Multi-Dimensional Political Analysis

New Perspectives for Political Science, Consulting, and Political Education

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Politics both as problem-solving and social problem

Politics is considered to be a means of societal problem-solving. As apposite this view may be in functional terms, see for instance the energy political redirection from fossil to regenerative energies, as insufficient it is. Because quite often political efforts are unable to realize their intended functions or even hamper societal problem solutions. That does not only hold for autocracies where dictators establish reigns of terror; also political systems with established democratic aspirations often are not able to cope with public tasks and problems. A current example is the persistent inability to effectively regulate the global financial market: Politics even tends to magnify unbound financial power and financial asymmetries.

This problematic inability corresponds with a comparatively low innovation rate of political structures. While other societal sub-systems, particularly the development of technologies based on natural science, show a literally dramatic dynamic of innovation and currently revolutionize society, politics and state still do operate by traditional means up to bold lobbyism, power networks, and power fights. The political system insofar shows a remarkable leeway of innovation compared to dynamic sectors of society.

Is Political Science jointly responsible for political deficits?

Disciplines of natural science stand for path-breaking technological innovations, in the science-ethical discussion also for triggered technological risks and wrong courses of development (example: atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb). In contrast, it is not usual to jointly hold Political Science accountable for weak political steering and low innovation rates of political structures. Because, different from technological developments, politics does not be rated as figured by science. In addition, at least external observers cannot perceive any characteristic profile of how Political Science influences politics.

Political Science, indeed, points at influencing politics through consulting and political education, whereby a certain joint responsibility of Political Science is given. Furthermore, the question of whether deficits of Political Science find expression in lost opportunities comes up. That's why, the status of research, lessons and consulting in Political Science becomes precarious, particularly compared to given standards of other sciences.

Whereby differs Political Science from „normal sciences"?

Following Thomas S. Kuhn's theory of science, the development of a scientific discipline to a normal science requires the structuring effect of a broadly accepted paradigm wherein theoretical as well as practical enigmas can be solved.[1] To develop those broadly accepted paradigms, according to Karl Popper's logic of research, the members of a scientific discipline have to exchange their views on the theoretical foundations of their discipline.[2]

Indeed, Political Science has made far-reaching progress in methodological terms since the 1960ies. Differing from natural sciences as well as from economics, however, Political Science has not developed a broadly accepted theoretical framework and deduced leading questions of research. Political Science is rather operating as a grown complex of a multitude of organizations. Its sections, working groups and project groups – up to the foundation of individual scientific journals – do comply more with Luhmann's model of auto-poetic and self-referential sub-systems than with Popper's idea of scientists communicating with each other about the theories of their subject.

An advantage of this structure consists in the opportunity to set and discuss individual issues, theoretical ideas and methodological ideas in small scientific circles, bringing about versatile research and lectures. On this way, remarkable theoretical developments have come into existence, such as differentiated theories of political learning, the discussion of competing theories of international politics, developing theories of democracy or diverse approaches of communication analysis. On the other side, without such a framework there is no stimulation to scientifically communicating and solving scientific enigmas. Innovative corrections and qualifications hardly come up. Vice versa, without broad communication even substantial theoretical approaches hardly get scientific dynamics, whereby the impression of missing theoretical development arises. The resulting lacking of a scientific profile, again, lowers the importance of Political Science compared to other scientific disciplines and in public.

Increasingly self-conscious Political Science

Until the 1970ies, the missing profile of Political Science may be explained by the fact that vacancies of chairs often had been filled by other scientific disciplines, such as public right, economics, philosophy, or theology, and mutually exclusive concepts of politics and research faced each other. Since that time, however, Political Science increasingly developed to a self-conscious empirical-analytical science using qualitative as well as quantitative methods of

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[1] Kuhn, Thomas S. 1962: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, University of Chicago Press (1996: Third edition).

[2] Popper, Karl R. 1934: Logik der Forschung, (3d ed. 1969), Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Siebeck). In English: The Logic of Scientific Discovery (1959):
http://www.cosmopolitanuniversity.ac/library/LogicofScientificDiscoveryPopper1959.pdf

empirical research. The traditional dispute about the right concept of politics got alleviated and eventually became obsolete through the development of a multi-dimensional concept of politics. Background for this development was the encounter of traditional Political Science with imports of policy research.

From policy research to the multi-dimensional concept of politics

Policy research is standing in a long tradition of consulting ruling actors.[3] After the originally middle-European research and educational training had been gathered in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries, policy research came back as scientific import to Europe in the 1970ies and 1980ies. The US policy research encompassed different streams, such as the interdisciplinary school of policy studies that strongly focused on political contents, and the school of policy analysis that also takes interactive and institutional conditions into consideration.[4] See Thomas Dye's famous book title from 1976: *Policy analysis. What governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes,* whereby the door to the analysis of procedures and structures of the decision-making process has been largely opened.[5] A meanwhile particularly influential approach wherein substantial, interactional, and institutional variables have been combined is Paul Sabatier's advocacy-coalitions approach together with theories of political learning that refer to the approach.[6]

The encounter with policy research meant a challenge for the just stabilizing European political science: While in the hitherto existing sub-sections *political philosophy and history of ideas*, *political system*, *comparative politics*, and *international relations,* fundamental questions of legitimation and power dominated, now management issues of how certain policy areas should be operated were to be dealt with. The result of this encounter was the foundation of the multi-dimensional concept of political affairs, comprising the dimension of

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[3] Beyme, Klaus von 1985: Policy Analysis und traditionelle Politikwissenschaft, in: Hartwich, Hans-Herrmann (Hrsg.): Policy-Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ihr Selbstverständnis und ihr Verhältnis zu den Grundfragen der Politikwissenschaft, Opladen, S.7-29.

[4] The policy studies approach traditionally has been focused on aspects of the policy cycle. See to the current shape: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1541-0072. A transition between policy studies and policy analysis has been formed by Theodor Lowi's typology *distributive*, *redistributive*, *regulative*, *constitutional.* In this typology, certain structures of political decision-making process (arena structures) have been related to certain policy-types according to the motto *policy determines politics*. Patterns of interaction are deduced from characteristics of policies, that is, not analyzed as a precondition of its own.

[5] Dye, Thomas 1976: *Policy analysis. What governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes,* University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

[6] Jenkins-Smith, Hank C/Sabatier, Paul A. 1994: Evaluating the Advocacy Coalition Framework, in: Journal of Public Policy, Volume: 14, Issue: 02, Publisher: Cambridge Univ. Press, Pages: 175-203; Advocacy Coalitions Framework: http://www.mendeley.com/research/advocacy-coalition-framework-11/; Bandelow, Nils C. 1999: Lernende Politik. Advocacy-Koalitionen und politischer Wandel am Beispiel der Gentechnologiepolitik, Berlin: Ed. Sigma; Bandelow, Nils C. 2003: Lerntheoretische Ansätze in der Policy-Forschung, in: Maier, Matthias Leonhard et al. (Hrsg.): Politik als Lernprozess? Wissenszentrierte Ansätze in der Politikanalyse, Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 98-121.

public policy, the dimension of political interaction (politics), and the institutional dimension (polity).[7]

As fast this concept got about even in the middle European Political Science, as low impacts it had. Indeed it is meanwhile found in any German print or online dictionary on the concept of politics; however, it has not been considered to be theoretically relevant.[8] Even policy research, which has been traditionally operating with the policy-concept, does not differentiate political dimensions.[9] The multi-dimensional concept of political affairs, however, contains a huge potential of theoretical orientation for scientific political analysis. Crucial point of this orientation is the differentiation of diverse logics of political affairs.

Logics of political affairs

The multi-dimensional concept of political affairs implies different logics: While in the policy-dimension it is searched for optimal solutions of public problems, i.e., operational arguments do matter, in the dimension of political interaction it is about the question of what objectives respectively what actors prevail; that is, the logic of power is holding. Eventually, holding rules (norms and procedures) are crucial in the logic of institutional systems. These different logics, that also can be called rational calculi or rationalities, are in any case consistent and consequential:

- If the policy logic is holding, nothing counts but the better factual argument, such as answers to the question of what helps to deal with a public problem, for instance joblessness. In going on that way, models, empirical statements, and factual arguments up to the discussion of best possible solutions come up. As qualified rate those who deliver well-founded factual arguments – with the consequence that the most competent participants tend to rise up.
- In the institutional logic the analysis turns around the question of what rules are holding, who or what complies respectively defects. The promotion as well as come-down of involved actors corresponds with the complying or defecting with holding rule-structures.
- In the logic of political interaction, finally, nothing but power and potentials of power counts. According to this logic, actors who have potentials of influence and the ability to have their way rise up.

[7] Hartwich, Hans-Herrmann (Ed.) 1985, leading to a wide-spread reception and declamation of the multi-dimensional concept of political affairs in political science (see currently Wikipedia: *Politik:* http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politik)

[8] See to the spreading and seeming relevance of the multi-dimensional policy concept currently: Wikipedia: Politik http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politik; to the try to systematically display the multi-dimensional policy-concept in a textbook: Prittwitz, Volker von 1994: Politikanalyse, Opladen: UTB 1707, and Prittwitz, Volker von 2007: Vergleichende Politikanalyse, Stuttgart: UTB 2871.

[9] Schubert, Klaus/Bandelow/Nils C. (Hrsg.) 2008: Lehrbuch der Politikfeldanalyse, München: Oldenbourg; Schneider, Volker/Janning, Frank 2006: Politikfeldanalyse: Akteure, Diskurse und Netzwerke in der öffentlichen Politik, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Out of these logics the power logic is the one with the lowest preconditions. The policy-logic and the institutional logic, in contrast, require that it may be thought and felt beyond individual motives, and general rules come into existence. That's why politics is influenced in any case by the logic of political interaction; in contrast, the policy-logic and the institutional logic do not become relevant before the development of a political system. Insofar there is a capacity-related asymmetry of the three political logics.

With the development of a political system, i.e. with the upcoming of rule structures and public policy, practical politics is progressively going on in a mutual linkage between the three logics. That does not mean in any case a symmetric connection; mostly certain logics are phase-wise prevailing. Hence, a particularly interesting object of investigation is changes and transitions between phases of different prevailing political logics.

Analytical variables and models

Certain criteria, variables and models are of particular relevance to analyze certain political logics:

- The policy-logic can be analyzed in terms of *problems*, criteria of *problem-solution (such as effectiveness, efficiency, and normative acceptance), approaches of problem-solution, and effects of certain action*. Typical models are the policy cycle (model of steering-demands) und the causal depth model (gradual causality and intervention model).
- In the logic of interaction, politics may be analyzed in terms of actor motives, such as interests, values, ideas, social orientation of interaction, constellations of influence, such as political, organizational, cultural, economic, or military power, dependencies, and network-structures, finally in terms of certain forms of interactions, such as symmetric or asymmetric interaction, one-dimensional and multi-dimensional communication.
- In the logic of institutional systems, politics is about rule-structures, rule-related compliance or defects.

These criteria and models may be used separately or combined with each other. So variables of one dimension (for instance variables of interaction) can be defined as independent, variables of another dimension (let's say, institutional variables) as intervening, and then variables of public policy as dependent – a usual procedure in policy-analysis. Other combinations are feasible. If a given and an alternative rule structure are considered to be independent and a complex of policy-variables is considered as intervening, you may search for resulting structures of interaction in both cases. Here the arithmetic of power is widened by input-sided components of rules and policy.

Furthermore, you may scrutinize complex combinations of variables with respect to their follow-ups or preconditions of origin. If you compare, for instance, how certain types of public communication in presidential systems and how certain types of public

communication in parliamentary systems effect innovation processes in certain policy-areas, it is about the comparison of complexes of variables. This way of scrutinizing may be extended up to simulating complex patterns of political situations and processes.

Levels of analysis

Politics cannot not only analyzed by external observers; in fact, also political actors do analyze actions, processes and structures in certain political logics. In doing that they may even state and explain certain prevailing logics of other political actors. Thereby, different levels of analysis are possible: 1) the level of analyst, 2) the level of immediate actor, 3) and the level of mediate actors. So in an analysis of a parliamentary debate, often you can see that deputies perceive and/or call themselves as agents of problem-solving (policy perspective of self-perception), an impression that serves individual and party interests of that actors. Those actors, on the other side, tend to consider and to blame other actors to be motivated by individual and party certain (power perspective of other actors).

On that way, multi-dimensional analysis gets a vertical structure.

Relations amongst political logics

Because at least developed politics (including political systems and areas of public policy) materializes by mutual effects of its different partial logics, political affairs can be analyzed in a deeply contrasting and dynamic way only by taking those mutual effects into consideration. Here, the figurative expression „deeply contrasting" stands for an analysis to focus on certain variables, however looking at those variables in constellations with other variables respectively logics. Thereby, even changing meanings of diverse political logics become clear.

Exemplary, those connections can be shown by analyzing a political conflict process, such as Stuttgart 21: While in certain phases of this process the factual discussion of planning details seemed to be unproblematic, but also hardly relevant for the public, in other process-phases relational aspects between the involved actors (patterns of political interaction) came into the foreground. Following phases wherein factual aspects including a widened perception of alternative options were focused on can be understood only against the background of the happened phase of politicization. In order to understand this process, the concept of path dependency is not sufficient because also new, innovative forms of interaction, particularly communication, have to be analyzed. Also the traditional try to scrutinize single variables as independent respectively dependent is short-handed in a multi-dimensional dynamic analysis of this type. The best way to cope with the developing complexity may be a constellative analysis of situations following upon one another. Doing that, in any situation are scrutinized: a) the dominant logic of politics, b) relevant mutual relations between the logics of the situation and possible earlier situations.

General models of relations between political logics do hitherto not exist, but it is not far to seek for possible contradictions between the three political logics. At least in developed political systems the three political logics have to be consistent to a certain degree; because otherwise the political system, in the long run possibly the whole society, will go down. On the other side, there is a principal tension between the three logics: So public policy is in general discussed according to criteria of public goods while political interaction usually takes place between actors with limited motives. And new challenges of the public often demand new forms of governance while general institutions have to be protected against too much influence of one-sided power and other kinds of weakening. Looking at those contradictions, the role of power should be focused on because political interaction is of general relevance in politics while roles of policy and institutions depend on certain preconditions.

Combining political logics by actors

Different political logics usually are combined by involved actors. A special example of how different political logics have been combined in a tricky way refers to the self-presentation of the former German president Christian Wulff in the scandal touching him. [10] In his television interview from January 04, 2012, Wulff conceded *one made mistakes* (distanced declaration of a rule breach), presented himself on the other side as responsible president who had to exclude those mistakes in the time to come (self-presentation as provider of a public function). Besides, he implied that a campaign against him in certain media was going on (Implicit suggestion: Other involved actors are operating in the logic of power). Also by this self-defense Wulff, despite grave objections, could stay in his charge some weeks longer. Only when the public prosecution department started to ascertain against him (institutionalized accusation), the political pressure increased that much that he had to retreat.

Another example was the temporary campaigning junction of the French president Nicolas Sarkozy and the German chancellor Angela Merkel (*Merkozy*).[11] In this case, both partner tried to use highly legitimated foreign and economic policy demands (policy logic) in Sarkozy's electoral campaign. This multi-dimensional tactics, however, backfired insofar as Merkel, in the French public, primarily was considered to be a representative of German interests. That's why the *Merkozy* phase ceased soon.

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[10] Hawemann, Robert (März 2012): Perspektiven zwischen Skandaliertem und Öffentlichkeit. Mehrdimensionale Analyse des Falles Wulff anhand des Fernsehinterviews vom 04.01.2012 (Seminar paper/Proseminar Mehrdimensionale Politikanalyse, Otto-Suhr-Institut für Politikwissenschaft/FU Berlin, winter 2011/2012)

[11] Molt, Arthur: *„Merkozy" im gemeinsamen Wahlkampf. Mediale Inszenierung der deutsch-französischen Außenpolitik vor dem Hintergrund der französischen Präsidentschaftswahl 2012* (Seminar-Papier/Proseminar Mehrdimensionale Politikanalyse, Otto-Suhr-Institut für Politikwissenschaft/FU Berlin im Wintersemester 2011/2012)

Historically quite often emerging was another even wider ranging form of coupling different political logics by mighty political actors: A current or possible public hazard is deliberately overdone or even collusively produced in order to magnify public attention and specifically public legitimation of ruling actors.[12] Here, policy demands are manipulated in order to get advantages in political interaction. The logic of power not only shapes policy proposals, but also the awareness of facts.

Manipulation of that character is no trifle, as you can see by its side effects: In situations of protecting against threats that have been overdone or collusively produced, the structure of interaction changes in the same way as in real hazards: General rights, particularly rights of political and social minorities, are limited, in some cases completely abrogated. Whoever disposes at power over the public awareness of factual situations, not only dominates the political agenda, but also the dominant interpretation of institutions. Democratically sensitive actors and analysts are well aware of the risk of overdoing and collusively producing public hazards by mighty actors. The point is to prevent regression of multi-dimensional politics to one-dimensional power.

Political Science: On the track to a structured solving of enigmas?

Synoptically, the multi-dimensional concept of political affairs embodies a basic option of theoretical orientation, multi-dimensional political analysis a research approach of structured enigma-solving within this orientation. To the degree Political Science opens for such enigma-solving that might:

a) trigger a boost of innovative research in Political Science,
b) intensify communication in Political Science and thereby foster the internal scientific cohesion,
c) give a fresh impetus to scientific lectures and political education,
d) allow Political Science to developing a characteristic scientific profile,
e) strengthen scientific capacities of consulting.

Whether this option will be materialized, is going to depend on whether the existing sections and working groups of Political Science will include challenges of multi-dimensional political analysis in their discussions and programs.

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[12] See for instance the so-called "Emser Depesche" that triggered the German-French war of 1870/1871, the declaration of Falkland War by the English premier minister Margaret Thatcher in the year 1982, the usage of the Elbe flood by the German chancellor Schröder in his electoral campaign 2002, and the propagation of financial „rescue" packages by the German government and the EU since 2010.