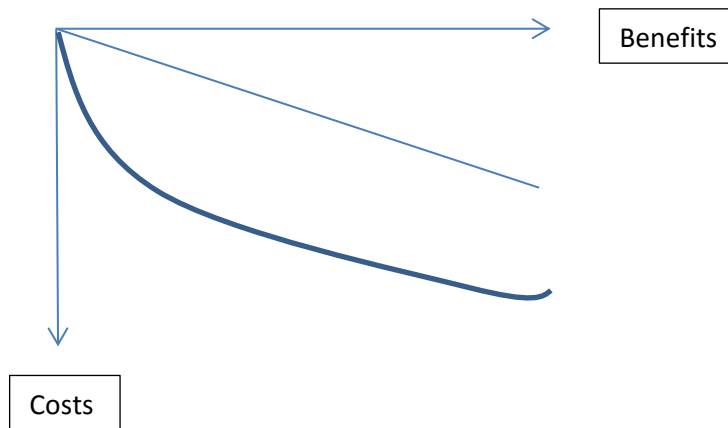


# The Science of the Possible

## Political performance and how it can be achieved best

Performance has been defined as the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed.<sup>1</sup> Usually the accomplishment of a given task (benefit) is compared with given costs of coping with the challenge - leading to a **cost-benefit model** - see figure 1.

**Figure 1: The cost-benefit-model (efficiency)**



The figure presents two different curves, a linear co-variation of costs and benefits (thin line) and a non-linear co-variation with first steeply rising and then lower rising costs per benefit until the very end when the relative costs go even back (thick line). The normative orientation of that models goes to maximize the benefit at given costs respectively to minimize the costs per benefit. In short, it is about **raising efficiency** as far as possible.

### *Political Performance*

Can and should we use cost-benefit models in order to understand and handle political performance? In principle also political affairs should be managed in an efficient manner, for instance by avoiding redundant bureaucracy or by stimulating effective public policies. But looking at the issue in a more thorough and systematic way, we see some complications: Often politics is simply

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/performance.html#ixzz3ZYwimHlp> ;  
<http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/Definition/performance-measurement.html>

identified with striving at power.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly political performance could and should be measured only in terms of getting and preserving political power, for instance by preserving the own charge in government, by winning political elections or by promoting a political movement in public. Some authors, in contrast, define political performance by diffuse benefit concepts, such as *quality of life* or *happiness* without thinking about specific costs.<sup>3</sup> Insofar the main criterion of political performance would be the question how far the people in a country feel happy.

In **Political Analysis**, as you know, we conceive of political affairs in principally independent dimensions: Political governments shall protect and foster common goods (public policy dimension). The political process converts more or less different interests and ideas into accepted authoritative decisions (politics dimension). Institutional patterns constitute political orders (polity dimension). Following this idea, political performance has to be defined and measured in all three dimensions:

- Winning and stabilizing power
- Accomplishing aims of public policy best
- Stabilizing the institutional system

From a political actor's perspective, winning and stabilizing governmental power constitutes a practical precondition for realizing public policy aims and stabilizing the institutional order. Existing helper interests, that can have influence far into communication media, increase the importance of this criterion, especially if certain persons or parties are considered to be necessary anchors of political stability. That's why political performance profiles in the politics dimension, such as winning power, being attractive in public, pursuing good tactics, and behaving skillfully, often prevail.

Also if we look at the issue from the perspective of an external observer, politics criterions of performance in the described sense usually appear to be relevant; public policy criterions and the need of stabilizing the institutional order, however, are more in the focus. At that the *Democracy Cycle* constitutes a basic model - see figure 2.<sup>4</sup>

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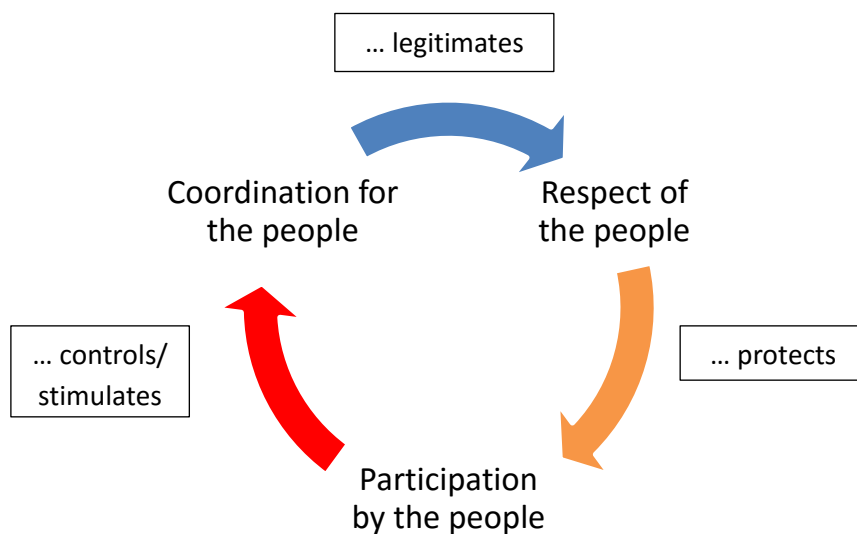
<sup>2</sup> Even Niklas Luhmann's system theory operates with an understanding of the political sub-system in that sense. Any subsystem dissociates itself from its environment by a dichotomizing code to reproduce itself. The code of the political subsystem is power/no power (Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme. Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie*, Frankfurt am Main 1984, new edition 2001/English translation

<http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=2225>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.humanmetrics.com/politics/politicstest.htm>

<sup>4</sup> See in a former version lecture 8, figure 2

**Figure 2: The Democracy Cycle**



According to this model, democracies are political systems that serve the public sake. Those systems operate in a functional cycle of coordination for the people, respect of the people, and participation by the people. At that **coordination for the people** is the immediately crucial indicator. Since any political effort is to serve the public interest and coordination for the people implements this need immediately. Correspondingly any political system without effective coordination is losing its political **legitimation** sooner or later. **Participation by the people** stimulates and controls effective coordination for the people. **Respect of all people** protects everybody and hence enables effective participation by the people. Hence there is a corresponding democracy cycle. If only one of these functional needs fails, there cannot be a functioning democracy. That's why political performance of democracies has to be assessed according to these three criterions.

An index that has been developed starting from the *Democracy Cycle* model is **The People Index**.<sup>5</sup> It measures the three outlined indicators by the following questions:

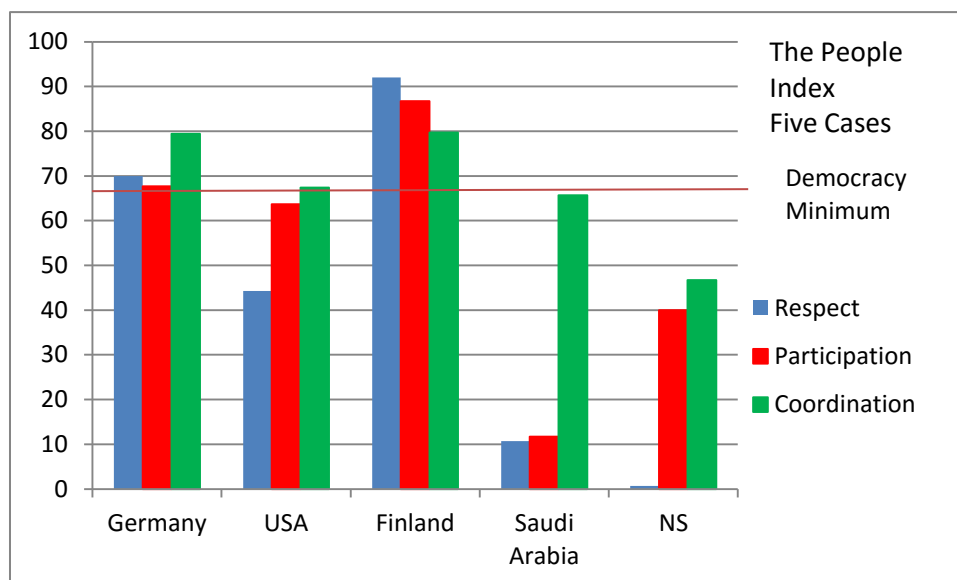
- Respect of the people: Are all inhabitants, also and even marginal and weak parts of the population, respected as free and equal citizens? Are fair and free procedures common? Are all international borders respected?

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.diberlin.info/tpi.htm>

- Participation by the people: May the people elect and recall their government? May the people participate in current decision-making? How representative are the people's representations?
- Coordination for the people: Is there guaranteed peace? Is the public infrastructure sufficiently fostered? Is the economy coordinated well? How equally are the incomes distributed? Is health effectively protected? Are qualification and education, research & development managed well? Ecological and financial sustainability.

First comparative applications of the Index to Germany, USA, Finland, Saudi Arabia, and the NS System appear to prove the basic assumptions of the Democracy Cycle:

**Figure 3: The people Index: Comparative results of five cases**



Scores lower than 33.3% for *Respect of the people* and/or *Participation by the people* do not correspond with scores for *Coordination for the people* that are higher than 66.7%. And the comparatively best coordination scores have been ascertained in countries where all three main indicators exhibit higher scores than 66.7% (above of the democracy minimum).<sup>6</sup> Altogether we state functional linkages and positive co-variations between the three outlined functional needs (respect of, participation by, coordination for the people).

<sup>6</sup> <http://diberlin.info/tpi%20comparative%20results.htm>

## *Bound governance*

How to accomplish political performance best? What might be good governance in that sense?

*Good governance* must not be identified with governmental structures of official democracies like USA, Great Britain, or Germany. Since these countries - as others do - exhibit many structures, attitudes, and forms of behavior that do not meet the outlined functional needs. So there are unfair procedures - see for instance extreme lobbyism and some corruption. Often not all parts of the population are respected to a satisfying degree. Effective peace has not been guaranteed in all regions. And sometimes, so in the case of the USA, borders of other sovereign states are not respected as it should be. In short: Formally democratic institutions do not guarantee the realization of high political performance.

At that we should be aware that anomies (with civil wars and the rule of war-lords, hence very low values of all three indicators) and autocracies (with very low values of respect and participation) do not render a perspective of high political performance because of the outlined functional interdependencies. That's why autocratic and even anomic structures do not stand for good governance. What then could provide guidance?

To this end we can resort to the already shortly presented ***Bound Governance***.<sup>7</sup> That type of governance that may be illustrated by sport games like soccer or tennis represents exactly the contrary of corruption and other forms of unfairness. Its core structure is a fair and free procedure for all operational actors independently from any power structure. Motivated by this procedural core all involved actors try hard to do their very best and strive at realizing their interests peacefully - altogether a solid ground for increasing general welfare.<sup>8</sup> This outstanding balance sheet results from the following reasons:

- Operative **performance responsibility**: Good operative performance (according to given rules and procedures) leads to personal advantages, bad operative performance leads to personal disadvantages - a strict responsive mechanism that strengthens individual performance.

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<sup>7</sup> Lecture 14, chapter 5; Lecture 22

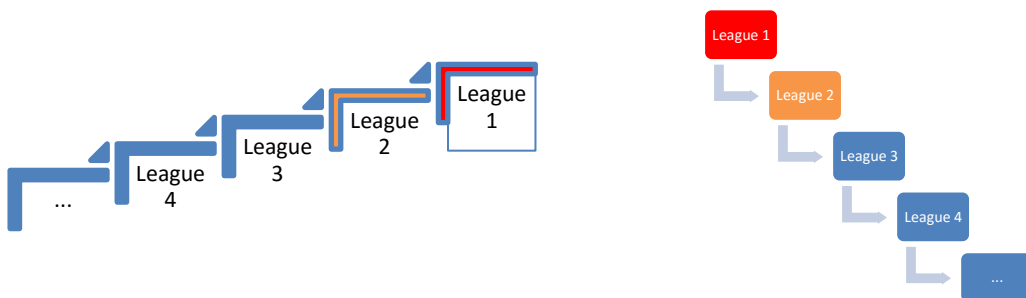
<sup>8</sup> Prittwitz, Volker von 2007: Vergleichende Politikanalyse, Stuttgart (UTB 2871); idem: [http://www.volkervonprittwitz.de/bound\\_governance\\_031212.pdf](http://www.volkervonprittwitz.de/bound_governance_031212.pdf) ; Prittwitz, Volker von 2014: Politik-Logiken im Ukraine-Konflikt, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 64. Jahrgang 47-48/2014, p.34: <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/194822/politik-logiken-im-ukraine-konflikt?p=all>

- All operative actors are **equal** concerning given rules and their authoritative interpretation. That's why there is a real chance to win for everybody - even for the weakest actor.
- The **rules are authoritatively and firmly pre-given**. That's why in principal it does not make sense to direct much own efforts into getting power over the rules. Also a fight between operative actors regarding the interpretation of given rules is in principal abundant. Hence the operative actors are motivated to focus on their operative performance.

That's why *Bound Governance* appears to be a suited type to foster socio-political performance. Therefore it is sensible to check how far Bound Governance structures have been met in concrete governance types respectively how far they have been failed - see for instance the fact that juridical organs even in so-called democracies are sometimes subordinate to organs of the political executive or the widespread routine of deals between judge, prosecutor, and culprit (defenders).

Indeed, how does *Bound Governance* cope with existing differences of capability? Whenever personal or group-related capabilities differ to a high degree, formal equality obviously does not match reality - a very fundamental objection because varying and different capabilities are very usual.

**Figure 4: The League system - moving up and relegation**



The answer to this objection goes to structure individual systems in **leagues**. Individuals respectively teams of about the same capability level play in one league; all leagues of a certain discipline are vertically ordered. Successful teams of a lower league are entitled to move up to the next higher league; correspondingly unsuccessful teams of the higher league are relegated to the next lower league. Since moving up and relegation are very consequential for the involved actors, they constitute particularly challenging and for the observers exciting elements of league games.

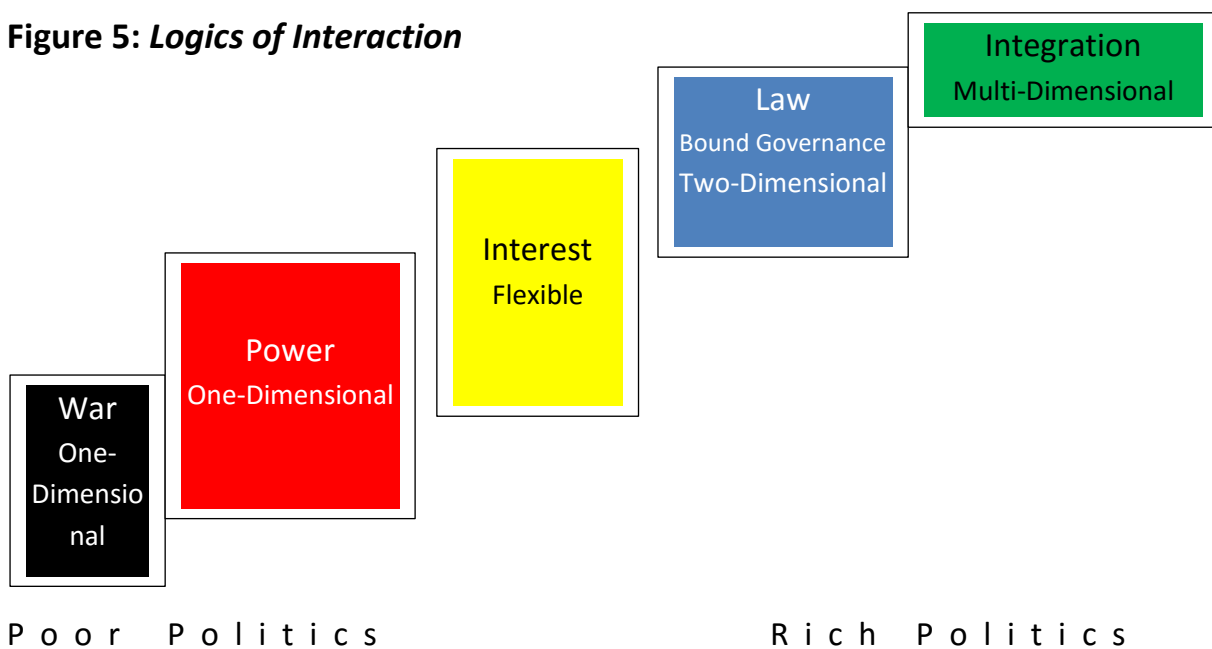
Mediated by the league structure *Bound Governance* is principally able to manage a large spectrum of different capabilities. Indeed any process type, for

instance arbitration processes, elections, and legislature processes, implies specific characteristics concerning the issue of inequality.<sup>9</sup> So federalism respectively multi-level governance a little looks like the league-system. In contrast to it, however, in some kinds of federalism there are vivid ways of cooperation between different policies and institutions on different levels.<sup>10</sup> Additionally governance types on local or sub-national levels refer to specific tasks and challenges, as governance on national and global levels do at their turn. Hence bound governance and multi-level governance are to be combined in specific ways differing from the presented league-system.

### *Logics of Interaction*

Under diverse preconditions, however, it is not possible or even not desirable to use bound governance. Since the way the involved actors think, feel, and calculate corresponds with different situational conditions, with their specific dispositions and thinking traditions - resulting in different logics of interaction.

**Figure 5: Logics of Interaction**



While the one-dimensional logics of war and pure power imply no good for the universal commonality, the multi-dimensional logics of law (bound governance) and integration foster the universal sake (in figure 5 marked by the uprising order). The flexible logic of pursuing individual interests ranges in between. The logics of power and war are closely linked, also the logics of law and integration.

<sup>9</sup> See lecture 22

<sup>10</sup> See lecture 9, chapter 5

The real significance of the individual logics (in figure 5 marked by the expanses of the cubes), does not correspond with their normative ranking. Instead hitherto the logic of pure power appears to be most influential, followed by the logic of interest, and - not bad, considering its complexity - by the logic of law (bound governance). Unfortunately the logic of war is still important, and there are recent developments, such as the rising of organizations like Boko Haram and Islamic State, that leads to the impression that this worst logic again gets more influence. On the other side, the logic of integration only slowly wins ground (for instance by growing integration of the European Community and some international regimes).

The theoretical point here is the linkage between the normative order and the practical process. Accordingly **political performance** can be assessed by questions like the following:

- Do actors manage to avoid war and to reduce the logic of war, particularly under extremely conflictual preconditions?
- Do actors manage to bring up the logics of law (bound governance) and integration towards the logic of one-dimensional power?
- How far it succeeds to bind actors operating in the logic of interests to the logics of law and integration?

The more poor politics (in the logics of war and power) can be substituted by rich politics (in the logics of integration, law, and connected interests), the more successful politics is operating in general. The specific degree of political performance, however, also co-varies with the given preconditions: The worse the pre-conditions, the greater a success to come to rich politics, and vice versa...

### *Ways and tools of successful politics*

In some former lectures you have got a bunch of concepts and models on ways and tools of politics, for instance on political communication, governance types, and political processes. In lecture 25 to come we will specifically deal with tricky politics. All those ways of politics can be used in favor of political success according to figure 5 presented above - or in favor of the contrary. Political analysts are able to assess and to evaluate political processes under this fundamental aspect.