

## Corridors of Incidence and Force Field Analysis

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### 1. Policy Networks Approach and Corridors of Political Incidence

In democratic order and culture with inclusive institutions<sup>1</sup> political reforms emerge upon the **interaction and negotiation** between different stakeholders, being interested in the issue at stake. In view of a pragmatic and viable agreement on the issues at stake, the stakeholders are interdependent: at least in democratic orders they need the negotiation to build gradually consensus. The course of such processes depends on a variety of success factors, such as:

- the quality of interaction between the stakeholders
- the degree of mutual trust
- the mutual recognition of diversity of views and interests
- the functional participation of all relevant segments of the society
- the legal rules, mechanisms and protocols for participation
- the equality in participation
- the access to relevant, evidence based knowledge about the issues at stake
- the quality of the public debate
- the ability to negotiate and compromise
- the governance (or management) and monitoring of the negotiation process
- the probability that agreed policies are implemented with the necessary performance standards

In the perspective of stakeholder negotiation, state and government do not operate as exclusive creators and controllers over the political reform process. Government and representatives of the public sectors are stakeholders among others. Therefore, a vivid fabric of CSOs is a pre-requisite for a democratic society. Seen from the viewpoint of **political markets**, one can say that the citizens and their organizations and pressure groups represent the **demand side** of politics. They and their representatives from different sectors of the society voice and express their concerns and needs for reforms or a particular kind of state demonstrating certain performance standards. Political institutions like parties, CSOs, unions, associations of different kind, the parliament, as well as current government represent the **supply side** of politics. If they are not able to deliver what the demand side is asking for, they risk to lose votes, elections and power over the institutions, which may lead to the change of government.

In this conceptual framework, the notion of **policy or political networks** is central for the negotiation, the course and governance of political reforms. The concept draws the attention to the importance of the participation of interested stakeholders in the process. The stakeholders themselves make the process. They shape the negotiation process leading to agreements on institutions, rules, regulations, common standards and participation. This understanding of the political processes stems from the working hypothesis that new policies emerge from a negotiation process among the stakeholders and that the stakeholders themselves shape the process within the legal framework on democratic participation. Behind this understanding there are **four basic characteristics**:

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<sup>1</sup> Democratic in the sense that the society is on the way towards an open access order with inclusive institutions. Democracy is founded on the right of every citizen to take part in the definition and management of public affairs. The achievement of democracy presupposes genuine participation processes that take into consideration the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the citizens. Democratic rule needs democratic institutions which guarantee equal access to rights, resources and opportunities. A sustained state of democracy protects vulnerable citizen groups and requires a democratic culture constantly nurtured and reinforced by information, education, and the way the society organizes collective political bargaining processes. See also: Basic Tools 02 and 03.

- Political reforms are a **structured and dynamic fabric of interaction** among different, but interdependent stakeholders with different background, perceptions, power resources and interests. In other words, the policy network is a lively and flexible arrangement that changes over time and is changed upon the interventions of the stakeholders. The interactions follow some institutionalized rules of the game, for example concerning the the preparation process of legal proposals, association rights, unions and social movements, control over media, division of electoral districts, civil society participation, protection of minority groups, etc.
- The stakeholders are **interdependent**, because they cannot achieve their own goals on their own, but depend on the perception, viewpoints, power, willingness and influence of other stakeholders. Thus, they have to admit and **recognize different views and interests**. They develop a more or less horizontal structure of mutual respect and trust, and need to define their own steering mechanism for the negotiation process. In most political negotiation processes, the agreement on the agenda and procedures (or even the time schedule and the form of the negotiation table) is extremely important because these agreements provide a solid basis for mutual trust building. These agreements demonstrate that consensus is possible, at least on the issues of the negotiation process.
- Political networks embrace a wide range of **different public and private corporate actors** that become stakeholders because of their vested or claimed interest in the issue at stake (e.g. public local and national authorities, civil society organisations and communities, interest groups and social movements, private enterprises, political parties and the parliament).
- The stakeholders play out their interests in the **policy negotiation process** through more or less evidence based arguments, applying their power resources and building alliances. The stakeholders are bound by their specific, issue related interests and **the basic interest to increase their influence on the negotiation process**, for example by structuring the agenda, regulating participation or access to new knowledge.

A political negotiation process helps in building trust as the stakeholders start understanding the interests of the others and the interdependencies in view of a viable realistic solution. As Alexis Tocqueville observed, pragmatic thinking is key for democratic development. Understanding the views and interests of others implies a sensible **culture of dialogue**<sup>2</sup>: (i) The readiness to listen. (ii) The respect for the diversity of discourses and interests. (iii) The willingness to look for consensus and common ground. (iv) The compliance with agreed rules and governance of the negotiation process. (v) The capacity to transform (hard) positions into (liquid) interests. (vi) The openness towards evidence based knowledge. (vii) The willingness to think pragmatically in different options and its possible effects. (viii) The contribution to mutual trust building. (ix) The consensus-oriented monitoring of the process. (x) The evolutionary way of learning from experience, creating new ways of building social capital and institutions that enable living together in peace, equality of opportunities and prosperity. The culture of dialogue evolves gradually during the negotiation process. Therefore, a successful political negotiation process produces and strengthen (i) a democratic civic culture of dialogue and (ii) broadly accepted political agreements which are realistic and close to implementation.

The objective of the following instrument is to sort out and visualize **four different corridors of incidence** in political negotiation processes that should be considered:

- Incidence on the access to knowledge
- Incidence on the participation and negotiation capacity of the involved stakeholders

<sup>2</sup> Dialogue from its Greek roots means the flow of words between (dia-) two or more people as a horizontal exchange of ideas and world views (-logos).

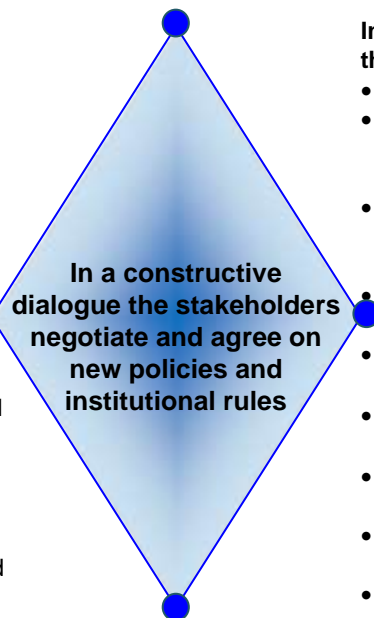
- Incidence on the design and course of the negotiation process
- Incidence in public debate and improvement of evidence-based quality

**Incidence on the access to knowledge:**

- Development and systematization of evidence-based knowledge about the issues at stake
- Facilitating access to external expert knowledge (from research, experts, representatives of different organizations, global knowledge)
- Evaluation ex-ante of possible impacts of different political reform options: distributional effects, financial and institutional scenarios, etc.
- Audience friendly presentation and dissemination of knowledge
- Panels with stakeholders to exchange with experts and discuss different policy options

**Incidence on the participation and negotiation capacity of the involved stakeholders:**

- Definition of participation based on transparent criteria like legitimacy, representativeness, age, gender, diversity, thematic expertise
- Clarification of the rights and duties of participating stakeholders
- Empowerment of discriminated and marginalized stakeholders
- Fostering negotiation capacities and pragmatic consensus building
- Capacity development on political economy analysis (ex-ante evaluations of options and distributions effects, institutional and financial scenarios)



**Incidence on the design and course of the negotiation process:**

- Structuring of the negotiation agenda
- Agree upon rules of negotiation, time schedule, venues, and thematic groups
- Provide moderation / facilitation services on request of the stakeholders
- Facilitate the transformation of hard positions into movable interests
- Foster mutual recognition of different views and interests
- Facilitating the presentation and exchange of views and interests
- Strengthen trust, confidence, resilience
- Facilitating progress monitoring of the negotiation process
- Nurture the culture of dialogue & respect

**Incidence on the public debate:**

- Access to media and public events to participate in public debate
- Presence in media debates and citizen information
- Broad information work on policy options and their possible impact
- Strengthening of CSOs in media work and public debate
- Polls and working with focus groups
- Working with editors and opinion leaders

For each of the four different ways of incidence, the reflection should be focused on a specific reform process at stake. The graph can be used to elaborate the specific picture of incidence of a specific reform process. Based on the findings for each way of incidence, the involved actors may determine whether the way of incidence is one that offers an **opportunity** to improve the reform process; one that has a **potential** of improvement, but would require additional capacity development efforts; or one that is so **locked up** that it currently makes no sense to focus on it.

Unfortunately, the dark worlds of prejudice and arrogant behaviour, lies and fraud, envy and rivalry, intrigue and the desire for power are omnipresent in political negotiation. The so-called hidden agendas constitute the colourful and toxic **parallel world** of political networks. Nevertheless, the horizontal configuration of the approach contains a rather high potential to find constructive solutions and solid, democratically legitimated agreements.

To serve this purpose, **democratic processes** have to be embedded in **inclusive institutions**. Democracy is certainly an arduous, tough and slow process. But complying with basic principles like rule of law, independence of justice and equal opportunity, authoritarian rule under religious or military dominance is hardly a tempting alternative. What separates democracy from other political systems is the principle and practice of solving differences first and foremost **through dialogue**. Therefore, dialogue and inclusiveness in the sense of **meaningful and informed participation** certainly are the best-fit way to solve peacefully differences and conflicts of interests, and build institutions that benefit all citizens. It is the only way to generate and reach viable decisions that are acceptable to the majority of citizens and interest groups. Dialogue is the primary means of avoiding and resolving conflicts by building consensus and transforming political positions into negotiable interests.

A parliament, to take the example of an important democratic institution, is the forum where political reform processes and new institutions are negotiated, in consultation with the organized civil society. It is the **political market place** where a plurality of views and interests needs to be heard. Plurality of views and interests means including all voices in the political debate: young-old, rich-poor, men-women, minorities and indigenous peoples. The ability to listen and understand is sometimes as, if not more, important than our ability to speak. There are different **arenas of dialogue**, for example:

- between different political forces, organizations and parties, inside and outside parliament;
- between parliament and citizens: (i) As institution seeking opinions from civil society organizations during the legislative process. (ii) As individual parliamentarians, maintaining a permanent dialogue with the citizens they represent, explaining the decisions taken in parliament, and gathering views that will help to inform decision-making;
- between the different state institutions of government and justice and the society at large;
- between the CSOs, the private sector and government.

Dialogue and inclusiveness are part of the essence of a **culture of democracy**. Dialogue needs to be inclusive of different stakeholders and points of view. A lack of inclusiveness generates frustration and, over time, rejection, at the end an erosion of trust in the state institutions and in the current government. The qualities of civic life need to be nurtured and demonstrated in everyday life. Informing young people about the principles of democracy is vital, but not sufficient to developing democratic culture. People need **to learn to become a citizen** who demands rights and effective state services, who bears duties and owns the state, who pays taxes and demands accountability, who elects government and decides on institutions, who needs an enabling environment for social and economic organization.

People also need to learn to negotiate their interests and build consensus upon mutual respect for the diversity of views and interests. This training process starts in family and continues through formal education. And it is an ongoing process, which does not end after passing through the school gates. Respect for the rule of law, and respect for the other, solidarity and protection of vulnerable people are fundamental notions of a democracy with inclusive institutions that apply equally to all people, whatever their position in society.

## Guiding questions

About decision-making at the local level

- What mechanisms are there to enable citizens to participate in decision-making at local level? What are the modalities used in participatory local democracy?
- How satisfied are people with the communication with government officials and the level of consultation between citizens and their representatives? How responsive are representatives to the concerns that are expressed?

About the legislative process

- What opportunities does parliament provide for citizens to participate in law-making? How is this input used in the legislative process?
- What capacity does parliament have to listen to citizens' concerns? How willing is it to do so?

About the culture of democracy

- Is political culture based on dialogue or confrontation? How important is it to reach a compromise that is acceptable to all?
- What are the barriers to inclusive dialogue? How can these barriers be lowered?
- Does the citizen get the necessary information about public finance management, accountability and investments made by state institutions?
- Does the majority allow the minority to express their views freely?
- Are men and women able to participate equally in decision-making?
- How is the performance of the systems of social protection?
- Do political parties practise internal democracy? Can all members of a party participate freely in policy discussions?
- How do young people learn to recognize the diversity of views and opinions?
- What measures are being taken to strengthen the culture of democracy in society? What impact are they having?

## 2. Force Field Analysis (actor oriented process monitoring)

The so-called *force field analysis* was developed by Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), one of the many German academic emigrants to the US after 1933. He is known as a pioneer of the research on social movements and organizational change processes. Besides his academic research and university lecturing he worked as a consultant for the Government, the NAACP<sup>3</sup> and Martin Luther King.

The underlying assumption of the theory and the concept tool is that social and political change occurs when the field of influences is changed. The tool is a powerful method for gaining a comprehensive overview of the different forces represented and expressed by the stakeholders: arguments, behavioural patterns and attitudes.

The concept is based on the idea that the present situation is best understood as an **equilibrium** between two opposing sets of forces – those seeking to promote change (= driving forces, i.e. in favour of a change process) and those attempting to maintain the status quo (= restraining forces, i.e. against a proposed change process). Status quo or a stable situation is defined as a balance of the two forces. Therefore, in order for any change to occur, the driving forces have to exceed the restraining forces, thus the equilibrium of the system has to be shifted.

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<sup>3</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People an American civil rights movement, to ensure the equality of rights and to eliminate racial discrimination.

In practice it is assumed, that the most promising change strategy is **working on the restraining forces and learning from resistance**. This means that we have to pay special attention to open and discrete forms of resistance to change. Any expression of resistance, being open or hidden, silent or discrete provides valuable information about the probability, plausibility and feasibility of change. The force field analysis is a forceful method to

- explore the balance of forces involved in the negotiation of political reform processes;
- examine different expressions of the forces in terms of applied power resources, arguments, and behaviour an favour or against a proposed change process;
- identify the most important stakeholders that are opponents, allies or indifferent to change;
- attract the attention for different stakeholders and influences that shape the reform process;
- observe and monitor progress of a political reform process.

**How to apply the tool?**

Force field analysis is best carried out in small groups of about five to ten people involved in the reform process or advising it. The group uses the force field diagram below and works through the following steps:

1. Draw the diagram below on a pin board and work with metaplan cards that can be easily changed and shifted if necessary.
2. Agree on the specific reform process or policy issue at stake or reform option to be discussed and write it down into the heading blue box of the diagram.
3. List the main actors or stakeholders that may exercise influence on the reform process. Be aware that such influence can be expressed actively (e.g. driver of change, critical argument) or passively (e.g. resignation, withdrawal).
4. Identify arguments and behavioural patterns that you can attribute to these stakeholders. Put them in the first or the second column as driving or restraining forces, according to their strength and importance as weak (+)/(-) or strong (++) / (--). Be aware that a “force” can be expressed in different ways, e.g. as a political and institutional position of a stakeholder, the communication power on the issue, the influence on public debate, the networking power, the negotiation performance, through knowledge and evidence based arguments.
5. Discuss the overall picture and draw conclusions about possible measures and strategies. Be aware that each stakeholder might simultaneously show driving and restraining forces.

Reform process / Policy issue / reform option at stake: ...				
Arguments, behavioural patterns IN FAVOR of the proposed change or reform		Main ACTORS or STAKEHOLDERS exercising incidence on the reform process	Arguments, behavioural patterns AGAINST the proposed change or reform	
+	++		--	-
		Stakeholder 1		
		Stakeholder N		

**Discussion of the Force Field Analysis**

The established figure nurture the discussion about various relevant issues of the reform process. It helps to understand the dynamics of the process by:

- Tracking down white spots and ignorance about the positioning of stakeholders;
- Revealing ambiguous positions and different expressions of resistance;
- Comparing different stages of knowledge and more or less informed participation;

- Better understanding different expressions of resistance (verbal / non-verbal, active / passive)
- Providing insights about alliances among the stakeholders;
- Enhancing awareness for the stakeholders that are reluctant or against the change and therefore need to be addressed particularly;
- Searching out the lack of access to knowledge and participation;
- Providing evidence about optional interventions;
- Advising monitoring of the change process.

### Following up the Force Field Analysis



**Be aware that coalitions with driving forces may boost unintentionally resistance:**

First of all, professional change management requires full awareness and lively interest in all kinds of open and discrete expressions of resistance. The holders of these expressions have to be invited to explain their motives. The good understanding of these expressions is a learning opportunity that helps to improve reform options.



**Develop different strategic options of possible intervention:**

Analysing the forces does not lead to one, but different possible paths to change the equilibrium of the field. In most cases it is necessary to check out and learn from different alternatives by practical small interventions that irritate the system. Kurt Lewin said: If you really want to know how it ticks, try to change it. Examples for productive irritations are reframing through joint learning events on constructive negotiation and consensus building, peer reviews with other but similar negotiation arrangements, change of environment and visits to similar but already implemented reforms, formation of search groups among stakeholders to treat specific questions.



**Be aware of loss of control mechanisms:**

Confusing messages about the purpose of reforms or the process may generate a feeling of loss of control over the reform process and life in general. Change processes use to move the so-called locus of control from inside to outside, meaning that people aren't anymore controlling their lives, but exposed to not controllable outside influences and forces.

### Examples of different strategic options to be combined as a best-fit mix.

- **Information, communication and knowledge strategies:** Get information right and avoid confusion. Communicate clearly the purpose and benefits of the reform process. Communicate actively to overcome information deficits and asymmetries, rumours, mistrust and misinterpretations. Avoid unbalanced access to information and knowledge. A common ground of shared information and knowledge improves gradually the negotiation process.
- **Participation and advocacy strategies:** Empower and strengthen the capacities of discriminated, marginalized and vulnerable stakeholders. Improve the informed participation of all stakeholders. Facilitate the negotiation of an agreement about participation modalities.
- **Relational strategies:** The aim is to create inclusion, build trust and improve social relations among stakeholders. Lack of trust and misperception among stakeholders are regarded as the central obstacles to successful negotiation processes. To overcome mistrust – which frequently has deep roots, e.g. deriving from longstanding antagonistic relations and diverging positions and interests – the following measures could be considered:
  - Undertake consultations and spend extra time at the outset to initiate concrete action that can be delegated to a small task force group of stakeholders, for example organizing

- three expert panels. Despite the transaction costs incurred, such initiatives bring the stakeholders together and in exchange. It helps them to learn about the different motives, time frames, narratives, languages of stakeholders.
- Agree on mechanisms for information practice, communication and dispute resolution. Inclusion and commitment grow when principles of transparency and fairness are applied practice.
  - Push management for results, e.g. by setting concrete milestones as part of a common negotiation agenda.
  - Create easy wins, for example achieving relatively quick results through small pilot activities, to complement laborious consultation processes and increase motivation of the stakeholders (often stuck in a heavy negotiation process).
- **Structuring the negotiation process:** No negotiation is the same as the previous one. But reform processes have a time frame, they start and end, and they have to build consensus based on stakeholder participation and commitment. The process needs to be structured and the stakeholders should know where they are and what they have reached so far. The basic structure starts with a clearance phase to clarify purpose, scope, and rules for participation and decision making mechanisms, schedules and work organization. The set-up of an agreed but still flexible agenda is certainly a crucial part of the initial phase. Subsequent phases are, for example: The presentation of interests, getting further knowledge and consultations process with external resource persons, development of options, participation in public debates, set-up of evaluation criteria to assess the options, integration of negotiations in sub-groups and consensus building processes. As other actors in the policy making arena, policy networks also have to guarantee for accountable and transparent structures.
  - **Public debate strategies:** The stakeholders involved in a reform process should be clear about their participation in public debate. Public debate is a democratic must, but it is not advisable to open the negotiation process to the public at any moment. Confidentiality and consensus-building have priority and require a wise public debate policy. This also applies to the mandatory information practice and debates with institutional bodies such as members of parliament and representatives of government agencies. On the other hand, by definition political reform processes are embedded in democratic decision making. Therefore, the stakeholders themselves have to decide by when, on what and who will participate in public debates. At an initial stage of the negotiation process, the participation in public debates also helps to explore the presumed acceptance of different reform options.
  - **Process monitoring strategies:** Monitoring and reporting are priorities in every political negotiation process. Monitoring provides relevant information for decision making on the course of the process and strengthens the sense for progress and the shared commitment to the political goals of the negotiation process. On the other hand, adequate reporting about progress and results to a wider audience improves accountability of the involved stakeholder group and enables the environment for voice participation of the public at large. Given the role of stakeholders in a political negotiation and the commitment to the organizations they represent, monitoring and reporting is a joint responsibility of the stakeholders. According to their agenda and work schedule they have to design principles and practical instruments for proper monitoring of progress that can inform their own process management and align the process with consultations and public debate.

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