Which institutional stages does a relevant law go through from its conception to proclamation – and what channels of influence exist at these stages? Above all, what are the effects of these structural specifics on the interests of the actor? The relationship with the aforementioned training is obvious. While the latter is aimed at developing a political mindset on the part of the client, navigation is about using this mindset for orientation in the power field. Safe navigation builds upon successful training.

Navigation as a consulting task is not to be confused with strategy development. The latter is the identification of the ideal causal path (maximum chance of success, minimum costs) to a specific and clearly defined strategic goal, taking into account the strategic environment, i.e.: time horizon, variables and constants (see Chapter 2.5.2); it falls within the scope of condensing (see Chapter 3.3). Navigation is thus the prerequisite for successful strategy development as well as for organization and coordination. By defining the political terrain and its institutional, procedural paths, it lays the foundations for power consultants and power actors to develop and implement a political strategy. Still, another component is indispensable for this: the collection and analysis of information on political, legal and societal developments and topics, and on actors who are relevant to the interests of the client. This core element will be described in more detail in the following section under the second major concept of power leadership – condensing.

3.3 CONDENSING

In the previous section, we outlined the key concept of empowering and the conditions that exist for an understanding of the board in power chess. The focus there was on the internalization of the strategic constants of the overall political field: political logic, political language and political ethos. Now we turn to the concept of condensing the position analysis of power chess. In order to develop game strategies and take control of the game, the power actor must be able to understand specific constellations on the board and to evaluate them in terms of their goals. Such constellations can be assigned to one political subarea or several subareas – we also speak of an *arena* – of the entire field (e.g. transport and infrastructure policy, health policy and digital policy).[31] These arenas consist of four main elements: *firstly,* political actors or stakeholders, their interests and the balance of

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31   A short note on the terminology. The term *arena* denotes the concrete political action space in which a power actor moves. Within this action space, numerous policy fields or political subdivisions (consumer policy, tax policy, youth protection policy, health

power between them; *secondly,* political issues and points of contention between actors; *thirdly,* specific laws, regulations, standards, etc. of the political arena; and *fourthly,* reform projects, developments and trends in the political arena.

These four elements make up the *strategic variables* of power chess, those factors that, unlike the basic rules, can always change in the course of a game. The goal of condensing is thus to provide continuously updated, compact knowledge of the respective political arena, which enables the power player to assess his or her own situation and form strategies. This means that the homo consultans needs to inform clients about all relevant political and social developments in a quick, compact and understandable way. However, the mere acquisition and mediation of information only forms the first component or the first phase of condensing. Without successive filtering, classification and (probabilistic) assessment, political information has little strategic value. Below we outline our four-phase model of political position analysis. This model cumulates in the development of a policy action plan. It thus forms the hinge between the two guiding principles of political empowering and political influencing.

3.3.1 The Four-Phase Model

The four-phase model presents the various steps of the positional analysis. Each phase involves the analytical enrichment of political data – commencing with the "raw mass" of the pure information, and culmination with the strategic assessment and recommended action.

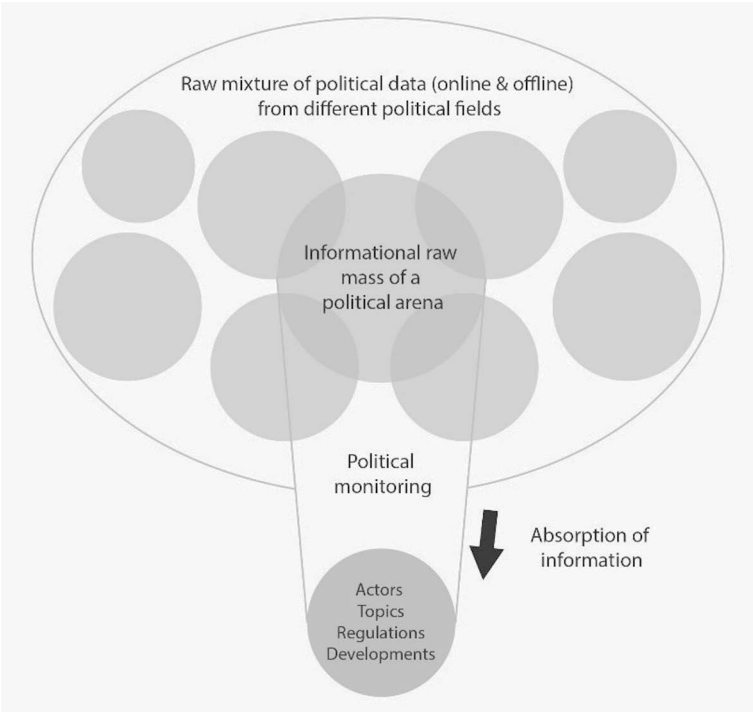### Phase (1) Monitoring and Intelligence

The first phase of the political position analysis pursues the central question: What do you need to know? This question is by no means banal in relation to the political arena of the actor, especially in the context of the exponential growth in data due to digitization (see Chapters 2.3.2 and 3.2.2). In the days of 24-hour news cycles, there are thousands of agency reports, press releases, news items, commentaries,

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policy, etc.) can overlap. The more diverse the goals of the power actor and the larger his or her range of action, the larger the number of relevant policy areas usually is. For a digital technology group, not only the field of economic policy is relevant, but also infrastructure policy (for example, in terms of broadband deployment) and research policy (for example, in terms of the cooperative development of artificial intelligence). Positioning yourself successfully in your arena thus means using all relevant policy areas strategically and tactically.

tweets, social media postings, newsletters, and videos of potential political relevance on the web every minute. In addition there is parliamentary printed matter, court judgments, reports from authorities, foundations and NGOs, scientific publications and, of course, verbal communication in personal (technical) conversations, discussions and lectures. In short, for every policy segment – whether consumer protection, finance or agriculture – there is a tremendous amount of information, both apparent facts and evalutions.

The homo consultan's first task is to continuously gather information from the informational political cosmos that is relevant to his or her client's specific arena. This form of selective information gathering is political *monitoring*. The technical implementation of monitoring is discussed in the following section (see Chapter 3.2.2) where we talk about the tools and techniques of compression; here we focus on the core functions of obtaining information. Target-oriented monitoring focuses on the four main elements of political constellations (actors, topics, regulations, developments) and follows a series of key questions: Which activities, statements and controversies characterize the previously selected political arena – and from whom do they originate? What are the dates and deadlines of significant events (for example, elections, committee hearings, technical meetings, parliamentary votes, etc.) – and who will be there? What are the latest statistics and surveys in the arena, for example, as they relate to unemployment, the level of broadband availability, the approval of the European Union, the Brexit issue, sentiments regarding US immigration policies such as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) or adolescent adiposity? What concrete legislative proposals exist – and what is their status? And so on.

Figure 11: Political Monitoring as a Selection Process

This comprehensive form of data and information gathering from public sources, professional databases and personal contacts is essential for the homo consultans to gain the most detailed picture possible of the arena and to ensure that no potentially significant or explosive information is overlooked. However, this informational raw mass only provides strategic added value for the client as a result of the first stage of analysis: *intelligence*.

The keyword intelligence refers to the combination of filtering and prioritization of the collected information with regard to its relevance for the homo consultandus.

The relevance of information is, *firstly*, a question of its validity: mere rumors (e.g. about reform projects, dismissal of public officials, scandals, etc.) that are anonymously distributed via social media channels are of much lower importance in the compilation of intelligence than facts that are confirmed by more than one reliable source.

Secondly, relevance depends on the power status of the actors. For example, the opinion of a local community chairman of a town in central Hessen as to the
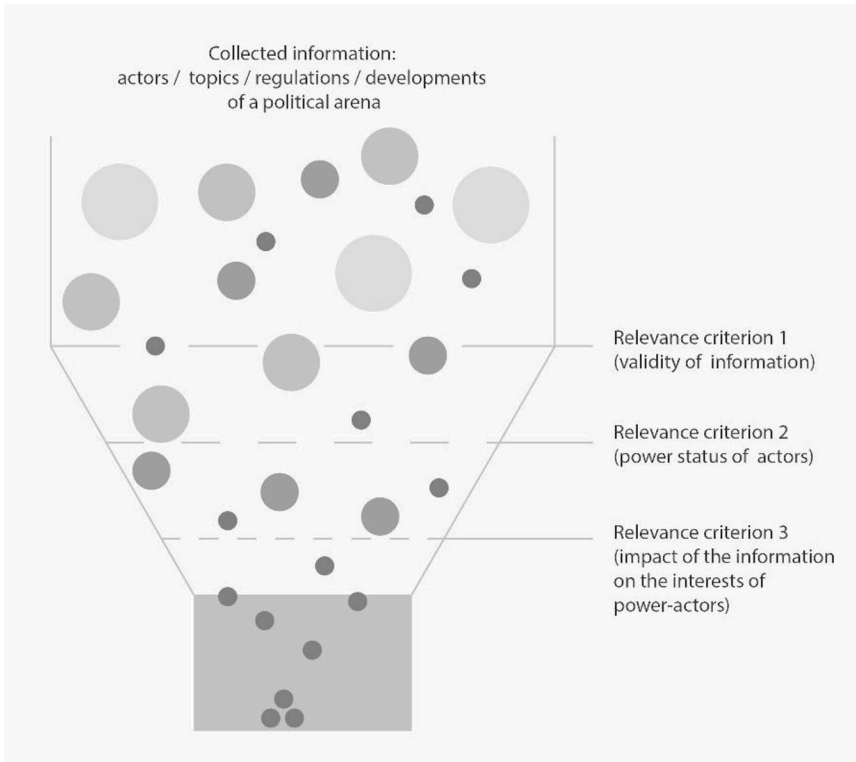
alleged risks of GM corn is of far less relevance for a producer of transgenic cereals than a corresponding communiqué from the national Minister of Agriculture. Similarly the comments of the local chapter of the Democratic Party in a yet smaller town in Texas on the alleged risk of global warming to local agriculture would have less impact than a statement by the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

The *third* relevance factor is the impact of the information content on the interests of the power actor: does the issue only affect the power actor's objectives peripherally or does it have such fundamental effects that targets may need to be revised? An example of the latter case is the announcement by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo that from the autumn of 2017, the use of e-cigarettes in restaurants and bars should be banned just as consequentially as that of conventional cigarettes.[32] This regulatory information is of immense significance for tobacco companies that are currently diversifying their product range and need to plan their long-term business development, especially in view of the signal it gives to other US cities.

The definition of relevance criteria is followed by their prioritization. The relevance criteria selected here demonstrate a logical order of priority – validity of information, power status of the actors, and impact of the information on the interests of the power actor. For example, information is of little value if it mentions powerful actors and may have potential implications for the power actor, but the source of the information is unreliable. Information that is not of solid quality can thus be filtered out by the first relevance criterion.

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32 Cf. Maslin Nir, Sarah (2017), New York State Bans Vaping Anywhere Cigarettes Are Prohibited, in: New York Times from 23th October 2017, [online] https://www.ny-times.com/2017/10/23/nyregion/new-york-bans-vaping-ecigs-bars-restaurants.html, retrieved on 30.1.2018. One also thinks of the Sugary Drinks Portion Cap Rule, the Soda Ban, as proposed by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his successor Bill de Blasio, aimed at limiting the size of sweetened soft drinks in New York City; it was subsequently repealed in 2015. Cf. Goldberg, Dan (2017): De Blasio sours on tackling sugar, [online] https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/city-hall/story/2017/05/03/de-blasio-sours-on-tackling-sugar-111726, retrieved on 22.05.2018.

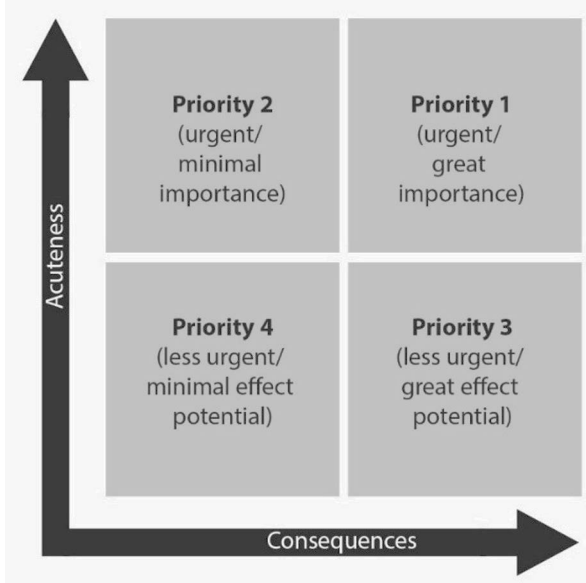*Figure 12: Filtering as the First Stage of Intelligence Analysis*

On the basis of these relevance criteria, filtering – as the first stage of intelligence processing – results in the identification of a comparatively small amount of relevant information. In short, filtering focuses on a specific set of information that then becomes the subject of deeper systemization and evaluation. This process requires the power consultant to be practiced in processing large amounts of data quickly, and also to be able to analyze data precisely and client-specifically according to the relevance criteria.

This separation of the proverbial wheat from the chaff is followed by prioritization as the second stage of intelligence processing. Based on the so-called Eisenhower matrix, this method not only structures the data, but can also serve as the basis for subsequent consultancy. Here all the filtered information is evaluated in terms of urgency and importance. The urgency of information is measured by how quickly the consultant has to respond, that is, the timely evaluation and classification of the information. The importance of information assesses the content of the information or its political impact.

The evaluation and sorting of the filtered information results in a four-part categorization, which identifies a small amount of priority information followed by a large amount of subordinate or less urgent information.

Figure 13: Prioritization as the Second Stage of Intelligence Analysis

On the one hand, this continuously updated and hierarchically organized information is vital to ensuring that the power consultant and client are constantly up-to-date with the arena and are able to respond tactically to short-term challenges. This monitoring and intelligence is often referred to as an early warning system. On the other hand, the information is also indispensable for long-term political positioning and strategy building. Thus, unlike the classic Eisenhower matrix, the information categorized in Quadrant 4 is not completely ignored in the consultant's work agenda, but is rather part of the long-term and ongoing policy monitoring of a particular political arena. Specifically, they form the basis or starting point for the second phase of the political position analysis.

Phase (2) Arena Analysis, Stakeholder Identification and Topic Identification

The second phase addresses the key question: Where do you stand? Here the focus is on the precise mapping of the political field of action in which the power actor moves – with regard to legislative and administrative framework conditions; actors or stakeholders from politics, administration, business and civil society who

influence the media debate and politics; and discursive topics and issues. In this phase, the previously filtered and prioritized information is condensed into a three-dimensional, political picture of the situation in which the client's position can be pinpointed. The three core functions of this phase – arena analysis, stakeholder identification and topic identification – are not separate processes but are interdependent aspects that supplement one another.

The term "arena analysis" is often used to describe a wide variety of investigations of the socio-political actor environment.[33] We use the concept in a narrower, more concrete sense. *First*, it describes the legally binding rules (laws, regulations governing implementation, directives) and procedural orders at the national and supranational levels which define the scope for action of the actors in the respective policy area or policy areas. *Second*, it includes the relevant international treaties, conventions and protocols – for example the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or the tobacco smuggling protocol of the WHO. *Third*, it describes voluntary standards and conventions, for example, the IT standards of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) or the German Industry Standards (DIN) or the IBR (incorporated by reference) standards of the American National Standards Institute ANSI). These three categories determine the parameters of the formal system of rules and decision-making for a specific arena; this is therefore the equivalent of the overall political system logic (see Chapter 3.2.1) but as applied to a specific political field.

Accordingly, an arena analysis applied, for example, to broadly focused nature and environmental protection organizations like the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) or NatureServe would describe the most important regulatory areas of federal nature conservation (from the provisions on agriculture and forestry to criteria for planning approval procedures), regulations concerning renewable energy sources, and also the provisions of the chemicals legislation, pollution control and waste management. This is then supplemented by information on the respective legislative responsibilities and decision-making rules for amendments and reforms. A powerful arena analysis thus covers the client's entire range of interests and activities by condensing the rules, norms, standards, etc. of all relevant policy fields (in this case environmental, agricultural, energy and infrastructure policy) into one overall picture or one political map.

Stakeholder identification is not undertaken subsequent to the arena analysis – unlike the relationship between intelligence (filtering and prioritization) and monitoring – but takes place in parallel. Essentially, it involves listing all relevant actors (i.e. organizations and individuals) who are connected with concrete inter

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33   For an overview, see Köppl (2017): pp. 46ff.

ests to the arena of the client and who can influence politics in that arena directly or indirectly. In the language of the power-chess model, it includes all the figures that make up the concrete play constellation in their positioning relative to one another. Knowledge about these actors is as crucial for the positional analysis as knowledge about the arena's rules and decision-making system: they make up the aggregate of factual or potential allies and opponents, as well as neutral decision-makers. These are the organizations and individuals that the power actor must convince with a powerful communication strategy or from whom it is necessary to be differentiated thanks to unique selling points. However, the mere identification of stakeholders is not yet an evaluation of their strategic potential and goals; that is the subject of the third phase: stakeholder mapping.

Stakeholder identification is divided into the following categories: state actors (government members, MPs, federal agencies, etc.), associations and other bodies governed by public law (e.g. professional self-governments, churches, trade unions), NGOs and non-profit associations and foundations, and finally companies. The extent to which these categories are filled depends largely on the arena of the power actor and his or her goals. Thus, e.g., the political positioning of a producer of alcoholic spirits wanting to improve their position in relation to advertising bans or increased excise taxes will involve numerous stakeholders from the fields of addiction and health policy as well as the main professional associations and financially strong competitors. At the US governmental level, for example, the federal food and drug administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives as well as congressional committees will be relevant. At the association and corporate level, medical associations and health insurances, but also e.g. the brewery associations are pertinent. In the category of non-profit entities, organizations concerned with addiction issues, and at the level of private sector players, global players in the beer and spirits sector come to the fore.

Topic identification is the final element of the second analysis phase. It aims to identify those topics and corresponding theses and arguments that dominate the political discourse of the arena or have the potential to shape it in the future. This class of topics of discussion and disputes is also referred to as *policy issues* in political science and political power consulting. Policy issues can act as a catalyst for fundamental legal reforms or trigger protracted struggles and blockades between different groups, or they can stir up public opinion for or against power actors. Above all, they comprise a set of political content that requires every protagonist in the arena to take a position if they want to participate successfully in shaping politics. These policy issues are highly specific to each policy area. With regard to the important field of digital policy, such key topics are e.g. cyber security and data protection, e-government and e-learning.

Knowing the policy issues of an arena is necessary for the homo consultans for three reasons. First, they determine the scope of content with which they can assert their own interests. If their goals cannot be linked to dominant key issues, or if they cannot be formulated as solutions or answers to related problems, the actor runs the risk of reaching neither decision-makers nor the public. Secondly, because of their potential for mobilization and attention, policy issues are key opportunity and risk factors in the arena. Thus everyday topics of the food discourse, such as sustainability or fair trade, have – since their rapid growth in importance in the 2000s – proved to be major strategic challenges for global food companies such as Nestlé or General Mills. Third, topic identification forms the basis for the power actor to define his or her *unique selling point* (USP). For example, the political USP of a power actor may be the ability to provide an innovative and plausible solution to a policy issue, or a reputation as a credible organization that – unlike its competitors – has been reliably supporting certain core issues for years (see also Section 3.2.3). The USP of Germany's Social Democrats under Gerhard Schröder consisted of the fact that they were the only party in the early 2000s with a credible reform concept for the challenges of the German social system and the labor market – the Agenda 2010. The USP of Bernie Sanders, a serious contender for the office of President of the United States in 2015, was his being "in need of some money." This made him stand out from the mainstream of Democrats and Republicans, parties which support the often very high tuition fees at American universities. The unique feature of the Catholic Church as a power actor, however, is its unrivaled organizational stability and constancy of values and beliefs with regard to moral-political issues. Ultimately, the definition of the USP depends on both the central themes of the political arena and the specific strategic powers or strengths and weaknesses of the power actor. Only if both aspects are synthesized in the positional analysis can a convincing unique selling point be derived.

The core elements of the second phase of political consolidation – arena analysis, stakeholder identification, topic identification – together ensure the classification and systematization of all relevant information in the form of a map of the political arena. This forms the basis for a strategic-probabilistic assessment of the position of the power actor, thus entering the third phase.
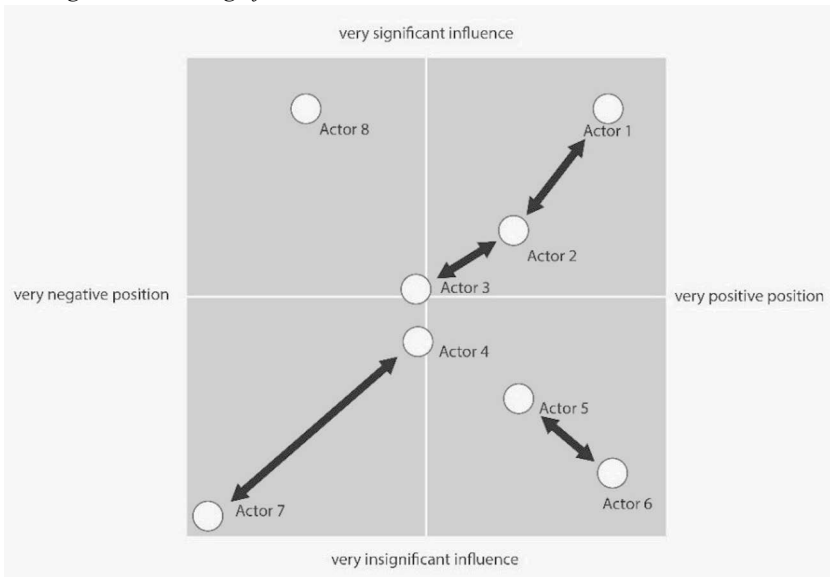
Phase (3) Stakeholder Mapping, Network Analysis, Risk Assessment, Scenario Analysis

The third phase focuses on the key question: What can help you, and what can hurt you? Both aspects are aligned. The goal is to determine the opportunities and risks of the strategic environment outlined above for homo consultandus and his

or her goals, with regard to three core aspects: strengths and weaknesses of (potential) allies and opponents, strategic potentials and deficits and possible development scenarios of the entire political arena. Once we talk about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, etc., we abandon the descriptive analysis – which was characteristic of the previous phases – and move into the field of forecasting and probabilities. Thus, the final precursor to strategy formation is achieved through a probability-based goal-means-environment calculation (for the significance of probabilistics for political strategy and the exercise of power see Chapters 1.1 and 2.5.2). The third phase evaluates all previously collected and systematized information in relation to the moves and countermoves the player has to expect in his or her power chess game, assessing the maneuvers that represent a particular risk and the maneuvers from which an advantage can be accrued.

The keyword *stakeholder mapping* covers two blocks of tasks. The *first* includes the ordinal scaling of the other actors in terms of their influence in the arena (from very significant to very insignificant) and their attitude towards homo consultandus or his or her interests (from very positive to very negative).
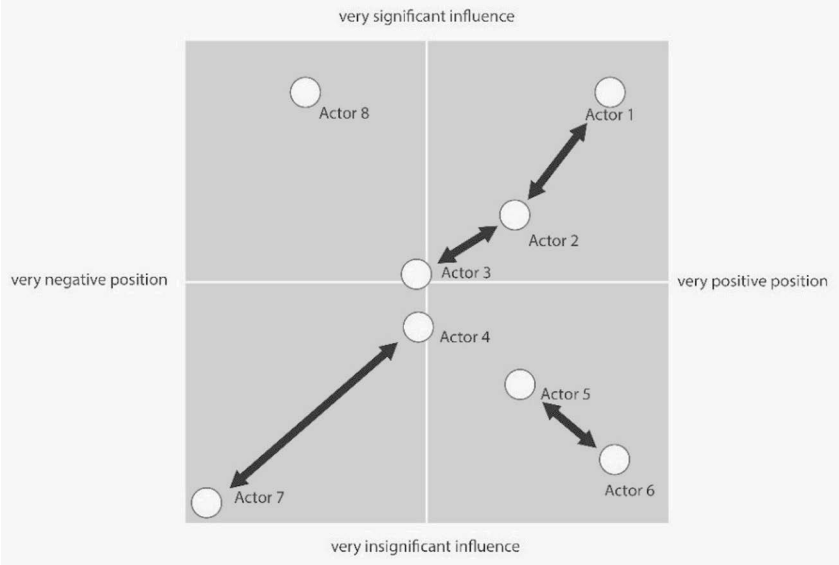
Figure 14: Scaling of Actors

Depending on the specific constellation, this analysis yields up to six classes: strong and weak (potential) allies, strong and weak (potential) opponents, strong and weak neutral players. This two-dimensional scaling is important for strategic positioning as it allows statements about who is useful to homo consultandus in

the realization of goals and who may become dangerous, and also determines crucial steps of the policy action plan. Thus it is usually hardly worthwhile to develop a counter-strategy for an organization whose goals are diametrically opposed to one's own but which has little strategic power to enforce their interests against resistance. Powerful neutral actors are strategically relevant in that both sides – opponents and allies – have an interest in attracting them to their side or, at least, not triggering their opposition. For particularly strong opponents, the question arises whether they are best met offensively or defensively or whether the homo consultandus is well advised to avoid the confrontation as completely as possible.

Although this scaling maps the objective power relations it does not depict the interdependencies of the stakeholders. However, these are obviously also strategically relevant: if e.g. the managing director of a – in itself – resource-weak industrial association maintains close links to the senior staff of a powerful administrative institution, they suddenly become important as a political ally. The second task block of stakeholder mapping is therefore the network analysis. It traces cross-links between and within the relevant organizations and reveals the importance of interfaces and multipliers, which are necessarily not captured by two-dimensional scaling. Such connections include formal and informal institutional interconnections (for example, the loose but still tangible political alliance between the NRA and parts of the Republican Party) and also personal ties and friendships, which can sometimes even run counter to political loyalties.

Figure 15: Network Analysis

Networks of this type are not only relevant as independent strategic variables. Insofar as the power actor can create and intensify political connections in the course of strategy development and implementation – not only with other actors, but also between them – network building becomes a possible strategic means of establishing one's interests. Decisive for this aspect of stakeholder mapping is thus not only the question of what forms of connections exist between which actors, but also where there are as yet no networks and for what reason. Depending on the nature and extent of the arena and the number of actors, different network analyses may differ greatly in terms of level of detail and density of description, and go far beyond the schematic representation in Figure 15. However, the benchmark remains the reduction of complexity and the establishment of strategic orientation in terms of opportunities and risks. Here the homo consultans has the duty not to overwhelm clients with graphically appealing but confusing diagrams – or to lead them astray with deceptive simplifications.

There are also two core functions associated with the catchword *risk assessment:* on the one hand, the determination of the internal strengths and weaknesses of homo consultandus, i.e. his or her strategic potencies and deficits; on the other hand, the evaluation of external opportunities and threats by means of a probability analysis of political scenarios (for example, legislative processes, public discourse, elections) that positively or negatively affect goals. For example, changes in regulatory conditions have a massive impact on the corporate development of companies. Exemplary for this is the decline of the German solar industry after the drastic curtailment of the photovoltaic subsidy from 2012 and the refusal of the federal government to enter into a competition with China. The two aspects of risk assessment are by no means strictly separate. The external analysis relies decisively on a prior penetration of the internal actor perspective.

The *internal* risk assessment combines the process of condensing and positional analysis with a central element of empowering: organizational consulting (see Chapter 3.2.4). To clarify how well or poorly established the homo consultandus is in his or her arena homo consultans must be very familiar with the organizational structure, the work processes and, in particular, the strategic potential of the client. The client's strengths and weaknesses can be determined using the categories of strategic potencies described in Chapter 2.5.2. Here the rule of thumb is that every potency greater than the average of the other players in the political arena is a strength and any below-average potency is a weakness.[34]

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34   The comparison with the average values of the potencies of strategic actors in an arena
      is crucial. Strengths and weaknesses are relational categories, i.e. an actor is always

We distinguish among seven different types of strategic powers (and corresponding strengths and weaknesses):

1. *Organizational capability*: the capability to set clear strategic goals and make corresponding decisions.
2. *Mobilization capability*: the capability to activate different groups of people (voters, members, clients, believers, patients, etc.) to enforce strategic interests.
3. *Network capability*: the ability to forge alliances with other actors to increase the reach of one's own concerns and/or to increase credibility.
4. *Mediation capability:* the capability to communicate those concerns that are relevant to one's own goals in a targeted and convincing manner to individuals and organizations.
5. *Fame:* public attention combined with acknowledgment of proven power competence, power knowledge and power itself.
6. *Financial potency:* monetary resources for staff, infrastructure, campaigns, etc.
7. *Willingness to make a sacrifice:* the motivation to accept deprivation and take risks in pursuit of strategic goals.

The challenge for the power consultant is not only to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the client in relation to these seven categories, but above all to relate them to their strategic environment. External opportunities and threats – that which helps homo consultandus and that which can hurt him or her – are not purely exogenous factors that simply occur. They arise from the meeting of the strengths and weaknesses of the power actor with the elements (topics, actors, trends, etc.) of his or her field of action. Thus, e.g. a discourse characterized by highly moralized policy issues (such as drug or gambling policies) is a strategic threat, especially if homo consultandus has little ability to mediate or is incapable of substantiating a position with credible arguments. The severity of other risk factors, such as a broad alliance of well-connected and financially strong opponents, in turn, strongly depends on whether the networking ability and the financial power of homo consultandus are above average or not. And in some strategic contexts, even perceived weaknesses may turn out to be opportunities and vice versa. For example, the less than glorious (according to our taxonomy – that is, politically inexperienced and previously without major achievements) Austrian politician Sebastian
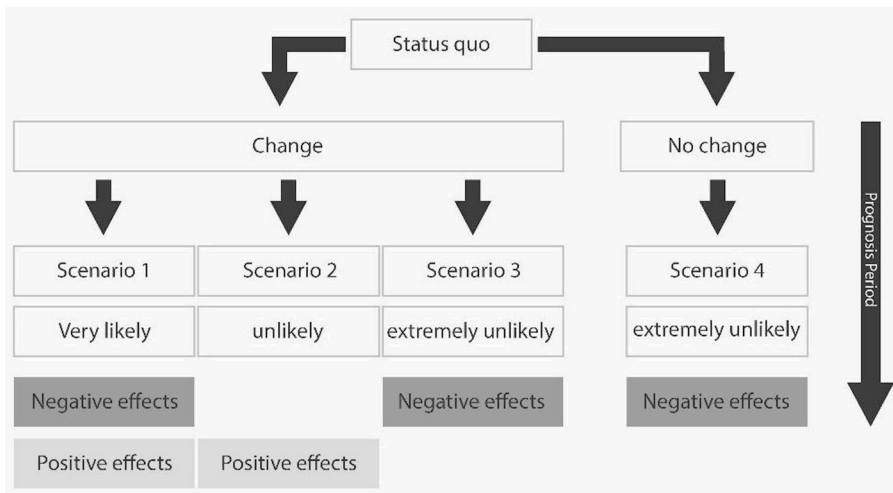
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strong or weak relative to a variable set of other actors. He or she is never strong or weak in any absolute or non-relative sense.

Kurz of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) was successful in the Austrian elections of 2017, beating his rival, Christian Kern of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ), because he was perceived as a 'newcomer' and 'blank slate' in a climate characterized by skepticism of elites.

In short, the assessment of player-specific opportunities and threats requires the power consultant to, first, know the client and his or her interests, strengths and weaknesses; second, to locate the client in the context of the relevant political arena, rule system and policy issues; and third, to assess the client in terms of his or her power-strategic relationships with other players and networks.

This knowledge is also the prerequisite for a precise *scenario analysis.* A scenario analysis is basically a prognostic statement about political and/or economic, media and cultural developments in an arena and their expected impact on the interests of the homo consultandus and those of the other actors. It comprises three elements: an inventory of the status quo; at least two alternative and mutually exclusive scenarios, including probability of occurrence and probable effects; and a time frame for the forecast. Each scenario analysis makes three predictions: first, the probability of a particular scenario occurring; second, the likelihood that the scenario will have – if it happens – effects of a particular type; third, that if the scenario occurs it will do so within a specified time frame. This analysis can be applied to a wide range of issues, from parliamentary elections and their implications for politics, business and civil society, to sectoral development in terms of the concentration or diffusion of market power, to individual legislative reform projects.

Figure 16: Scenario Analysis, Schematic Presentation

The relevance of scenario analysis for strategic positioning has a *passive* and an *active* dimension. The passive dimension involves the homo consultandus being enabled to organize protection against impairments to his or her interests (coalition negotiations with difficult partners, intensification of competition in a competitive market segment, higher taxes on certain services, etc.) or to make the most of opportunities (a new, more business-friendly government, the emergence of new markets, increased public attention for the concerns of NGOs etc.). In short, once the client is able to gauge what is likely to happen within a clearly demarcated timeframe – and what is not – he or she can better assess how to *react* to it.

The active dimension, on the other hand, involves, firstly, the client being able to exercise a more targeted influence on developments in the arena and shape them in his or her interests. A strategic risk is not simply given. Once identified, the homo consultandus can assess whether – and if so, how – the risk can be reduced, i.e. how he or she has to act. The scenario analysis thus influences the active steps of the political strategy (discussions with decision-makers and stakeholders, development and control of topics, etc.). Secondly, the active dimension derives from insights into how homo consultandus can use resources more efficiently by identifying achievable and unattainable goals. If the analysis shows that one of two scenarios is extremely unlikely, the power actor can spend most resources on influencing the more likely scenario or adapting to its effects. If, for instance, an EU regulation would entail a high logistical adjustment for a particular industry but is already massively supported by the majority of EU states, it is perhaps no longer a rational option for the industry association to lobby directly against the regulation. Instead, it may be better to focus energy on the resource-efficient implementation of the new standards and to anticipate further regulatory tightening.

However, scenario analyses only develop these benefits if they are *valid*, i.e. if they stand on a methodologically and substantively sound foundation. This does not mean that they have to produce exact percentages or even deterministic statements (if event x occurs, necessarily also event y must occur) – in any case the political power field is too complex and characterized by too many unpredictable imponderables, so-called 'wild cards' (see Chapter 2.5.2) for this to be possible. Instead, the goal is to achieve a significantly higher than average hit rate in predicting political scenarios. In other words, the analysis of the political expert is only worth something if it is clearly superior to the level of interested lay people in the long term and is supported by reliable evidence.

For this, the homo consultans has to consider a number of conditions and quality criteria. *First*, before concrete probability forecasts can be set up for development scenarios, it must be clear that the analysis covers all plausible scenarios. One of the biggest jokes of geopolitical forecasting is the inability of Western

power consultants, political scientists, military strategists and intelligence officials to predict the collapse of the USSR in the 1980s.[35] The problem was not that they considered the collapse of the giant empire unlikely – they did not even have the event 'on their radar' and therefore did not assign it a probability value. Constructing plausible scenarios is thus a creative act that requires the power consultant not only to have detailed knowledge of the arena and its actors, but also so-called 'out of the box thinking' – i.e. the ability to question habitual thought patterns, predictions, stereotypes, etc. and to assess the client's strategic environment in an unbiased manner.

Second, homo consultans not only needs to know the actual state of the political arena, but also its history. For example, anyone who remembers the power-political marginalization of the FPD in the Merkel II cabinet from 2009 to 2013 and the accompanying grievances and loss of trust, was likely to be less surprised by the failure of the so-called Jamaica coalition talks between Christian Democrats, Liberals and Greens after the 2017 federal elections in Germany. Familiarity with the previous development of the arena is also indispensable because it allows the establishment of parallels or the derivation of laws. Contrary to Mark Twain's statement that history does not repeat itself, most of political and/or economic scenarios are by no means unique, but are merely variations of certain basic types with which homo consultans has to become familiar.

Third, the power consultant must not only know the relevant strategic constants (political logic, procedural rules, etc.) and variables (strategic powers, interests, policy issues, etc.), but also be able to evaluate them probabilistically. The homo consultans must, e.g., be able to assess whether the threat of a Minister-President not to ratify a joint treaty of the German states if his or her demands concerning the content of the contract remain unfulfilled, is credible or just a bluff. This ability depends on political experience, human understanding and a deeper understanding of the economics of threats and promises (see our discussion of instrumental power in Chapter 2.1).

Finally, the *fourth* point is that the homo consultans must take into account the temporal dimension of predictions. Basically, the longer the period for which scenario forecasts are set up, the higher the probability of errors. The statistician and election researcher Nate Silver calls this critical time factor "scenario uncertainty."[36] This uncertainty is also compounded by an increasing number of actors and controversial policy issues. Especially in arenas located at the intersection of

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35   Cf. Silver, Nate (2012): *The Signal and the Noise: Why Most Predictions Fail – but Some Don't*, New York: Penguin Books.

36   Cf. Silver (2012): p. 392.

numerous, heterogeneous policy fields and used by various protagonists, extremely long-term forecasts (for example, over a period of more than 15 years) often turn out to be a gamble. Especially global players with tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of employees and billions of dollars have a particular interest in long-term forecasts because their sheer size makes fast tactical action and reaction difficult; here the homo consultans must master the tightrope walk between rebellion and humility (see Chapter 3.2.3) and highlight not only the potentials of political scenario analyses but also their limitations.

Phase (4) Strategy Building

The development of a political strategy forms the conclusion of the four-phase model and the accumulation point of the previous phases of the position analysis. Here all filtered, systematized and probabilistically evaluated information are condensed into a concrete action plan.

Figure 17: The Four-Phase Model

The focus of the fourth phase is on the concrete recommendation for action by homo consultans. It can thus be summarized in one practical key question: What should you do? Of course, this does not involve (primarily) the recommendation of one individual and situative – that is to say tactical – action, but is rather a situation-independent action calculus. This calculus defines a medium to long-term political goal (for example re-election as Chancellor, reform of federal-state competences, introduction of new, coordinated primary care for patients, legalization of marijuana). It takes into account current monitoring and intelligence results, information and probabilistic evaluations concerning the political arena (as well as the client's powers, stakeholders, topics and scenarios), and determines a

cost and benefit-optimized causal path to the goal. The determination of the goal and the path together make up the strategy. At this point, the previously acquired political knowledge is implemented through well-planned, effective and efficient policy design.

In Chapter 2.5, we comprehensively discussed our strategy concept from strategy foundations and capabilities to strategy development and strategic steering. The key challenge is to define a goal that is realistic in terms of the client's potencies in relation to those of others in the arena, and to set a precise timetable with specific but adaptable stages and a clear and efficient decision-making hierarchy. Every political strategy is a planned exercise of power – it determines who is supposed to achieve what when, by what means against which resistance, and how to deal with imponderables in the achievement of goals. In order to not repeat ourselves (see rather Chapter 2.5), we intend to keep our general discussion of strategy as a power technique short. Instead, we focus on the essential components of political strategy: alliance building, thematic governance, and dialogue. These basic elements form the DNA of each action plan. The differences between individual plans exist solely in their combinatorics and concrete execution.

Anyone who wants to achieve a goal in the political arena must always rely on allies to compensate for strategic deficits (e.g. lack of financial power, mobilization or organizational capability) and to increase the reach of their concerns by tapping into additional groups of addressees or networks. Moreover, those who do not actively seek allies run the risk of being isolated in their political arena, both in terms of information gathering and policymaking. Therefore, *alliance building* is a core element of any policy action plan, regardless of the concrete goal or power of homo consultandus. The successive formation of ad hoc alliances (which are limited to the concrete achievement of particular goals) or of long-term networks often represents a starting point for strategy development. Here, overlaps with the interests of other people and organizations are considered, synergies and know-how and expertise are identified, and risks from the strategic deficiencies of potential partners (such as a problematic reputation, numerous opponents in the arena, a lack of trustworthiness) are assessed and evaluated. On the basis of this, contacts will be intensified, cooperation structures established and joint control mechanisms for the alliances implemented. All these steps therefore require a precise arena and network analysis as well as stakeholder mapping. Crucial to strategy development in this context is the insight that political alliances are not self-perpetuating: personal relationships, the cornerstone of any stable alliance, must be nurtured. The values and interests of the cooperation partners must be continuously reviewed and maintained. Otherwise, however well-planned the strategy may be, it will fail due to conflicting objectives between the actors.

While alliance building aims to optimize the actor's position in the arena relative to other actors, *thematic governance* is about positioning oneself in relation to dominant policy issues or future challenges, developing targeted messages and putting key issues on the political agenda and anchoring them in the media discourse. The targeted placement of new topics and the associated generation of attention are often referred to in this context as *agenda setting*, while addressing topics that are already influencing the discourse and using them to pursue one's own communication goals is termed *agenda surfing*. Whereas agenda setting requires a longer-term planning process, not least involving an assessment of the responsiveness of the target audience to different potential messages (e.g. through quantitative or qualitative studies or focus groups), successful agenda surfing requires a good sense for the right time to seize upon a topic and the tactical flexibility to react quickly before the proverbial 'wave of public attention'' subsides.

The strategic relevance of thematic governance arises from the fact that the exercise of power in democracies is linked to an obligation for argumentative justification (see Chapter 2.4 and Chapter 3.2.2). Those who cannot provide plausible justification for their political goals and who are unable to establish a connection between their own preferences and the common good will not gain public acceptance or support from other actors for their strategy. Thematic governance does not mean, however, developing messages that are invariably acceptable to all the protagonists of the power field. Such a requirement would be completely unrealistic in our pluralistic societies.

Instead, plausible messages must *firstly* be credible, i.e. convincingly match the profile of homo consultandus, their values, beliefs and history. A medium-sized cigar and cigarillo producer can, for example, credibly portray themselves as representing a worthy manufacturing tradition and sophisticated culture in their political positioning strategy. But such a portrayal would be impossible for a global cigarette manufacturer.

Secondly, the messages must link the client's USP to the arena's prevailing policy issues. Strategic thematic governance is sensitive to the concerns, hopes, fears and expectations of community members in the various policy fields, and is based on a clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of homo consultandus. A negative example is the strategic communication planning of the SPD Bundestag election campaign of 2017. A unique selling point of the Social Democrat chancellor candidate, Martin Schulz, was his European political expertise as a long-time President of the European Parliament. Instead of capitalizing on this USP and deducing the European policy relevance of issues such as migration and internal security, Schulz's EU past was ignored in favor of his position as 'Mayor

of Würselen' a smallish town in the westernmost part of Germany. Thus, the Social Democrats failed to emphasise an important characteristic that would have provided differentiation from the CDU.

Another example is provided by Jeb Bush, one-time governor of Florida, USA, and his failed campaign for the Republican nomination for the 2016 presidential election. Key term in this regard was the concept of detaching Jeb from his brother's policies, most prominently the 2003 Iraq War. His campaign had the opportunity to emphasize its achievements in educational policy and crisis management for natural disasters, for example. Unlike many governors, Bush was very focused on education reform throughout his tenure. He set up Florida's first state-wide voucher program, expanded charter schools and established standardized testing. In other words, his campaign had the chance to capitalize on grievances that were relevant to Trump voters, but they were only relevant to small parts of the Republican electorate.

The *third* criterion is that the message must be appropriate to the addressee. As we discussed in Chapter 3.2.2, the communicated political positions must not only correspond with the interests of the addressee but, above all, with their language and professional knowledge. For example, the authorization of pain medications necessarily involves a complex evaluation and administration process for drug companies. The integration of patient associations and self-help groups in these central processes requires immense simplification and a focus on the core issues.

In addition to these three substantive aspects thematic governance has an important formal side – namely the question of through which channels and in which formats messages should be communicated to their addressees. In our section on communication logic in Chapter 3.2.1 we discussed in detail the requirements of political mediation and the dichotomy of analogue and digital channels; accordingly, we can be brief at this point. We have noted that in the course of digitization, the communicative cosmos has become more plural, faster, more volatile and increasingly empty of content. These trends make topic-setting and mediation more challenging and strategy-building more complex. The challenge is not only to generate attention and interest in one's own policy issues but also to retain it. There is no strategic recipe for this. However, we can say that digital and analogue media are not exclusive to one another but are complementary tools in this task. In particular, broad-based communication strategies, which are aimed not at a narrow target audience but at a variety of stakeholders, must be both online and offline. A one-sided digital or analogue focus not only fails to address certain generational cohorts but can make the fatal impression that the homo consultandus is deliberately ignoring these groups.

The choice and design of communicative formats are equally important decisions within thematic governance. The timely launch and intuitive ease of use of a campaign website can determine the success or failure of a strategy, as can the graphic design of a brochure or the argumentative plausibility and research quality of a position paper. Strategy development here thus involves combining messages, channels and formats appropriate to the addressees, policy issues and USP of the homo consultandus to create a coherent overall design.

The third basic element of strategy development, *dialogue*, consists of the purposeful planning of talks and discussions with the relevant players in the arena. As with alliance building and thematic goovernance, it is a universal building block of the strategy. Political design lives not only from powerful alliances and appropriately addressed topics, but also from personal exchanges – be it at parliamentary evenings, podium discussions, citizen forums or one-on-one meetings. Through this exchange, confidence and empathy can be built; dialogue promotes the mutual understanding of others' interests and goals more than any other form of communication. Thus, dialogue serves to personally persuade others of the value of one's own goals and to convey information, but also to reflect on the legitimate interests of the interlocutor and to include them in one's own strategy formation.

The type and number of interlocutors and the design of the dialogues differ significantly depending on the strategic goal. If, for example, a medium-sized business alliance is working towards the construction of a tram stop in its commercial park, dialogue planning primarily includes discussions with local actors: from citizens' initiatives wishing to upgrade an adjacent residential area, to district mayors and members of district councils, to the responsible transport companies. Ideally, these dialogues will gradually consolidate in the form of regular round tables or coordination days, which in turn can influence higher political decision-making levels. Compared to this, global corporations, because of their economic status and their influence, already enter into dialogue at a higher level of decision-making. Regardless of questions of power and status, however, all forms of dialogue are valid: the more comprehensively homo consultandus is informed about his or her interlocutors (and their responsibilities, interests, beliefs, abilities and scheduling), the greater the chance of successfully understanding strategically relevant positions. This statement may seem rather obvious, but it underlines the immense importance of intelligence gathering for the strategy; without a reliable informational foundation, dialogue is blind. Since as part of strategy development, the power consultant must plan in advance who has to talk to whom at what time, he or she must know both relevant topics and dates as well as the characteristics of the interlocutors.

As mentioned earlier, alliance building, thematic governance and dialogue are the universal DNA of any political strategy. The key question of strategy building – What should you do? – is always answered in terms of these three elements. In this context, the power consultant faces the threefold challenge of *concretization*, *timing* and *coordination*. The consultant must plan: (a) when and with which specific actors alliances must be forged and for what purpose, (b) which thematic-argumentative emphases are set in the arena and when they are transmitted via which channels, (c) which dialogues are held with which interlocutor when; and must also (d) coordinate these building blocks of overall political strategy.

In view of this range of tasks, it is worthwhile revisiting Raschke & Tils' assessment mentioned in Chapter 2.5.2: "Forming a strategy is a great cognitive and creative challenge if you do not rely solely on your gut feeling."[37] Precisely because the development of a political strategy is a creative act, it is not possible to provide a schematic guide to tackle this challenge. Each strategy is based on the same elements, but each remains unique. Their development requires experience and competence, power knowledge and an in-depth familiarity with the instruments of political influence – that is, a mastery of the three great vectors of power which we described in Chapter 2. It should be clear from the sketch of the four-phase model that a profound level of information and knowledge about actors, topics, arenas, etc. is also indispensable for the planned exercising of political power. If the three questions –- What do you need to know? Where do you stand? What can help you and what can happen to you? – are answered plausibly, then decisive prerequisites are fulfilled for providing a convincing answer to the practical question of strategy – What should you do?

3.3.2 Tools and Techniques of Condensing

As we have seen, condensing as a guiding principle of the power leadership curriculum covers three thematic priorities: information, analysis and strategy. The methods used to address these focal points are as different as the priorities themselves. Most of them have already been explicitly or implicitly discussed in our description of the four-phase model. Here we want to briefly summarize and systematize the resources of the power consultant again.

Collecting information was for a long time one of the most time-consuming and burdensome challenges for the political power consultant. Until the 2000s, this task involved the daily manual scanning of hundreds of news items, press

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37   Cf. Raschke & Tils (2008): p. 19.

releases, draft bills and court rulings. Only in recent years has the digital revolution brought forth web crawlers, which scour the internet via text mining, social media mining and other specialized search forms, leading to a paradigm shift (see also our discussion of data power in Chapter 2.3.2). Effectively deployed monitoring software and intelligent bots can filter through the bulk of arena-relevant information from news sites, institution and company homepages, online editions of trade journals, etc., in seconds, generating output for which a power consultant would need hours. However, policy-oriented crawlers need to have over 98% probability of indexing relevant websites to ensure that the homo consultans is actually up-to-date with the arena in question. In addition, linguistic problems have to be solved, especially with regard to monitoring services that extend to various nations. Thus, e.g. German does not correspond to English in terms of syntax and grammar, not to mention the potential pitfalls provided by more distant languages such as Chinese or Arabic.

The use of this indispensable digital tool of compression, which is usually combined with professional databases on political institutions and actors, requires a completely new skill profile from the homo consultans. Instead of diligent work in obtaining information, there is an increasing need for digital know-how and a deep understanding of political language and semantics. The best software agent is only as powerful as the search terms (including synonyms, slang words and hints) and the search strings with which it is programmed and fed.

Despite this rapid informational paradigm shift, it is not yet possible to outsource the actual intelligence and analysis tasks to computerized algorithms. Here, the power consultant has the key function of prioritizing and classifying the collected policy information for homo consultandus, e.g. in the form of policy alerts on daily topics, daily updates or weekly and monthly reports. The quality of these intelligence services depends not least on the judgment with which the power consultant can assess the relevance and validity of information and how well he or she is able to structure and condense it in a manner that is comprehensible for the client. Ideally, homo consultandus receives compressed information that, firstly, refreshes his or her political background knowledge, secondly, can trigger concrete activities, and thirdly, represents the basis for a (re)alignment of strategic positioning in the arena and with respect to people and content.

In comparison, the central tools of policy analysis – from the arena and its stakeholders to complete scenarios – are borrowed from the methods of project management. Insofar as the core issue is always determining the position of homo consultandus in relation to the strategic environment, numerous instruments borrowed from management literature, such as the SWOT table, the stakeholder issue

interaction diagram and other management tools are relevant.[38] We focus here on two highlights. The classic SWOT analysis can be used to determine the current state of the client's political positioning. It depicts internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities (SWOT stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) in the political arena, including possible legislative changes and regulatory initiatives as well as the product or service range of a group.
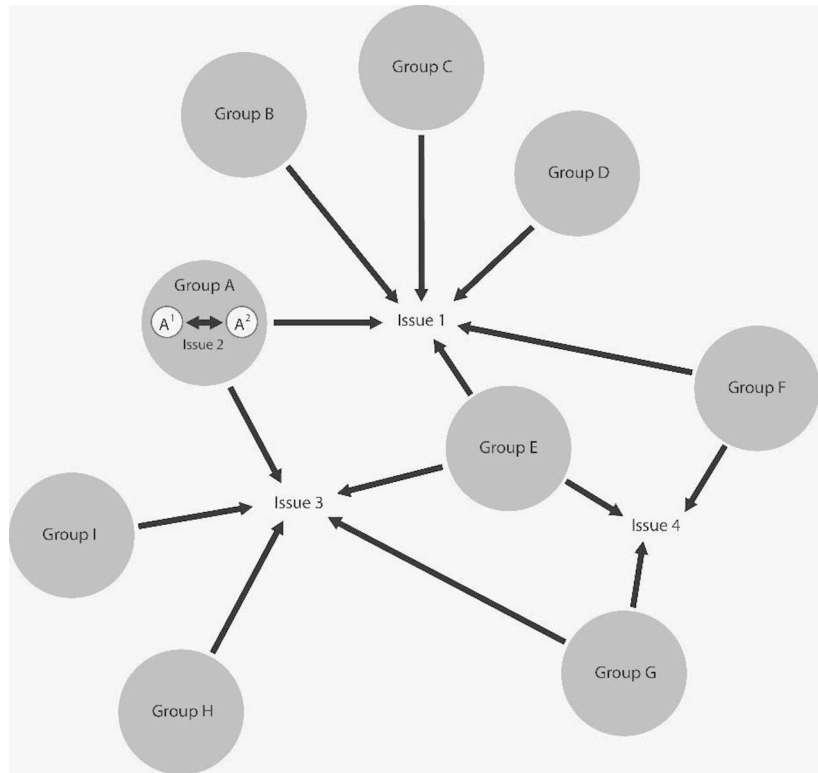
Figure 18: SWOT Matrix

In contrast thereto, a *stakeholder issue interrelationship* diagram reconstructs the attitudes of other influential actors to the topics that dominate discourse in the arena. It is therefore an analysis tool that combines the elements of stakeholder mapping with those of topic identification and condenses them to create a clear, strategic picture of the situation. In this way, it illustrates, on the one hand, the relative importance of policy issues and, on the other hand, the connections, potential synergies and conflict potentials between the protagonists of the power field. The diagram provides the homo consultans with orientation as to which content he or she must relate to and how the political arena is structured beyond the mere power relations and networks of the actors.

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38   For a more in-depth analysis, see i.a. Bryson, John M. (2004): What To Do When Stakeholders Matter. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis Techniques, *Public Management Review*, 6 (1), pp. 21-53.

Figure 19: Stakeholder Issue Interrelation Diagram

Source: Bryant (2003): p. 196

These and similar analysis tools are key to creating the foundations for policy de-velopment. While the homo consultans often conducts political analyses and eval-uations as 'preparatory work' and only communicates the essential results and as-sessments to the homo consultandus, the development of the actual strategy is al-ways a collaborative activity undertaken by the power actor and the power con-sultant. The consulting tool of choice here is the *strategy workshop.* The interac-tive and usually multi-hour workshop or dialogue format is indispensable for a number of reasons. First, because it allows both sides to agree on strategic goals; second, because it offers the opportunity to compare inside and outside perspec-tives on the potentials and deficiencies of the power actor; and third, because it creates the conditions for an action plan that is mutually endorsed by homo con-sultandus and homo consultans. A key challenge for the power consultant is the much-discussed tightrope walk between rebellion and humility. Strategies that

look perfect on homo consultans's drawing board but to which the client only responds with a frown of disbelief – perhaps because they do not reflect his or her political self-image, represent a radical break with important traditions or are simply too complex and technically challenging – are ultimately not practicable. The same applies to approaches that may reflect all the preferences of homo consultandus and fit exactly with his or her political ideology or corporate philosophy, but are not covered by a sound risk assessment or a realistic arena analysis. Here the power consultant is called upon to establish a strategic agreement through professionalism and empathy.

Strategy development is the bridge between the consolidation of political information and knowledge on the one hand and concrete policymaking on the other. Only when the strategy is implemented by tactical savvy, motivated and efficient people and organizations, can the homo consultandus can take control of the game of power chess. The great German soccer coach Alfred Preißler very strikingly paraphrased an old Faust quotation: "All theory is grey – what matters is what's on the field."[39] In the following section, we therefore go directly to the political playing field and clarify the guiding principle of political influence and the organizational practice of exercising power.

3.4 INFLUENCING

Political influence, the concrete exercise of power in the field of politics through interaction with organizations and persons, is the litmus test for the previous empowering and condensing. Only if the first two elements of the power leadership approach have been implemented effectively can homo consultandus and homo consultans jointly take control of the game of power chess. This applies equally to both forms of the approach – political leadership and lobbying leadership. What it means to successfully influence politics depends entirely on the goals of the power actor: re-election to a post, organizing a voting majority, revising a directive, averting regulatory restrictions, legalizing a product, subsidizing an industrial sector, or implementing a new business development calculus. Planned policy influencing always involves transforming a power strategy into an actual event by the purposeful use of power leadership tools.

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39   Cf. The original quote by Preißler – "Grau is' alle Theorie – entscheidend is'auf'm Platz", in: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung from 7th April 2015.