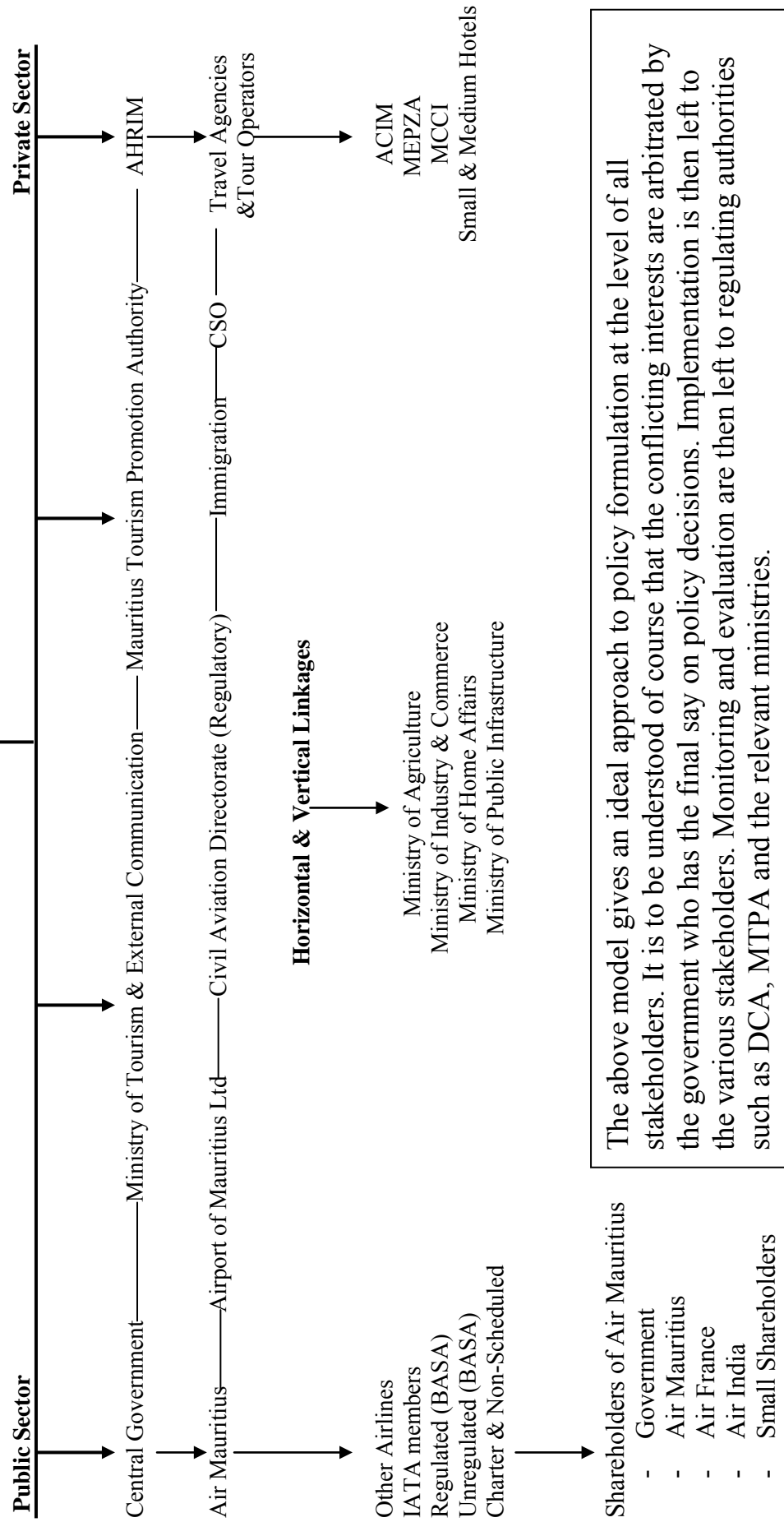
Europe: France, UK, Germany and Italy among others. One of the main issues because of distance is getting the markets to the destination. This poses a serious disadvantage that in turn gives its competitors in Europe a competitive edge. Such competitors, namely Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy together with North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria) puts Mauritius in an unfair situation where most of the travels to and from the country are termed long-haul journeys as opposed to the short-haul provided by its competitors.

One of the main issues to consider in this case is air transport and the main stakeholders are the national flag carrier, Air Mauritius and other airlines that have been given the various freedoms of the air on the basis of bilateral agreements and code sharing facilities. Another serious group of stakeholders for tourism development is inevitably the hotel industry. Air travel and hotel accommodation are obviously the two major components of this industry. There has been, however, a dichotomy in the national and government approach. Until the beginning of this century, the national airline has been enjoying a situation of quasi monopoly with a few bilateral agreements that made economic sense at that time. Hoteliers used to complain that the national airline does not offer enough flights, hence not enough seats, to and from their markets. The national airline used to oppose this argument by saying that there are not enough hotel rooms to satisfy the demand.

Based on this, government who has the upper hand on major policy decisions has had to intervene and this paper looks at the policy approach of the government and makes proposals how the making and implementation of policies could be determinant. Various policy theories are examined with a view to see what are more appropriate in order to have win/win a situation for all stakeholders concerned.

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Aviation Policy Process Model

Public Sector   **Private Sector**

Tourism Policy Formulation

Ministry of Tourism & External Communication —— Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority —— AHRIM

Immigration —— CSO —— Travel Agencies & Tour Operators

—— ACIM
MEPZA
MCCI
Small & Medium Hotels

Central Government —— Ministry of Tourism & External Communication

Air Mauritius —— Airport of Mauritius Ltd —— Civil Aviation Directorate (Regulatory)

Horizontal & Vertical Linkages

Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Industry & Commerce
Ministry of Home Affairs
Ministry of Public Infrastructure

Other Airlines
IATA members
Regulated (BASA)
Unregulated (BASA)
Charter & Non-Scheduled

Shareholders of Air Mauritius
-   Government
-   Air Mauritius
-   Air France
-   Air India
-   Small Shareholders

The above model gives an ideal approach to policy formulation at the level of all stakeholders. It is to be understood of course that the conflicting interests are arbitrated by the government who has the final say on policy decisions. Implementation is then left to the various stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation are then left to regulating authorities such as DCA, MTPA and the relevant ministries.

II. Air Transport Policy Process Based on Some of the Existing Policy Theories

Understanding causal influence is difficult in the best of circumstances for any activity: it is an especially complex task to assess the impact and role of research on public policy-making. Such assessments are difficult, first, because of the intrinsic nature of research and related activities and second, the goal is to achieve influence in dynamic processes with a multiplicity of actors. It is for these reasons that we have to find some already established policy theories and examine their relevance to our topic and come up with some hypotheses which can eventually be tested. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to survey the academic literature pertinent to our topic and develop a conceptual framework that will guide us in the evaluation of the policy theory and its implementation. Forming such a framework requires a wide ranging view of several analytical approaches which includes knowledge utilization, policy communities and networks, policy-oriented learning, conflict and agenda setting. It is necessary here to note that very often there is a gap between policy researchers' findings and policy makers' tasks. According to Lindquist and Weiss (2003) "it seems logical to suggest that public policies would be better constructed if policy-makers had access to the best research. Yet all too often, researchers and policymakers inhabit separate spheres – the work of the two does not connect."

This paper therefore takes stock of some of the various policy theories propounded and expounded. It also gives an overview of the ACF as it is and how it has been used by researches and scholars over the decades. It finally summarises and draws lessons from past application that could also be applied to the policy process in the aviation industry.

Some hypotheses will be formulated in order to test the theory applicability to the industry and in the policy making process.

The relationship between social scientists and policy makers was explicitly depicted as 'knowledge utilisation' (Lindquist, 2001; Weiss, 1977). The initial function of policy process was to depict, explore and explain the distance between two communities: one comprised of social scientists (the "knowledge producers') and the other (the 'knowledge-consumers'), each with different, though not necessarily unrelated, overarching values and cultures. However, Lindquist (1990) was more discerning in identifying a 'third community' of organisations inside and outside government neither comprised of policy-makers nor committed fully to social science research per se, but rather sharing a commitment to producing policy-relevant data, research or analysis, even though they might be located in the government or private sector, work for and target different audiences, and have varying degrees of willingness to put inquiry in the public domain. According to Lindquist (1990) delineating policy communities is essential for addressing the complexity of policy-making systems, but an important question concerns how this approach, which was developed to make sense of processes in large developed countries, can also be applied in different contexts in developing countries and eventually in more specific domains like aviation.

In her "pathways for Change", Sarah Stachowiak (2007) selected six theories to explain how policy change happens. She classified them as Global Theories and Theories about Advocacy Strategies or Tactics.

<u>Global Theories</u>

1. **'Large Leaps'** or Punctuated Equilibrium Theory
2. **'Coalition'** Theory or Advocacy Coalition Framework
3. **'Policy Windows'** or Agenda Setting

<u>Theories about Advocacy Strategies or Tactics</u>

4. **'Messaging and Frameworks'** Theory

5. **'Power Politics'** or Power Elites Theory

6. **'Grassroots'** or Community organizing Theory

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III.   Summary of the Six Theories

Global Theories

Theory (Key Authors)	Discipline	How Change Happens	The theory may be useful when:	Limitations of the Theories
1.'Large Leaps' or punctuated Equilibrium Theory (Baumgartner, Jones)	Political Science	Like seismic evolutionary shifts, significant changes in policy and institutions cab occur when the right conditions are in place.	- Large-scale policy change is the primary goal - Strong capacity for media advocacy exists	While these conditions Can set up the environment in which large-scale can occur, they do not predict or guarantee it. May not result in policy change. Change is not incremental (Baumgarten and Jones)
2.'Coalition' Theory or Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, Jenkins-Smith)	Political Science	Policy change happens through coordinated activity among a range of individuals through coordinated activity& with the same core policy beliefs	- A sympathetic administration is in office - A strong group of allies with a common goal is in place or can be formed	Policies are unlikely to change unless (i) the group supporting the status quo is no longer in power; (ii) change is imposed by a hierarchically superior jurisdiction. (Stachiowiak)
3.'Policy Windows' or Agenda Setting (Kingdon)	Political Science	Policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates successfully connect two or more components of the policy process: the way a problem is defined, the policy solution to the problem or the political climate surrounding their issue.	- Multiple policy streams can be addressed simultaneously (problem definition, policy solutions, and/or political climate) - Internal capacity exists to create, identify, and act on policy windows	Policy options need to be seen as technically viable and consistent with policymakers and public values. Advocates must possess knowledge, time, relationship and good reputations. To be placed on the policy agenda, at least at least two 'streams' need to converge at critical moments or 'policy windows' (Kingdon)

Theories related to Strategies or Tactics

Theory (Key Authors)	Discipline	How Change Happens	The theory may be useful when:	Limitations of the Theories
4.'Messaging and Frameworks or Prospect Theory (Tversky and Kahneman)	Psychology	Individuals' policy preferences or willingness to accept them will vary depending on how options are framed or presented.	- The issue needs to be redefined as part of a larger campaign or effort - A key focus of the work is on increasing awareness, agreement on problem definition or an issue's salience	Decision making can be inconsistent. People may make choices that are less beneficial to themselves or riskier than might be expected based on how information is presented. (Tversky and Kahneman)
5. 'Power Politics' or Power Elites Theory (C. Wright		Policy change is made by working directly with those with power to	- One or more key allies is in place - The focus is on	Advocacy efforts are focused on the few, not the many. The power to influence policy is

Mills, Domhoff)	Sociology	make decisions or influence decision making	incremental policy change (e.g. administrative or rule changes)	concentrated in the hands of a few. Limited to certain specific classes of the social stratum.
6. 'Grassroots' or Community organizing Theory (Alinsky, Biklen)	Social Psychology	Policy change is made through collective action by members of the community who work on changing problems affecting their lives.	- A distinct group of individuals is directly affected by an issue - The advocacy organisation and is willing to play a 'convener' or 'capacity-builder' role rather than the 'driver' role	Requires mass commitment to change; can only address issues affecting large groups; limited to certain specific areas of policymaking involving issues common to collective groups.

IV. ADAPTED FROM SARAH STACHIOWIAK (2007)

a) Policy Options

Apart from the above six theories due consideration is given to other policy theories namely:

All the policies have their strengths and limitations. Some of the theories are applicable to some extent but not for the long term. It is difficult to adopt one single policy theory and apply it 'stock and barrel' to any situation. It is also not very convenient and appropriate to apply the theories in a piece-meal or a fragmented way. The policy which is suitable for the topic is the ACF which was developed to study policy change over the long term (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Modern policy problems are complex and no state agency has the resources to address issues singlehandedly: they are dependent upon the cooperation and resources of other actors. This is the core analytical device in most policy theories and even more so in Policy Network analysis and Advocacy Coalition Framework.

b) Policy Network Analysis

In the PNA it is assumed that the policymaking sectorised and takes place within networks of public and private policy actors (Smith, 2000) Apart from ACF, this is the closest policy theory to the air transport policy issues raised in this project. Smith (2000) makes a comparison between PNA and ACF and points out that both frameworks emphasize the importance of inter-organisational relationships within policy sectors (John 1998) although the bases for these relationships are conceptually different. Smith (1999) also holds that the ACF was developed to study policy change over the long term, and to include technical knowledge and policy-oriented learning in the process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith,1993). Because of the multiplicity of actors and complexities of policy-making in fragmented areas (in this case aviation), Lindquist (2001) recommends the ACF as an ideal approach to policy-making. According to him " rather than focus on structures and relative capacities, Sabatier and his colleagues have sought to comprehend policy communities in terms of beliefs and values, and to model important structures – advocacy coalitions – as flowing from the bonds and relationships of actors who share values and beliefs. These coalitions, which may be tightly or loosely coupled, are comprised of government agencies, interest groups, associations, think tanks, academics, university research centres, journalists and prominent individuals who more or less share common world views and generally agree on policy solutions." He went on to say that "Sabatier predicts that two to four advocacy coalitions can be found in every policy community, with one emerging as the dominant coalition controlling the important levers of power. The difference, however, between his notion of the dominant coalition and Pross' subgovernment is that the former also includes actors located in the attentive public (Italics from Lindquist). Thus, certain think tanks and academics, for example, will have greater currency when like-minded individuals assume positions of importance in the central institutions controlled by the dominant coalition, whether they be local, national or international organisations."

c) The Advocacy Coalition Framework

One of the policy process framework that has been developed to simplify the complexity of public policy is the ACF. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988) initially introduced the ACF as a symposium issue for Policy Sciences. They recognize that there was a gap to be filled by the creation of the ACF as there were at least three limitations in the policy process literature. Lindquist (2001) emphasizes that there has been a movement from 'policy communities to policy networks'. According to him "rather than focus on structures and relative capacities, Sabatier and his colleagues have sought to comprehend policy communities in terms of beliefs and values, and to model important structures – advocacy coalitions – as flowing from the bonds and relationships of actors who share similar values. These coalitions, which may be tightly or loosely coupled, are comprised of government agencies, interest groups, associations, thinks tanks, academics, university research centres, journalists and prominent individuals who more or less

share the common world views and generally agree on policy solutions."

The ACF developed by Paul Sabatier is generally considered as one of the most promising theories of policy process. Parsons (1995), Eberg (1997), Schlager (1995) and Grin and Hope (1997) have all emphasized the remarkable contribution and relevance of this theory to policymaking and process. The framework considers policy change as the result of learning processes within and between advocacy coalitions (Fenger and Klok 2001)

The following is the process and requirement:

Policy is conceived within a subsystem of advocacy coalitions

Policy subsystems must be identified empirically

Advocacy coalitions compete to influence policy brokers

Analysis emphasizes belief systems

Policy outcomes are influenced by competition between advocacy coalitions

Exogenous factors realign beliefs and generate change

The final dominant belief becomes a source of stability

In brief, ACF is a policy process framework that has been developed to simplify the complexity of public policy. ACF has been applied to various substantive topics and areas of development. The application of ACF to air transport policy is almost non-existent. This project will therefore endeavour to apply ACF to changes in policy making within Air Mauritius, the national airline of Mauritius as a small island state.

d) The Ambivalence of PNA and ACF

In PNA, it is assumed that policy making is sectorised and takes place within networks of public and private policy actors. Each policy network ordinarily includes the relevant sectoral government department (Smith 2000). Structure is important in policy networks. PNA illustrates how some actors are denied a voice in policy processes by structural means (Marsh and Rhodes 1992). Power-dependency theory forms the heart of PNA (Rhodes 1986). According to Wilks and Wright (1987), the core analytical device in PNA is: "Each player's room for decisional manoeuvre on an issue is constrained by the material and intellectual resources available to him, appropriate to that issue and which he is prepared to use, and by those possessed by other players, who may perceive their interests differently" (pp 4-5).

The ACF was developed to study policy change over the long term and to include technical knowledge and policy-oriented learning in this process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). There is agreement that ACF supersedes PNA and is more of a corollary of the latter and this is supported by Smith (2000) and Dowding (1995). According to Smith (1993) in PNA, "exogenous factors alter actors' perceptions of reality such that it diverges markedly from the appreciative system of network. This divergence either forces changes in the policy network or creates opportunities for non-members to gain access to the political agenda. Such challenges, working at the level of beliefs about policy problems, have parallels with the ACF concept of policy change". Smith (2000) also raises some interesting questions regarding this issue: "It also problematises the utility of PNA for the study of policy change. If significant change does arise from factors outside policy networks, does this mean that PNA can only shed light on the response of actors already involved in a policy sector? Does this mean this particular analytical lens cannot bring the entire policy process in to focus?"

Whereas PNA stresses the role of resources in structuring an actor's proximity to policy making, the ACF emphasizes belief systems and policy-oriented learning. The essential premise of the ACF is that policymaking occurs in a policy subsystem inhabited by several multiactor advocacy coalitions which compete to influence policy in line with the policy beliefs which bind each coalition together (Sabatier 1998). The ACF seeks to explain policy change by identifying the source of the beliefs supporting that change […]The ACF conceives policy change as a relatively open and competitive process between belief systems […] It stresses agency over structure in explanations of change (Smith 2000). Moreover according to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) "the ACF holds that a crisis may provide an opportunity for major policy change but assumes it needs to be skillfully exploited by proponents of change in order to have any effect (p. 148).

e) Limitations of the ACF

The first limitation was their interpretation of the stages heuristic as an inadequate causal theory of the policy process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, pp. 1-4). The second was in response to a decade-long debate about the strengths and weaknesses of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation research and the need for system-based theories of policy making (Sabatier, 1986). The third was the apparent lack of theory and research on the role of scientific and technical information in the policy process (Jenkins-Smith, 1990; Sabatier, 1988). As a response, the ACF was created as a system-based model that integrates most of the stages of the policy cycle, incorporates aspects of both the top-down and bottom-up approached to implementation studies and places scientific and technical information in a central position in many of its hypotheses.

Moreover, Fenger and Klok (2001) also argues that "there is no attempt to account for how actors with certain policy beliefs systems develop and maintain these advocacy coalitions." They further point out that "from the literature on interorganisational relations and policy networks […] the extent and structure of

interdependencies between actors are important determinants of the behaviour of the actors in interorganisational relations. Differences in interdependencies are supposed to lead to different types of interorganisational arrangements (Marin and Mayntz 1991)".
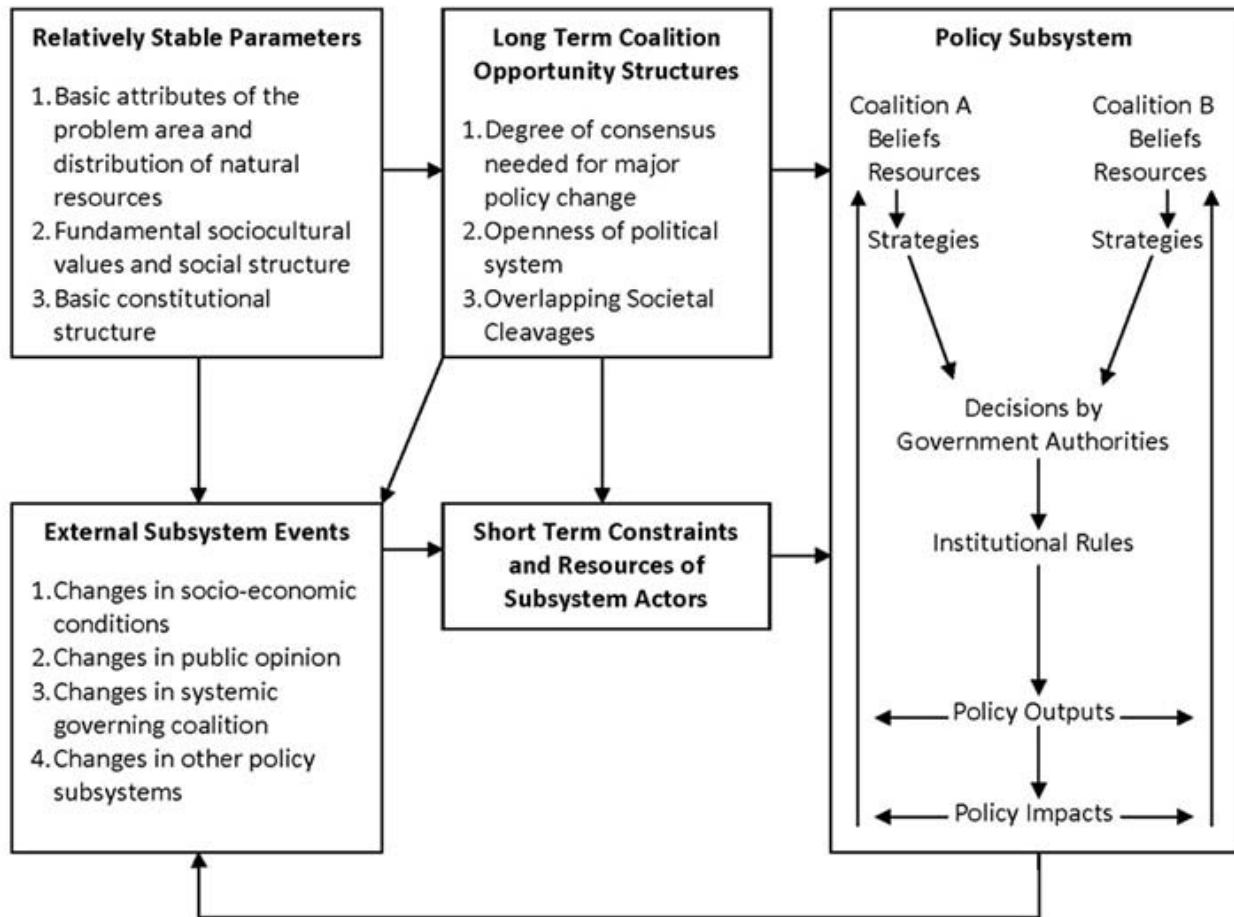
Advocacy Coalition Framework (adapted from Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1988)

The Advocacy Coalition Framework, developed by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith and sometimes also known as the 'Coalition theory', proposes that individuals have core beliefs about policy areas, including a problem's seriousness, its causes, society's ability to solve the problem and promising solutions for addressing it. Advocates who use this theory believe that policy change happens through coordinated activity among individuals with the same core policy beliefs.

There are some underlying assumptions:

- Coalitions are held together by agreement over core beliefs about policies. Secondary beliefs are less critical to alignment (e.g. administrative rules, budgetary allocations, statutory revisions).
- Because individuals and groups already share the same core policy beliefs, coalitions can have diverse members but effectively coordinate because of reduced 'costs' (e.g. time, need to reach common understandings).
- Policy core beliefs are resistant to change.

- Policy Core Beliefs are unlikely to change unless:
- Major external events such as changes in socioeconomic conditions or public opinion are skillfully exploited by proponents of change.
- New learning about a policy surfaces across coalitions that changes views about it.
- Policies are unlikely to change unless:
- The group supporting the status quo is no longer in power
- Change is imposed by a hierarchically superior jurisdiction

Application to advocacy:

- Promising strategies include :
- Influencing like-minded decision makers to make policy changes
- Changing incumbents in various positions of power
- Affecting public opinion via mass media

- Altering decision maker's behaviour through demonstrations and boycotts

- Changing perceptions about policies through research and information exchange

• Coalitions typically will explore and pursue multiple avenues for change (e.g. engaging in legal advocacy and changing public opinion), often simultaneously, to find a route that will bear fruit

• Coalitions should identify and reach out to diverse groups with similar core policy beliefs (e.g. unlikely allies).

According to Karin Ingold (2009), the framework rotates around three main factors:

The political subsystem

Competition of Coalitions

Convergence/divergence structures lead to coalitions: pro-change coalition, status quo coalitions. Members of advocacy coalitions improve their understanding of the process in order to adapt their policy preferences

According to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999), the ACF is based on five premises:

• That theories of the policy process need to address the role of technical information

• That the time period under study should be no less than a decade

• That the unit analysis should be a policy subsystem

• That the concept of actors in policy processes should be broadened to include journalists, researchers, policy analysts and actors at all levels of government active in the process – and not restricted to actors such as administrative agencies, legislative committees and interest groups

• That public policies can be conceptualized in much the same way as belief systems, which can be divided into three different categories: a deep core, a policy core and secondary aspects.
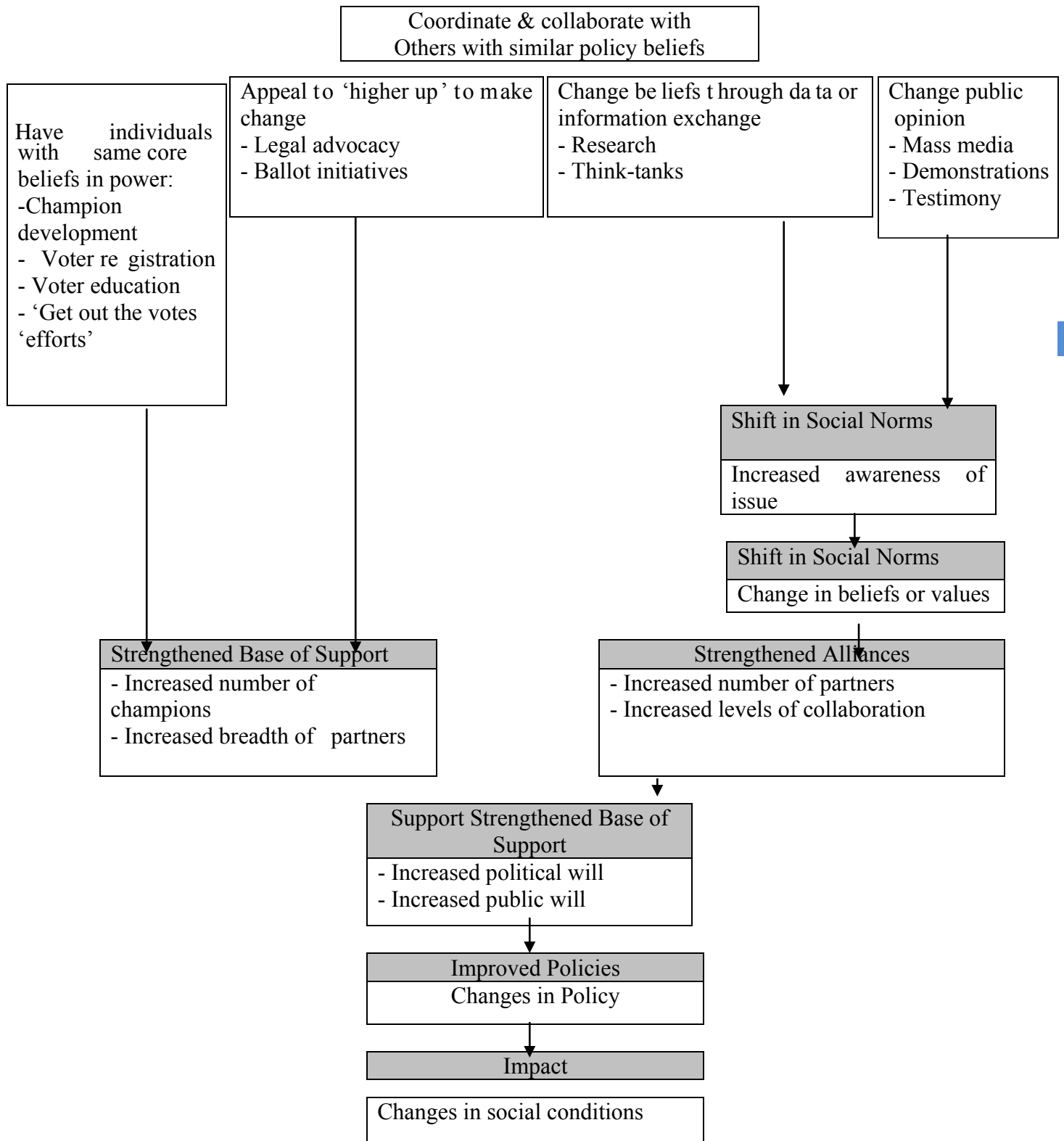
f) Belief System

The belief system makes coalitions hold together and builds the basis for their coordination and internal organisation. This involves policy core and secondary aspects. Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework provides one of the most influential understandings of policy learning (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993). The framework suggests that actors choose their coalition allies based on the proximity of core policy beliefs (Leach and Sabatier 2005). In any issue area - a subsystem in the framework's terminology – actors should divide themselves in at least two adversarial advocacy coalitions competing for the realization of conflicting core beliefs. The framework hypothesizes that members of competing advocacy coalitions rarely interact with each other and carefully filter incoming information and evidence: "The result is a 'dialogue of the deaf' in which members of different coalitions talk pass each other". (Sabatier and Zafonte 2001:1156). As underlined by critics, Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework is closer to a non-learning model (Fisher 2003). In fact, framework's prediction regarding policy learning is consistent with recent research suggesting that people dislike political debates (Hibbing and Theis-Morse 2002). According to Mutz (2006), citizens prefer avoiding politics rather then advocating ideas fellow citizens might dislike. Therefore, face-to-face deliberations among people who hold different views would occur rarely.

The advocacy coalition framework, however, acknowledges that in some subsystems members of competing coalitions can be attracted by the same reputed professional fora. When face-to-face meetings between members of competing coalitions occur in these fora, learning is encouraged, engendering alterations in the thoughts of participants. However, empirical tests of the advocacy coalition framework have provided more evidence of adversarial relationships than evidence of learning between coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999).

Advocacy Coalition Framework – the Theory of Change

Coordinate & collaborate with Others with similar policy beliefs

Have individuals with same core beliefs in power: -Champion development - Voter re gistration - Voter education - 'Get out the votes 'efforts'	Appeal to 'higher up' to m ake change - Legal advocacy - Ballot initiatives	Change be liefs t hrough da ta or information exchange - Research - Think-tanks	Change public opinion - Mass media - Demonstrations - Testimony

Shift in Social Norms
Increased awareness of issue

Shift in Social Norms
Change in beliefs or values

Strengthened Base of Support
- Increased number of champions
- Increased breadth of partners

Strengthened Alliances
- Increased number of partners
- Increased levels of collaboration

Support Strengthened Base of Support
- Increased political will
- Increased public will

Improved Policies
Changes in Policy

Impact
Changes in social conditions

Adapted from Sarah Stachowiak (2007)

Application of ACF to the Air Transport Industry

Explanatory Factor	Advocacy Coalitions	Outcome
Unit of analysis	Policy is conceived within A subsystem of advocacy Coalitions	A low level policy team is subject to higher level intervention
Methodology	Policy subsystems must be Identified empirically	Some policy actors come and go with varying effects and from outside the policy networks. Nonetheless, a core network of actors persists throughout
Policy mechanism	Advocacy coalitions compete to Influence policy brokers	Pressure for change from various interest groups and stakeholders. Continued importance of policy-community and members' influence. They mediate and interpret external factors
Core analytical device	Analysis emphasizes belief systems	Although different beliefs exist about good regulation exist, the distribution and relevance of resources influences practice
Determining influence On outcomes	Policy outcomes are influenced by competition between advocacy Coalitions	The beliefs of politically resourced actors influence high level policy change although policy outcome has ultimately been shaped by an unchanged regulator - industry resource interdependency in the implementation phase
Sources of significant change	Exogenous factors realign beliefs and generate change	Policy change is driven by external factors, though the policy community has been able to shape change
Sources of stability	A dominant belief system	Stability returned primarily because of a continued resource interdependency and a return to belief in the benefit of closer cooperation has followed

Adapted from Smith (2000)

g) Criticisms of the ACF

The ACF has been criticized for neglecting the mechanisms behind major policy change (Mindtrom and Vergari, 1996). But Sabatier (1998) contends that the ACF's response, however, is to evoke a list of exogenous factors: socioeconomic change, changes in public opinion, change in government, authoritative intervention and impacts arising from other political subsystems. There are a number of ways in which exogenous factors lead to such a change. First, the exogenous factor is exploited by a minority coalition such that it replaces the dominant coalition. Second, a minor coalition, strengthened by new exogenous conditions, creates a successful coalition of convenience with other groups. Third, an exogenous policy sovereign (for example, the European Union) commands the dominant coalition to change policy. Fourth, all coalitions recognise that the current situation is untenable and negotiate a compromise (Sabatier, 1998). In their latest review, Weible, Sabatier and

McQueen (2009) brings up one limitation of the ACF mentioned by an anonymous referee who described an earlier version as "self-indulgent and inward-focusd" and who also argued that reviews of this kind "are commonly seen as characteristics of disciplines that are running low on ideas, relevance or intellectual energy". The authors agree that "this essay (2009) is inward focused by deliberately taking stock of existing ACF applications in hopes of identifying future directions". They also argue that "gleaning lessons from comprehensive reviews is probably one of the best ways to move forward with any theory or framework". But they disagreed that "the ACF literature is short on ideas, relevance or intellectual energy. Indeed, the [review essay (2009)] shows that the ACF literature continues to expand in applications in diverse geographical and topical areas and to provide a useful lens – especially in conjunction with other theories and frameworks – for explaining the policy process".

h) Possible Hypotheses for Testing

1. Significant perturbations external to the subsystem (e.g. changes in socio-economic conditions, public opinion, system-wide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems) are necessary but not sufficient, cause of change in the policy core attributes of a governmental programme.

2. On major controversies within a policy subsystem when policy core beliefs are in dispute, the lineup of allies and opponents tends to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so.

3. Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there exixts a forum which is: (i) prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate; and (ii) dominated by professional norms.

4. The policy core attributes of a governmental programme in a specific jurisdiction will not be significantly revised as long as the subsystem advocacy coalition that instituted the programme remains in power within that jurisdiction – except when the change is imposed by a hierarchically superior jurisdiction.

5. Actors who share (policy core) beliefs are more likely to engage in short-term coordination if they: (i) interact repeatedly; (ii) experience relatively low information costs; and (iii) believe that there are policies that, while not affecting each actor similar ways, at least treat each fairly. (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009).

6. Actors who share beliefs are more likely to engage in at least minimal level of collective action (i.e agree upon a definition of the problem and structure of policies to address the problem) if they interact repeatedly, experience relatively low information costs, and believe that there are policies that , while not affecting each actor in similar ways, at least treat each fairly (Schlager 1995)

7. Coalition are more likely to persist if: (i) the major beneficiaries of the benefits that a coalition produces are clearly identified and are members of the coalition, (ii) the benefits received by coalition members are related to the costs that such member bear in maintaining the coalition, and (iii) members monitor each other's actions to ensure compliance with agreed upon strategies, resource contributions and cooperative and supportive activities (Schlager 1995).

i) Policy Theory for Aviation in Mauritius

It would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no actual policy as such regarding aviation in Mauritius. The Mauritian air transport industry has been allowed to grow as and when the various situations have required. Discussions with the ministry concerned revealed that at one point in time, there was talk about setting up an Air Policy Unit at the Ministry but nothing formal has happened yet. Nevertheless, one can safely say that although there is no formal policy or policy unit, there have been however over the decades following Independence which coincided more or less with the birth of Air Mauritius as a limited company, a whole set of major decisions that make the global policies of the Government. For many years, all interests, those of Air Mauritius, Government and the nation regarding air transport have converged to make Air Mauritius the national flag carrier. This explains the high level of protectionism enjoyed for decades by Air Mauritius which in an infancy stage was given all incentives to spread its wings. It is only recently, that is some three years ago that Air Mauritius has been called upon to face the harsh realities of free market and competition.

For the purpose of this paper, we will consider the various policy options available to Air Mauritius and the government in the eventuality that a policy unit is set up. The policy making process is a sequence of functional activities and has the following sequential components:

- Problem identification
- Agenda formation
- Evaluation & termination
- Modification & continuation of policies

This policy cycle remains a reasonably workable and insightful approach to the study and analysis of public policy making (Anderson 2005). A policy is also a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilise and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realise an objective or a purpose (Friedrich 2007). Policies emerge from policy demands. In response to such demands public officials make decisions that give content and directions to public

policy. These decisions may enact statutes, issue executive orders or edicts, promulgate administrative rules or make judicial interpretation of laws (Anderson 2005).

j)   Categories of public policies
i.   *Substantive and procedural policies*

Sunstantive policies involve what the government will do such as construction of airports, extension of runways, opening the sky to other airlines among other things. Such policies directly allocate advantages and disadvantages, benefits and costs to people. Procedural policies, in contrast, pertain to which course of action to take, how things are to be done and who will do them.

ii.   *Distributive & Regulatory policies*

Distributive policies involve allocation of services and benefits to particular segments of the population – individuals, groups, corporations and communities. Regulatory policies impose restrictions or limitations on the behaviour of individuals or groups:

The Application of the ACF to the Mauritian Context with Emphasis on Air Mauritius

Potential Factors Influencing Air Transport Policy Processes

Political systems and political structure
Political Parties
Governments
Economic set-up
Pressure Groups – Consumerism, environmentalists,
Technology
International economic changes – oil prices, recession
Local economies – inflation, economic growth
Social forces – unions, customers, press
Market Developments
Conflicts
Interest Groups
Exogenous and endogenous factors
Policy changes are caused by external factors or by processes within the national subsystem.

k)   Political Systems and political structure

Political systems and structures very often determine the air transport systems for a country. Depending on the system in force and the legislation body, aviation like any other business is tributary of the laws passed by governments. In a democratic system of government based on a multiparty system of government, aviation laws and policies can be determined by parliament which is the legislative body and implemented by the government and its cabinet of ministers which make the executive. There is a separation of powers among the three main forces of administration of a democratic set-up: the Legislative (the National Assembly), the Executive (Government and

the Cabinet) and the Judiciary (courts and judges). The latter is the last resort for judiciable people who are dissatisfied with the laws and the executive arms of the laws. A company, in this case an airline, has 'legal personality'. In other words, it has full consideration as a 'person' in a court of law. It is understood that such democratic system is based on a multi-party system. This is the case of Mauritius.

Other political systems and types of government may have different ways of determining and implementing laws and policies regarding business in general and aviation in particular. Other such systems would be a one party system (some African and Asian countries - Libya, Burma, or an executive monarchy - Morocco, Jordan or an autocratic or communist system – North Korea, Cuba.

l)   Political Parties

In a multiparty parliamentary system, political parties are often very vociferous about their opinions and say inside and outside parliament. Laws and policies are 'voted' or vetoed depending on how powerful the government of the day is. This situation is also influenced by the number of parties and the strength of the majority in the house. Political parties can make a difference in policy formulation and implementation especially if such policies are based of laws passed in parliament. However, it is fair to point out that an airline operating as a business entity may not always be subject to such laws unless they have a national bearing and involve other issues such as civil aviation laws and security or other such matters of national interest.

m)   Governments

In Mauritius government makes national policies but has an upper hand in the formulation of policies for Air Mauritius as a flag carrier. Government being the majority shareholder makes it difficult for Air Mauritius to have a free hand in policy matters. By and larger, there is a tendency for government to act as the sole policymaker and to treat Air Mauritius a mere operator. This has been made very clear by the present government. We will see later why this approach has been more of a hindrance for Air Mauritius due to the fact that the interests of both parties are not always convergent.

n)   The Economic Systems

The economic set-up also determines the types of aviation policies and laws of a country. It is understood that in a free economy, there is generally but not necessarily, a situation of competition among airlines. This has been the case for most countries of Europe and the United States although there has also been some form of protectionism. It is the attempts at removing protectionism that let to the deregulation and liberalization of the air transport industry. In a state

economy, government usually decides on policies form a national perspective and very often in a unilateral way. This has been the case for the former communist countries and may still be the case for few countries. In the case of a mixed economy like Mauritius, for many years protectionism in favour or the national airline has been the order of the day. It is only over the past five years that the government decided to embark on a process of liberalization commonly known as the open-sky policy.

o) *Pressure Groups*

These are groups among civil society that can have a positive or negative influence on policymakers and policies. These are normally consumer protection organisations, environmentalists and other interest groups that may have diverse opinions on matters of national or regional policies. NGOs are also quite prominent in their attempts to veto government policies. In many countries, Aviation has been a direct target especially in issues such as fares, service levels, government investments and ecology and Mauritius and its airline has been no exception. Admittedly, such pressure groups have been more vociferous in Europe and the United States on issues such as extension of airports and runways, carbon emission and noise pollution near airports among others.

p) *Technology*

Over the decades, aircraft technology and new developments have had an important bearing on government and airlines' policies regarding the following issues: better performing and more fuel efficient equipment, larger and more spacious aircrafts, more environment friendly equipment, private and government investments in such equipment. Because of the changing needs of travelers, it is more and more necessary for countries and private airline companies to have a new approach to investment based on aircraft ownership or lease agreement. However, the other side of the coin is that as a result of the acquisition of new equipment by western governments and airlines, more and more aircrafts are becoming obsolete and no longer meet the EU's stringent requirements regarding carbon emission and aircraft noise. These aircrafts are now being dumped on the market of developing countries on the basis of dry lease or even wet lease agreements. The purchase of equipment represents a very large capital outlay for airlines.

q) *International Economic Changes – the macro economy*

Globalization of the economy has made the counties more interdependent and changes in one part of the world have an effect on other parts. The recent economic downturn has spread like wild fire from the United States across Europe and Asia and at the same time hitting the countries down south. Because of

international linkages and interdependency of the economies and the monetary systems, it is imperative for private operators and governments to take in to account major changes from a macro economic perspective. International trade and exchanges dictate policies because airlines will fly where the business is. Such businesses include passenger and cargo traffic.

Two of the major issues that have hit the airlines are the rising oil prices and the recession. In taking these two factors in to account, Air Mauritius has had to review all its operational and investment policies.

r) *The Local Economy – the micro economy*

From a micro-economic perspective, it is obvious that changes locally will affect policy issues. Inflation for instance will affect fares and oil prices. Exchange rate will also have important effects as well as rates of interests. Exchange rate will determine the ability of countries to purchase equipment in hard currency. The higher he rate of exchange against the local currency, the more expensive the equipment and vice versa. It is a truism that hard currencies have almost no parity against the local currencies of developing countries. The monetary policies of these countries are also a determinant factor in such policymaking processes.

s) *Social forces – unions, customers, press*

Apart form the fact that equipment represents a very large capital outlay, the next big component of operational costs is the personnel cost. Since employment in airlines is still considered as high profile and glamorous, salaries in comparison to other sectors of employment are among the highest for all ranks of employees. Pilots for instance are among the highest paid employees in the world. Moreover airlines have to keep up with their traditional image of glamour and excellent service and this has a cost. Apart from salaries there are many hidden costs: Design uniforms, training, 24-hour insurance, stipends and per diem allowances while in transit, transport from place of residence to the place of work or the airports and back home, full board and hotel accommodation while in transit etc. All this makes the operational costs very prohibitive and the airlines are permanently under union pressure for more pay and less work or better condition of employment. Furthermore, since there is a scarcity of certain types of resources for the airlines, the forces of supply and demand of labour makes it even more inaccessible for airlines that are already having problems of covering fixed and variable costs.

t) *Market Developments*

The market very often is an indication of the directions that the airlines should adopt. The market forces of supply and demand are one of the factors that dictate policy formulation and implementation and processes. Countries that are dependent on the tourism

and manufacturing industries will certainly formulate policies for aviation bearing in mind the interests of all stakeholders namely hotels, export organisations, tour operators and travel agencies and other industries that depend on aviation for the marketing of their products. Market developments also trigger a multiplier effect that has positive or negative repercussions on the air transport industry.

u) Conflicts

Conflictual situations also prompt governments and business entities to adopt or change policies. In the case of the aviation industry there are often conflicts of interests that will

have an impact on policy formulation. Such conflicts are often due to lack of cohesion in the policies. A classic example would be the conflictual situation between the airlines and the hotels whereby the latter complains of shortage of hotel rooms and the former complains of shortage of airline seats.

v) Interest Groups

Unlike pressure groups, the interest groups have direct or indirect, vested interests in policy changes. Such groups are local and international financial institutions, public and private operators, international organizations, socio-cultural organizations and auxiliary support and service providers. Generally such groups have an effective influence through lobbies and they can make a difference in the policy processes.

w) Exogenous and endogenous factors

Exogenous factors are those on which the airlines have no control but are influenced or affected by them. These are external events or occurrences that may modify the policy directions. Examples of such factors are international economic changes, climatic conditions, government policies among others. Endogenous factors are those that are internal to the organisation and on which the airline company has almost full control. For instance, human resources, marketing plans, training, investment and extension of services are among the endogenous factors. Policy changes are caused by external factors (exogenous) or by processes within the national subsystem (endogenous) (Sabatier 1999).

Sabatier (1998) acknowledges that his ACF framework was developed with the adversarial American political system in mind. Thanks to the separation of powers (Executive, legislative and judiciary) and the fragmentation of governance, the American political system may not encourage policy learning to the same extent as more consensual systems. This fragmentation is also a draw back when this policy process is to apply to countries like Mauritius and more so to airlines especially the ones in developing countries like Mauritius. The vertical rivalry between the airlines and other stakeholders (hotels, tour operators, travel

agencies) on the one hand and the horizontal rivalry between the airlines and institutions (legislators, government, political parties) on the other can bring a permanent situation of conflicts and delay in policy formulation and implementation. This has been noticed in the case of flag carriers as too much of personal interests are at stake. Such interests can be social, economic and political. These stakeholders, both at vertical and horizontal levels, face the challenge of coordinating their efforts at national level without eroding their internal cohesion. The challenge is rarely surmounted and the result often is increased fragmentation in interest systems. In contrast with corporatist environments, interest groups and other private actors in this new environment become adversaries in competitions for access to policy makers and influence at various levels, especially political, institutional and governmental.

Like Weiss (1977), Sabatier acknowledges that as research findings move in to the policy-making process, they are shaped by and have to contend with, competing beliefs and values. Sabatier further argues that observers should identify the competing 'advocacy coalitions' in each policy domain and determine whether policy research and analysis was associated with or independent from those coalitions (Lindquist 2001).

V. CONCLUSION

Policy formulation, implementation and evaluation are the three major components of policy processes. It goes without saying that in policy decision making and in a democracy, it is necessary for all parties concerned to be part and parcel of the process. The Advocacy Policy Framework (ACF) has been tested and various authors and critics have found in the framework come of the solutions to the issues of policy making. No policy theory can be said to be a panacea for all aspects of decision making and it is in no way a one-size fit all theory. This paper however has attempted to show that in the case of Mauritius it would be appropriate to have a hybrid of some of the policy theories based on the analyses done here and elsewhere.

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List of Abbreviations :

ACIM - Association des Consommateurs de l'Ile Maurice.

AHRIM   -
 Rstaurateurs de l'ile Maurice

BASA - Bilateral Air Services Agreement.

CSO - Central Statistics office.

DCA - Department of Civil Aviation.

IATA - International Air Tansport Association.

MCCI - Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

MEPZA - Mauritius Export Processing Zone.