



STRATEGIES OF DECISION

HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN THE DECISION-MAKING
PROCESS

WHY IS RADICAL POLICY CHANGE SO DIFFICULT?

Two main obstacles:

- Conflicts and oppositions by those who suffer the costs of a decision (opponents)
- Disinterest of potential allies – those actors who could provide resources which are necessary for getting approval

OPTIMAL SITUATIONS ARE RARE:

- The promoter has enough resources to take the decision on his own
- The solution is a win-win game
- Goals are shared by all actors and hence collaboration is the normal mode of interaction
- The context is stable

WHAT IS A STRATEGY?

It is the intentional manipulation of some elements of the policy process as to obtain a configuration favourable to taking a non-incremental decision

FOUR POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

1. Manipulating resources
2. Manipulating the content of the decision
3. Manipulating modes of interactions
4. Manipulating the network

I. Manipulating resources

TWO WAYS OF MANIPULATING RESOURCES

1. **Increasing the resources of the innovator by finding allies.** **Example:** Vele di Scampia
2. **Decrease the resources of the opponents.** **Example:** Diaccia Botrona (but also expert oppositions, judicial appeals, etc.).

LEVELE DI SCAMPIA



DIACCIA BOTRONA



- 1987 permit renovation to Federcaccia

WWF:

- Asks to obtain the concession of the area to the Ministry of Finance
- Asks to the Ministry of the Environment the transformation into a natural reserve
- Obtains EU funding
- Obtains the confiscation of the area

WHY MANIPULATING RESOURCES

ADVANTAGES:

- No need to change the proposed solution, nor the problem to be tackled
- You can use it also with zero-sum games

HOWEVER:

- Everyone can use it; especially the defenders of the status quo – So watch the timing
- It does not eliminate oppositions, but helps to wake up consent and interest

2. manipulating the content of the decision

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO DO IT:

You can alter the content of the decision through:

1. **SEGMENTATION:** you cut the decision into pieces
2. **ENLARGEMENT:** you add projects and details and change the proposal

SEGMENTATION

You can introduce radical changes through a series of incremental steps if:

- The context is relatively stable
- There is continuity in the direction of the process
- The decision is amenable to be segmented

The main advantage is to neutralise the opposition which are more radical

ENLARGING THE STAKE

- You have to internalise new interests by adding projects
- **BEWARE:** The new elements to be included should be those cared for by the opponents
- The main condition for success is the flexibility of the original proposal

Examples: package deals, compensations, ...

3. Manipulating modes of interactions

WHAT TO DO

1. Show-down (go directly to conflict)
2. Inclusive strategies (make the actors collaborate)

SHOW DOWN – EXCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

- **Examples:** Vote of confidence, Referenda
- You need to be able to act unilaterally
- Resource balance should be in favor of the innovator
- Implementation should not be a problem

INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Modes of increasing consensus by changing how actors interact:

- Participatory decisions

How to: you need to divide the process in two phases: 1) how to decide; 2) taking the decision

SOME CONDITIONS ARE NEEDED

- The problem is shared by the actors. There should be a conflict on interests, more than values
- There are limited alternatives and criteria and there is a rational way to agree on the criteria
- The main advantages regard: «waking the sleeping dog», gaining legitimacy, collecting information

4. Network manipulation

IT MEANS CHANGING THE NETWORK OF ACTORS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS

- Increase the **number of interactions** (Trust? Learning?) or decrease direct interactions (Diplomacy)
- Increase/decrease **complexity** (change the types of actors included or their territorial level)
- Modify **centrality**

A general 'law' of decisional processes

The complexity should couple the complexity of the policy, i.e. the number and diversity of actors/interests involved in the problem/solution