

Multi-Dimensional Process Analysis

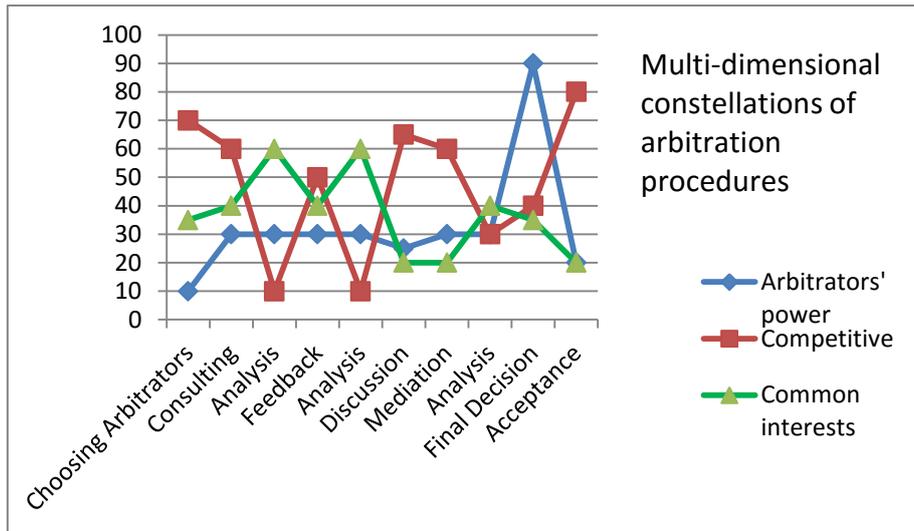
In Political Analysis the term *political process* stands for two different matters, a) procedurally structured ways of political decision-making; b) unstructured or low structured sequences of political situations. Both process types will be issued in this lecture. The point of analyzing them is to get insights into their multi-dimensional structures - not only looking at overarching patterns, but also at how the involved actors see, feel, and behave.

1. Procedurally structured processes

Political procedures, such as elections, legislative processes, and arbitrary processes, imply free decisions of the involved actors in the framework of jointly accepted rules. That's why they have at least a two-dimensional character produced by strong independent institutions (polity) and by free interaction (politics). Based on this two-dimensional character, often a protected space of independent policy development opens up - see for instance processes of legislation, that can imply much more than an agreement on the lowest common denominator. Instead legislation can stimulate also processes of substantial analysis and learning - fostering innovation processes in society.

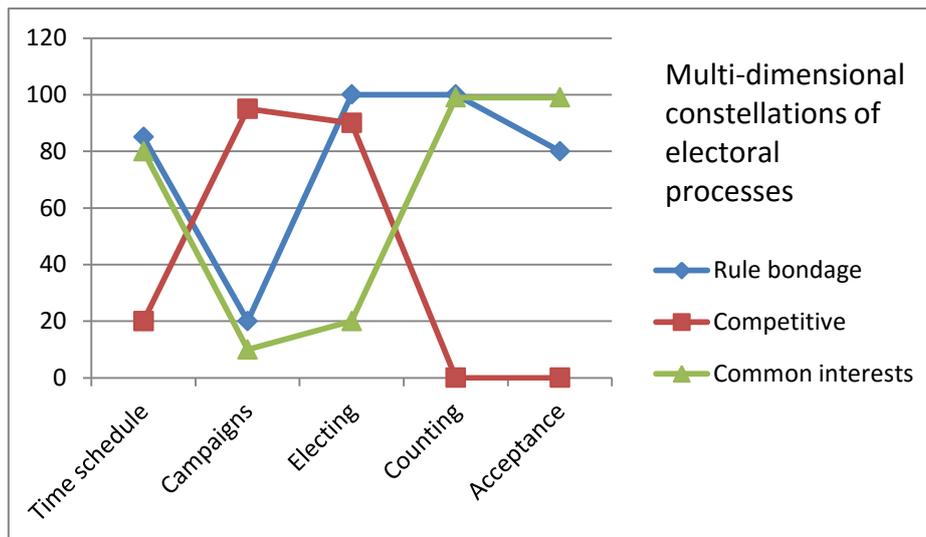
Are there **dimensional constellations** of those processes **over time**? Empirical studies on that issue do not exist yet, but - based on current observations - we may build hypotheses. In the following you see hypothetical models on how multi-dimensional constellations vary over time in some political procedures. The first procedure to be outlined is arbitration.

Figure 1: Multi-dimensional constellations of arbitration procedures



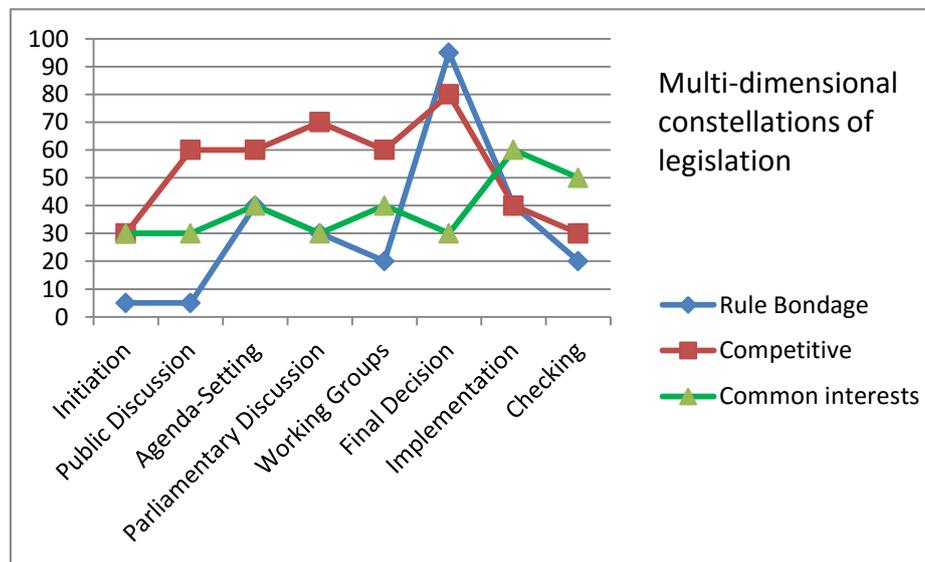
In arbitration arbitrators that have been chosen by both sides steer a mediation process authoritatively. In the end they declare a final decision to be accepted by both sides or not. By studying figure 1 you see the clearly prevailing importance of competitive interests in the starting phase, in between and above all in the very end. Common interests (of jointly bringing forward the process), in contrast, usually dominate in the early phases after the very start. Aside of the very start and the very end, there is significant power of the arbitrators, particularly in fixing the (authoritative) final decision.

Figure 2: Multi-dimensional constellations of electoral processes



Electoral processes comprise the fixing of a time-schedule, campaigning, voting, counting, and acceptance of the results. Looking at following figure 2 (last page) you see extremely different phases: While rule bondage (institutions) and common interests (policy) clearly prevail regarding the fixing of a time-schedule, the counting and political acceptance, the core phases (campaigning and voting) are clearly dominated by competitive interests. Indeed also (and even) the voting process has to comply with valid procedural demands (institutions) corresponding with the highly institutional character of democratic elections.

Figure 3: Multi-dimensional constellations of legislation



Processes of legislation may comprise initiation, public discussion, agenda-setting, parliamentary discussion, working groups, final decision, implementation, and checking. Looking at figure 3 you see that the importance of rule bondage does increase in tendency from informal phases to phases of formal dealing up to the final decision in parliament. Then again the relevance of rule bondage distinctly decreases in the phases of implementation and checking. The competitive interest curve is similar to the showed curve of rule bondage, but starts much higher and exhibits top values in the early phases. The curve of common interests, in contrast, stays quite stable and increases not until the implementation phase - an expression of the fact that results of political decision-making usually are accepted as established parts of given reality.

Altogether we see inclusive constellations of politics, policy and polity variables over time in all outlined procedure types. **The unfolded analytical triangle works over time by changing dimensional constellations.**

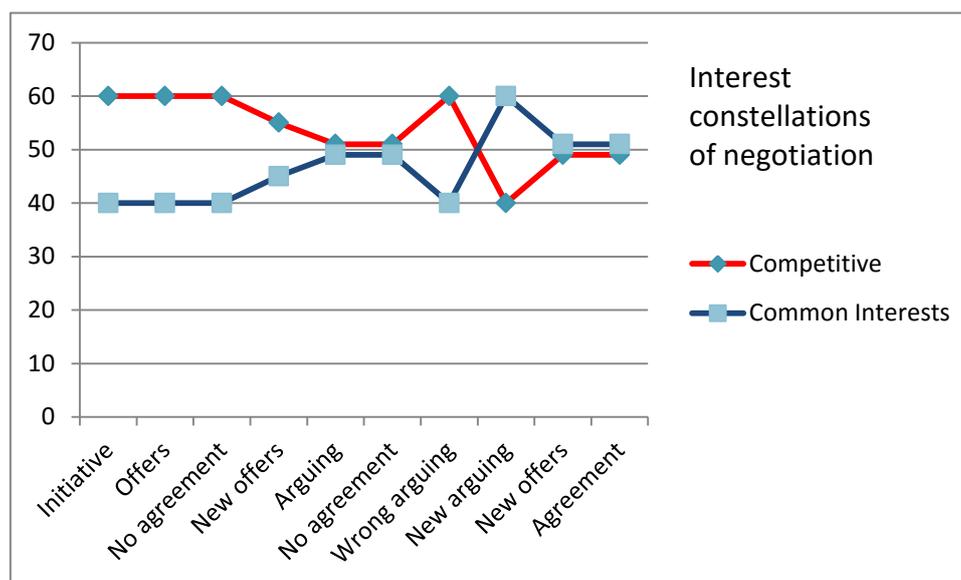
2. Low and unstructured processes

Whenever politics is done without a jointly accepted institution we can talk of a low or unstructured process. An example of low structured processes is negotiation including bargaining and arguing.

2.1 Negotiation

By the following figure you see a typical pattern of a successful negotiation process. At that first an agreement is failed because of too low readiness to a compromise and because of wrong arguing. Not until an argumentative turn and following more cooperative offers an agreement comes about.

Figure 4: Interest constellations of negotiation processes



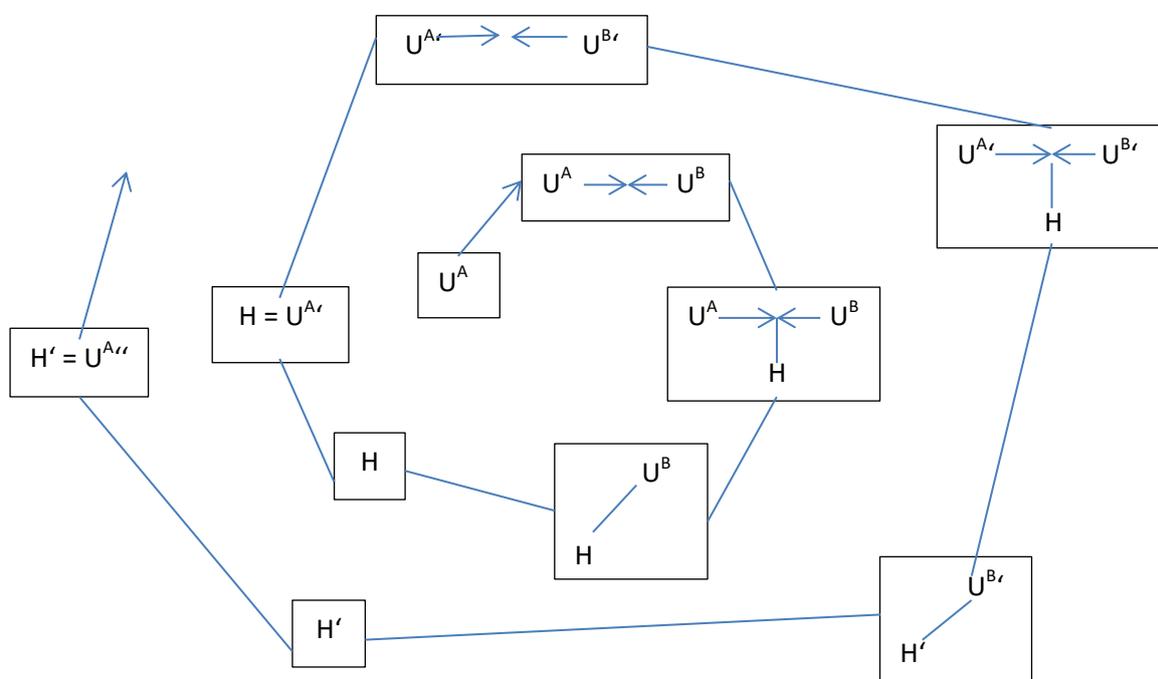
Indeed, you should take into consideration that negotiation processes can easily fail whenever the both-sided offers are too far away from each other or there are troubles in communication, such as by wrong arguing. Bargaining can proceed in asymmetric ways implying asymmetric results whereby one side is under bigger pressure. Negotiation, finally, may be used in an opportunistic way as a kind of camouflage if the contradiction of interests between the involved actors is too big. That's why in order to understand low and

unstructured political processes we should study the given actor constellation first. Then internal variables of the negotiation process itself can be successfully investigated.

2.2 The interest-spiral of public policy

The following model has been published in the year 1990 as a process model of environmental policy.¹ At the first glance it seems to be formal and mechanistic, but looking at it in a multi-dimensional and more open perspective it reveals stimulating insights.

Figure 5: The Interest-Spiral of public policy



The model is immediately about changing interest constellations between different actor types, competing users (U^A versus U^B) and helpers (H). All users and helpers refer to a currently dominating policy; hence the notations (') and (") mark new dominating policies where the actors refer to. Altogether there is a process model of interests and policy change.

¹ Prittwitz, Volker von: Das Katastrophenparadox. Elemente einer Theorie der Umweltpolitik, Opladen: Leske+Budrich 1990, p. 203

After a situation where the user A (U^A) was completely dominating the scene, an interest conflict between the users A and B comes up, for instance by certain negative emissions from A to B . As long user A is stronger than B or alike strong, this conflict cannot be solved. A change to a new policy that substantially dissolves the conflict is possible only after emerging of a new actor type, a helper (with own helper interests). As soon as a coalition between the competing user B and the new helper develops, the formerly dominating user A loses his influence, and a new policy - favoring User B and helper H - asserts oneself. Because the new policy manages B's problem, at least in the longer term the helper's interests dominate alone. Indeed, any dominating policy produces new problems, and the former helper H becomes a new user $^{A'}$. Hence a new turn on the interest and policy spiral develops, and so forth.

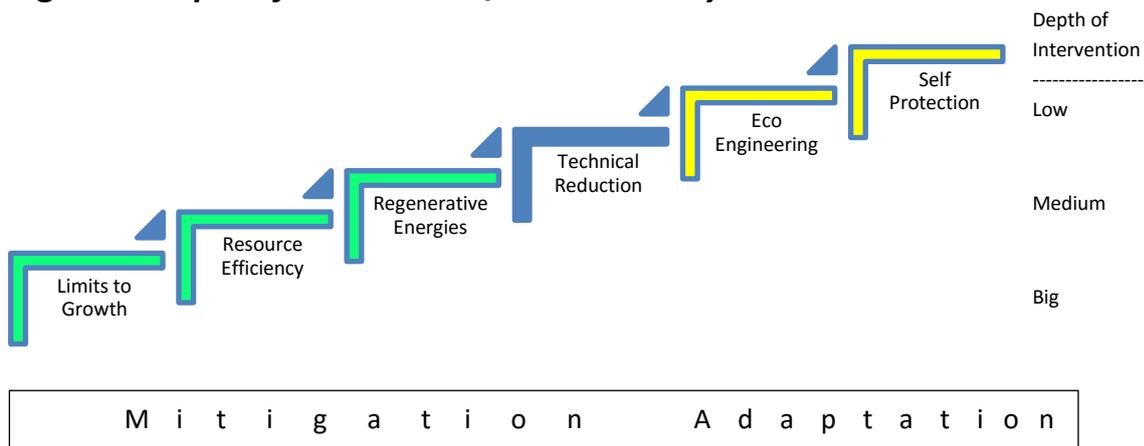
According to the criterion of analytical dimensions the *Interest Spiral* is a **two-dimensional model combining assumptions on actor constellations and policy change**: Policy change requires changing interest constellations, and interest constellations reflect currently dominating policies. The obviously creative and specific point is the helper: Helpers introduce possible solutions of unsolvable interest conflicts between the given users, and they build interest and power bridges to those new solutions. Indeed, helpers can fulfil their innovative roles only against the background of a sharp interest conflict. Since otherwise - as long as a user dominates the scene without any challenge - only affirming helpers (such as priests blessing the given power state) are required. Altogether we see **both, upcoming interest conflicts and helpers to solve the conflicts, as existential preconditions of policy innovation.**

2.3 Under-steering running after

Actors have to operate in an effective manner in order to cope with a certain challenge. Such effectivity depends on sufficient preciseness, intensity, scope, and depth of intervention.² Of these requirements the sufficient depth of intervention can be considered basic because it constitutes a complete requirement. If it is not met the practical effect of a policy goes to zero or works worse. See for instance the **case of climate policy** (following figure 6).

² See lecture 14, figure 6

Figure 6: Depth of Intervention/Climate Policy



If climate policy operates only or predominantly with the strategy of adaptation (low depth of intervention), the problem of man-made greenhouse gases increases furtherly very fast - accelerating and intensifying the existential risk of destroying the Earth - Humankind system .

Indeed, this warning is well-known for decades. And in some parts of the world new capacities of mitigation have been established and have produced a policy change towards mitigation. The global process of economics and climate politics, however, does not follow the logic of the presented model. Not only in newly industrialized countries like China climate policy develops only in cumbersome ways or turns backwards. Also in economically developed countries, such as Canada, the USA, Japan or Australia, economic and political strategies of cost lowering by preferring low depths of intervention prevail. So in California, USA, where a massive drought is existentially threatening all life, the responsible government has reacted on the unavoidable necessity to reduce water consumption in a very cumbersome process after years. But US American coal is meanwhile exported all over the world (after having massively developed cheap US American gas exploitation by fracking mechanisms), contributing to the very bad global record of furtherly increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed there are some efforts to mitigate climate change, but altogether the problem is furtherly growing. **We (the humankind) are running after the problem by understeering it** because of - seemingly - rational cost-benefit calculations of mighty actors.

This disastrous contradiction between (immediate) interest constellations and necessary public policies is not limited to the issue of climate protection. It,

rather, prevails in many other political fields, too - implying fundamental barriers against a rational problem-solving. See for instance the **European refugee policy** (Lecture 21): By reducing public discussion and political agenda-setting on subjects of low and medium depth of intervention, deeper causes of the problem are out of the political discussion. Indeed, the resettlement of refugees within the European Community, scope and management of rescue activities on the Middle Sea, and the problem of refugee smuggling, are very relevant. As long as many African countries - through wars, weak governments, and economic dependency - economically do not come up, the stream of migrants to Europe probably will get even stronger. In that view, strengthened activities of a European refugee policy on low and medium depths of intervention alone contribute to an under-steering of the problem. The European Union runs after the problem worsening it.
