An introduction to multi-actor processes

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1 Wicked problems and multi-actor domains (adapted from Gray, 1985)

The nature of problems which confront both public and private sector organizations has been undergoing fundamental change. Many problems exceed the capability of any single actor to control, and are dubbed "messes" of "inherently wicked problems". The open ended, unstable nature of such problems has been causing external pressures on organizations, which constrain their decision making. In a globalized and interconnected world, organizations find their strategies increasingly dependent up decisions taken by other organizations. Attempts by individual organizations to intervene are often unsuccessful because they are uncoordinated and create unanticipated problems for other actors. Additionally, the competition for resources from the environment allows some stakeholders to promote their values at the expense of others, which is seldom optimal for the domain. We argue that the inability of individual organizations to adapt is due in large part to a failure to conceptualize problems and organize solution at the domain level.

Situations where multiple actors or stakeholders interact are omnipresent, both within and between organisations, in the public and private sector, in the profit and not-for-profit sector, with stakeholders varying from highly to loosely organized, from powerful to marginalized and from local to global actors. The reason for interacting generally boils down to a mutual interdependency of different actors having an interest or stake with regard to a certain problem domain. The interaction between these stakeholders can take many forms, ranging from synergy to destructive conflict.

Collaborative efforts presume that individual actors are one among many stakeholders whose activities are truly interdependent. With a domain focus, needs and interests are not defined in terms of a single organization but in terms of the interdependencies among the stakeholders who are affected by an issue and claim a right to influence its outcome (Trist, 1983). Stakeholders in the domain concerned with the dumping of chemical wastes, for example, include the chemical companies, home owners who must relocate, families who have been exposed to health risks, and all those who must foot the bill for clean-up efforts. A domain focus is needed precisely because none of these stakeholders acting alone can solve the problem. Furthermore, purposeful actions by any stakeholder may profoundly influence the ability of the others to achieve their goals. Hence, they are interdependent on one another (although the degree to which stakeholders are conscious of this interdependence may vary considerably).

Collaboration has been proposed as the only viable response to this level of interdependence. Since each stakeholder can apprehend only a portion of the problem, by pooling perceptions, greater understanding of the context can be achieved. In this way, the process of appreciation or reality judgment is enriched and a negotiated order is created. Based on this negotiated order, the stakeholders can begin to coordinate their
activities and manage the problem collectively rather than individually, a process referred to as multi-actor collaboration.

2 Multi-actor collaboration

From a constructive point of view, the kind of interaction we are referring to is most accurately described as collaboration. Ouchi (1980) differentiates this concept from other kinds of relationships like market or hierarchically regulated relationships. One of the most important contributions to this research domain has been the conceptualisation of the collaboration process by Gray (1989). She defines collaboration as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (p. 5). Stakeholders include all individuals, groups or organizations that are directly concerned by actions others take to solve the problem. Gray (1989) draws on Trist (1983) to define problem domain as the way a problem is conceptualised by the stakeholders. Each stakeholder has a unique appreciation of the problem and collaboration offers the possibility to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of the problem among the stakeholders than one of them could construct alone.

From a practical point of view Gray (1989) analyses collaboration as a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders about the future of a problem domain. Five features are critical to this process.

(1) Mutual interdependence regarding the problem domain is a basic feature of collaboration processes. Interdependence brings stakeholders together and is the basis for elaborating mutually beneficial solutions. (2) Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences. Differences are often avoided because of the potential for conflict they contain. However, exchanges between the different stakeholders would be impossible if not for their different interests, resources, knowledge and skills. Differences can be either opposing or complementary, and one of the major issues in collaboration processes is to construct a complementarity of differences, which is more easily achieved at the level of underlying concerns or interest than at the level of predetermined positions or solutions (Fisher and Ury, 1981). (3) Collaboration involves joint ownership of decisions, meaning that participants are directly responsible for reaching agreement. Unlike litigation or regulation, where intermediaries devise solutions that are imposed on the stakeholders, in collaborative agreements the involved stakeholders impose decisions upon themselves. (4) Stakeholders assume collective responsibility for future direction of the problem domain. Through a form of self-regulation a set of agreements governing future interactions among the stakeholders is established, restructuring the socially accepted rules for dealing with problems of this type. Collaboration may lead to increased coordination among the stakeholders, although that is not a necessary outcome of the process. (5) Collaboration is an emergent process, subject to continuous change and development, typically evolving from underorganized systems in which stakeholders act independently, to more tightly organized relationships characterized by concerted decision making. In this sense collaboration should be distinguished both from cooperation as a more informal way of working together, and from coordination as a formal institutionalised relationship (Mulford and Rogers, 1982).
From a theoretical point of view, Gray (1989) argues for a dynamic, process-oriented theory of multiple stakeholder interaction, in order to do justice to the emergent and mutable character of inter-organizational relationships. From this point of view “collaborations can be thought of as negotiated orders created among stakeholders to control environmental turbulence” (p.227). Negotiated order refers to a social context in which relationships are negotiated and renegotiated through the interactions of participants. Organizing is viewed as complex and fragile social construction of reality, continuously transformed by the changing web of interactions among its members. The collective establishment of an agreement that satisfies multiple stakeholders involves considerable negotiation. The stakeholders need to appreciate the necessity of joint activity; they must delimit the problem domain and reach an agreement on how they will collaborate before they can even begin to address the substance of any transactions. They must also agree on the scope and the quality of information they will exchange and continuously assess whether that information is socially and technically sufficient. The negotiated order evolves through a process of joint appreciation, i.e. sharing appraisals of the domain and trading on individual and collective perceptions of what is and what is not possible.

The aim of collaboration is to gain collaborative advantage, that is, to achieve outcomes that could not be reached by any of the organizations acting alone (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). As these same authors mention, however, this is not easily achieved and collaborations often end up in a state of collaborative inertia, in which the rate of work output is much slower than might be expected.

Among the factors which tend to induce inertia Huxham and Vangen (2000) mention “difficulties in negotiating joint purpose due to the diversity of organisational and individual aims which those involved bring to the collaboration” and “difficulties in communicating due to differences in professional (and sometimes natural) languages and organisational (and sometimes ethnic) cultures”, followed by problems related to differing internal procedures, power imbalances, accountability to constituencies and logistics.

Gray (1989) proposed a phase model of multi-actor collaboration, which describes three broad phases: problem-setting, direction-setting and implementation. The problem-setting is a kind of prenegotiation phase involving mainly the exploration of the problem domain in terms of issues and actors. This is particularly important in multi-actor contexts, because the problem, the participants or the structure are not pre-given and have to be sorted out and agreed upon among the actors. The second phase is called direction-setting and involves the exploration of alternatives and culminates in reaching a negotiated agreement. The last phase covers the implementation and possibly the institutionalization of the agreements.

Each phase presents a number of challenges for the multi-actor group:

1. Problem-setting phase
   - Common definition of the problem (What are the central issues?)
   - Generating commitment to collaborate (What is in it for me?)
   - Identifying and legitimating relevant actors (Who has the right and capability to participate?)
Finding a convenor (Can we trust and respect the leading organisation and its representative?)

Identification of resources (How can we fund the planning process?)

2. Direction-setting phase

• Establishing ground rules (What is (un)acceptable behaviour?)
• Agenda setting (What are the substantive issues we need to examine and decide?)
• Organizing subgroups (Do we need to break up into smaller groups to carry out the work?)
• Joint information search (Do we really understand the other side of this negotiation?)
• Exploring option (What are the possible options for solving our problem?)
• Reaching agreement and closing the deal (Are we committed to go ahead with one option or with a package of options?)

3. Implementation phase

• Dealing with constituencies (How do we persuade our constituencies that this is the best possible deal?)
• Building external support (How do we ensure that organisations that will implement, are onside?)
• Structuring (Do we need formal organisation to fulfil our agreement?)
• Monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance (How do we control obligations and compliance with the agreement?)

3 Multi-actor negotiation processes (adapted from Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007)

Multi-actor negotiation processes set high requirements in terms of the interactional skills of participants, because of the open, self-organized and complex nature of the negotiations. Hereafter we discuss a number of process issues that participants in multi-actor negotiation face, grouped in five categories: setting ground rules, framing and reframing, representation and boundary management, negotiation strategies and finally leadership and facilitation.

3.1 Interaction ground rules

Ground rules refer to the norms and criteria of the multi-actor group to deal with each other and with the issues. These rules concern procedural questions, as well as process and content characteristics. Dealing among various actors with an issue always produces a certain degree of uncertainty as to the path to follow and to the possible outcomes. At the onset, a set of rules, jointly developed, can help to overcome these feelings, as they give participants a grip, at least on the evolving process (Vansina & Taillieu, 1997).

Here we focus our attention on procedural rules and work forms that organize a concrete interaction between the actors, with respect to aspects like:

- whom to invite and how to invite them:
− how to set the agendas;
− how to decide on who should deal with specific issues: single actors, bilateral settings, sub-groups or the plenary multi-actor setting;
− how to qualify information (as confidential, for internal or external use, as apt for the public in general;
− how to deal with different points of view and interests;
− how to take decisions (majority, unanimity, veto, ...).

Minimal agreements on this kind of ground rules can enhance the active involvement of the total group. Early agreements can facilitate the start-up of the activities, but ground rules can also evolve in the course of time as a result of a learning process. Actors with similar cultural, social or organisational backgrounds may have a lot of ground rules in common. These can be adopted implicitly by the multi-actor group. However, when actors with different background are involved, the ground rules will need to be stated explicitly, proposed, negotiated and accepted by all in order to avoid that some actors impose their rules on the others.

3.2 Framing and reframing the issues in the problem domain

A multi-actor problem domain is not just “out there”, it is imbued with meaning by social actors who call for an intervention in a situation that they perceive as a threat or an opportunity. Actors define or frame a domain as problematic and requiring intervention through selectively identifying the main issues and delimiting its boundaries. They gradually “cut out” a part of the ongoing reality, in interaction with the other social actors, and attribute a problematic character to it. This we call the interactive framing of issues in the problem domain (Dewulf, Craps, Bouwen, Taillieu & Pahl-Wostl, 2005; Lewicki, Gray & Elliot, 2003).

Different social actors tend to acknowledge and highlight different aspects of reality as problematic, because of their specific practices and experiences and the specific frames they tend to use for making sense of them. When actors look to a situation from a different point of view, a situation ensues in which different perspectives are at play simultaneously (Salipante & Bouwen, 1985; Bouwen, Craps & Santos, 1999).

Several frame typologies have been developed to characterize the different kinds of frames that actors tend to use in certain contexts. Lewicki et al. (2002) propose a comprehensive description of 8 typologies of frames that environmental disputants use, including identity frames, conflict management frames and whole story frames. Identity frames give an answer to the question “Who am I?”. They provide a sense of belonging and are closely aligned with values. Conflict management frames describe different perspectives on how the conflict should be dealt with, like avoidance, fact-finding, joint problem solving, authority decision, adjudication, political action, market economy or violence. Whole story frames are narratives that summarize the meaning of an entire conflict or situation by concisely formulating the core of the issue. Actors in environmental conflict situations have been shown to use different identity, conflict management, whole story and other frames, with important implications for the continuation and possible resolution of the conflict.
In addition to identifying the different frames used by the involved actors to make sense of the problem domain, it is also important to look at how those frames develop, evolve and influence each other when stakeholders interact in the course of a planning or management process. Although each actor typically starts with a specific framing of the problem, this definition shifts through the interactive process of shaping issues. Frames are co-constructed through the way actors make sense of their situation in interaction with other actors (Putnam & Holmer, 1992). The nature, importance, scope, interrelatedness, breadth and stability of problems are negotiated through the arguments and counterarguments of the actors (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981). In different interactions the same actor may use different frames, depending on who is addressed and what issues are at stake at a particular moment. The framing of the social and natural domain is therefore not a static and individual phenomenon, but a dynamic process embedded in social interactions between stakeholders.

In intractable conflict situations some frames can remain remarkably stable over long periods of time (Lewicki et al., 2002), but interaction can always result in frame change, frame connection or reframing. Dealing with these frame differences is an inevitable and crucial aspect of multi-actor collaboration management. When differences can be dealt with constructively by addressing them and trying to connect them instead of avoiding or escalating them, new possibilities can be discovered.

How issues get framed can have important implications for the inclusion and exclusion of actors, and vice versa. Framing an issue implies putting boundaries around it, which means that some actors become relevant, while others become irrelevant. Framing the issue in a specific way may also have important implications in terms of who is causing the problem, who is the victim and who is responsible for doing something about it.

3.3 Representation and boundary management

Although multi-actor negotiation takes place among organizations and social groups, much of the information exchange, sensemaking, decision making, negotiation and learning take place among individual representatives. Their mandate and their position in their own organization can differ widely.

The relation of the representative to the organization or constituency he or she represents can have important consequences. Representatives may belong to different hierarchical positions in their organizations (e.g. operational or strategic levels). This will determine the information they have, and their degree of freedom to take decisions without consulting their constituency. Some representatives may represent an under-organized stakeholder, a social category of people with a specific interest, but who are not organized in any formal way. Representatives of a homogenous constituency with clear and common ideas about the situation can speak more easily in the name of their constituency than representatives of heterogeneous or conflicted constituencies, who tend to act insecurely or inconsistently. However, a homogeneous constituency with a strong, fixed position can reduce the flexibility of their representative during negotiations.

One of the major tasks of representatives is to manage the boundaries between their own organization and the multi-actor context. They are the persons in contact with other organizations, and so through them different types of – possibly even confidential –
information will be shared or withheld. The way in which they represent their organizations will shape the exchange between the multi-actor platform (the collaborative task system) and the constituencies (the task systems of individual organizations), and thus also the possibilities for mutual learning between both.

In a multi-actor process boundary management is very relevant because the traditional boundaries of hierarchy, function, location, structure, role, task and time are often not available. Therefore the stakeholders have to manage and negotiate so-called ‘psychological’ boundaries (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992). These include the boundaries of identity, task and authority. These boundaries are subject to changes and negotiation during the collaborative process. If the boundaries around the multi-actor group are firm enough, this enables the representatives to develop a collective identity based on common interests. Vansina (1999a: 52) stresses that one of the key issues in taking a leading role is to invest energy “(...) in raising the importance of the collaborative task-system to counterbalance the pull towards the respective parties.” If identification with the multi-actor group is too strong, however, this might lead to conflicts of loyalty with ones’ constituent organization. This may result in dual conflict, when the representative who comes back from difficult negotiations with the other actors, faces an equally difficult negotiation with his or her constituency about the agreement that was reached.

The so-called dilemmas of the negotiator refer to the growing tension that representatives may experience at the boundary between the expectations of their constituencies and those of the multi-actor group. Representatives may face dilemmas with respect to identification, trust and transformation. Representatives are supposed to identify with their constituency and express the perspective and interests of their constituency. In the course of a collaborative process, however, they may gradually learn to appreciate a situation from the other actors’ perspectives, and to develop alternative problem definition and solutions. Shared experiences, negotiations, conversations and other activities, may lead to identification and a sense of belonging to this multi-actor group. The dilemma of trust refers to the fact that the more trust the representative gets from his or her constituency, the more added value he or she can bring to the multi-actor group. But the bigger this contribution, the more difficult it gets to convince his constituency that these activities benefit their interests. The dilemma of transformation refers to the fact that the more the representative tries to transform the positions of his constituency, the greater the chance to come to an agreement that is satisfactory for all actors involved. However, the same efforts to transform these positions may be a risk for the representative when the constituency starts to question his of her legitimacy.

3.4 Negotiation strategies

Participatory and multi-actor processes are generally conceived as joint decision-making and/or learning processes. Methodologies are implicitly or explicitly highly influenced by Habermas’ (1984) theory of communicative action. The idea is that process facilitation can improve the communication between social actors in such a way that they become aware of each others interests and perspectives, and capable of working out solutions that serve the interests of all the participants instead of just some of them to the detriment of others. Various authors have argued that this approach tend to underestimate the conflicting interests of the involved actors (Leeuwis, 2000).
Communicative action can be contrasted with so-called strategic action, where stakeholders secure in the first place their own interests.

Both dialogic exchange and strategic behaviour are likely to be present at the same time in multi-actor interactions. Multi-actor collaboration then becomes a continuous process of learning and negotiation, where actors defend their own interests and at the same time construct a broader and common problem domain.

We draw here on the literature and experiences that is also known under the label alternative dispute resolution (ADR), referring to methods for resolving conflicts, which involve face-to-face discussions and negotiations between the actors (Thomas, 1976). The last decade efforts have been made to translate lessons from this domain to resolve multi-actor conflicts in a constructive way (Bush, & Folger, 1994; Gray, 1989).

In the negotiation literature, a distinction is made between distributive (win-loose) and integrative (win-win) negotiation strategies (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Bazerman, 2000). This distinction is often explained by referring to the pie metaphor: distribution is about cutting an existing pie in (smaller or bigger) pieces, while integration is trying to produce a bigger pie together, to serve better the interests of all the actors. Defending predefined positions on the issue can paralyze a negotiation, while exploring underlying interests enhances the chance to find innovative and mutually beneficial agreements.

In an integrative negotiation process technical context knowledge and expertise has to be complemented by knowledge on the social networks and processes (Leeuwis, 2000, p. 358). In a joint learning and negotiation process the interests and perspectives of the stakeholders are at the focus, and external experts can only contribute collateral. Or stated in other terms, the external expertise has to be complemented with the local context expertise of the directly interested stakeholders.

Direct interactions among representatives play an important role in transforming competitive (distributive or win/lose) relationships in collaborative (integrative or win/win) relationships among the institutional actors. These kind of micro-social interactions among the representatives are a necessary although not sufficient condition for social learning to develop. Representatives need to be capable of justifying and feeding back their personal learning to their constituencies. Research evidence suggests that representatives of diverse societal actors can converge on a multi-actor basis around the construction of a common vision. However it seems harder for them to cope with the differences when it comes to planning concrete actions, and so this part tends to be left to bilateral negotiations (Vansina & Taillieu, 1997).

3.5 **Leadership and facilitation**

The multi-actor domain needs some form of direction setting to enable joint responsibility for sustainable solutions. The contribution of different actors should be integrated and articulated into concrete interventions if the multi-actor collaboration is to have any tangible results.

A number of characteristics of the multi-actor context can produce tensions among the actors. These include the ambiguity of the issues in the problem domain, asymmetries among the actors in power, resources and/or expertise, the indeterminate nature and complexity of the situation, dependence on other actors to achieve success and ambiguous boundaries. (Huxham & Vangen, 2000a, 2000b; Vansina, Taillieu &
Schruijer, 1998). Actors may be insecure about what is exactly at stake, how it can affect them, and how they can influence the process and outcome. This is especially the case in new multi-actor initiatives when different social actors and organisations start interacting. Therefore, participants in multi-actor contexts may experience a strong need for leadership that can take away the uncertainties and ambiguities.

Classical leadership models are not suitable for multi-actor settings, however, mainly for two reasons. First, the existing leadership literature presumes that there is a formal leader with managerial responsibility and in a hierarchical relationship to subordinates. In multi-actor settings no single organization has hierarchal control over all the others. Secondly, classical leadership models presume clearly specified and accepted goals, whereas literature on multi-actor collaboration demonstrates that agreeing upon collaborative goals is a critical task (Huxham & Vangen, 2000b).

The literature on multi-actor processes stresses the importance of shared or distributed leadership in participative systems as an ideal (Chrislip & Larson, 1994: Yukl, 1999: Bryson & Crosby, 1992: Gray, 1989: Feyerherm, 1994: Brown & Hosking, 1986; Gronn, 2002). They stress that inducing shared responsibility is a critical function of leadership. It is not desirable, nor likely that a single individual takes up all leading roles. The leadership function should focus on fostering shared leadership and creating the conditions for stakeholders to take up their responsibility.

Overemphasizing equality and consensus may have negative consequences, however. Firstly, when the rhetoric of ’equal partners’ and participation becomes too dominant, important differences and asymmetries (in power, resources, know-how, experience, social network, competencies, status and involvement) may become obscured. Acknowledging and being able to work with these differences in a constructive way is an important challenge in multi-actor settings. Secondly, the ideology of collaborative work systems may prevent people from taking up strong leadership, since the discussion is supposed to be fostering joint ownership, empowerment, collective vision and shared responsibility. This ideology may inhibit the emergence of explicit or overt leadership (Razzaque & Stewart, 1998, p. 2), while strong leadership may be important at certain points in a collaborative process: “Case studies of successful collaborations portray leaders intervening actively to manage the process leading to collaboration, particularly at points of pivotal breakdowns.” (McCaffrey et al. 1995, p. 618).

Leadership may focus either on the task at hand or on the process. When leadership focuses exclusively on the task (gathering information, working out plans, managing budget, etc.) the results risk to be sub-optimal because they do not take into account all relevant information. In such cases a strong leader may provoke high dependence in some actors and/or resistance from actors who feel excluded or put at a disadvantage. In fact, strong process leadership may be critical for multi-actor collaboration (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Process leadership is about creating conditions to get the most out of the diversity of perspectives, competencies and resources, while ensuring that each stakeholder can meet his own objectives (Vansina, 1999). Managing the inherent tensions in the relationships among actors in inter-dependent work is an important aspect of process leadership. This kind of leadership can be understood as convening the actors and keeping the collaboration going, rather than steering and controlling the process unilaterally.
In some cases, especially when there is conflict, a third party (facilitator or mediator) is invited in to take up process leadership (Schuman, 1996). Facilitators (explicitly designated or implicitly functioning as such) can fulfil an important role in dealing with the inherent tensions in multi-actor domains (Vansina, 2002) Facilitators can promote that relevant ideas and actors stay involved, and that the anxiety levels do not become destructive. However we may not overestimate the potential and role of process expertise brought in by external facilitators. They cannot design and steer a process from the outside if this system has to function as a joint learning process for the stakeholders. Process leadership has to be dealt with in a very cautious and flexible way and it’s certainly more than mechanically following some participatory recipes (Leeuwis, 2000, p. 358). Those who take up leadership roles need to be serious “reflective practitioners” (Argyris & Schön, 1974: Huxham, 2000, p. 353), who can apply the toolbox of participatory methods (Jones, 2001) from a good understanding of process.

4 References


5 Appendix 1. Observation questions

5.1 Interaction ground rules

− Can you identify some basic rules that all actors seem to stick to?
− Are these rules explicitly discussed or implicitly adopted?
− What are the consequences of the implicit nature of agreements?
− Can you identify moments when a ground rule was violated? How was this dealt with?
− Are there intentional and deliberate measures to deal with the unequal access to important resources of different stakeholders?
− Are there (implicit/explicit) ground rules with respect to the information handling: who makes the reports, who receives them, who has access to them, who maintains the public informed, who may talk to the press?

5.2 Framing and reframing

− Are all actors invited to give their view on the definition of the problem?
− Whose terms and concepts are used in the problem definition handled by the multi-actor group?
− Is there opportunity to voice alternative problem definitions, are they taken seriously?
− Do the actors look actively for common ground among all, or among some actors, at the moments that problems are analyzed and solution alternatives proposed?
− Do the actors start by analyzing a situation from different perspectives, or do some actors push to go directly to a certain solution?
− Are there certain problem definitions or aspects, suggested by some actors that are systematically ignored or denied by others?
− Can (some) participants look beyond their concrete positions and initial claims to transform them in more general interests that can be shared and negotiated with others?
− Do the actors dedicate themselves to “deal making”, that means entering in limited bilateral agreements with one other actor, or do engage in “multi-actor negotiation”, that means going for long term and sustainable arrangements of a multi-actor domain?

5.3 **Negotiation strategies**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIN-LOOSE STRATEGY</th>
<th>WIN-WIN STRATEGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define the conflict as a win loose situation</td>
<td>Define the conflict as a mutual problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pursue one's own goals</td>
<td>Pursue goals held in common</td>
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<tr>
<td>Force the other party into submission</td>
<td>Find creative agreements that are satisfying to both parties or present a mutually acceptable solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have an accurate personal understanding of one's own needs but publicly disguise or misrepresent them</td>
<td>Have an accurate personal understanding of one's own needs and show the correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to increase one's power over the other party by emphasizing one's independence, the other's dependence upon oneself</td>
<td>Try to equalize power by emphasizing mutual interdependence, avoiding harm and embarrassment to the other party in order to reduce fear and defensiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try to arrange contact where one's own power is greatest</td>
<td>Make sure contacts are on the basis of equal power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use deceitful, inaccurate and leading communication of one's own goals, position and proposals</td>
<td>Use open, honest and accurate communication of one's needs, goals and proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overemphasize one's needs, goals, position in the opening offer</td>
<td>Accurately state one's needs, goals and position in the opening offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid all empathy and understanding of other's position, feelings and frame of reference</td>
<td>Work to have the highest empathy and understanding of the others positions, feelings and frame of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use threats to get submission</td>
<td>Avoid threats in order to reduce defensiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostility is expressed to subdue the other</td>
<td>Express hostility to get rid of one's own</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling or Behavior</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate the highest commitment (rigid adherence) to one's position to force the other to give in</td>
<td>Feelings that may interfere with future cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate flexibility of position to help in creating problem solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behave unpredictably to use the element of surprise</td>
<td>Behave predictably, though flexible behavior is appropriate, it is not designed to take the other party by surprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concede and change slowly to concede concessions from the other</td>
<td>Change position as soon as possible to help in problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase ambiguity and uncertainty in attempt to use deception and confusion to one's advantage</td>
<td>Promote clarity, predictability, mutual understanding to help in problem solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use cooperative behaviors to grab the chance to exploit other's cooperativeness</td>
<td>Use cooperative behaviors to establish trust and mutual cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt a posture that allows one to exploit the other whenever is possible</td>
<td>Adopt a consistent posture of being trustworthy towards the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolate the other to reduce the possibility of his forming a coalition with third parties</td>
<td>Seek third parties to help in problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize only differences in positions and the superiority of one's own position</td>
<td>Emphasize exploring both similarities and differences in positions</td>
</tr>
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### 5.4 Representation and boundary management

- How are the bilateral (between two actors) and multilateral (between all) spaces used: where are the most important issues really dealt with, and who is just reduced to the position of being informed?
- Which kind of mandate do the representatives have? (degree of freedom to come up with own proposals during the multi-actor negotiations, or holding strictly to constituency’s position). Is that the same for the representatives of all actors?
- Do the representatives withhold certain information from internal or bilateral discussions, or do they share all relevant information they dispose of in the multi-lateral meetings? What is the effect of it on the interactions?
- Do the constituencies put pressure on the representatives at the negotiation table? How does that affect their behaviour in the multi-actor group?
- Does mutual stereotyping emerge in the course of the interactions? What is their origin, in which occasions?

### 5.5 Leadership and facilitation

- Is there a clear leadership? Is this so right from the beginning, evolving (in which way)?
− Which actor(s) is assuming the leadership of the domain?
− Which kind of resources does the leading actor dispose of (legal, financial, expertise, charisma,...)
− Is the leadership function evident for all actors? Is there reflection, discussion, negotiation on it?
− Is the leader perceived as neutral, or as (interested) part in the problem by the others? How does this affect they way he/she can function?
− How is leadership put in practice?
− Is the leader more focused on the technical content or on the relations between actors?
− Is there an actor facilitating the process: calling the attention to the relational aspects, watching how actors deal with each other, stimulating involvement ...?
− If there is such a facilitator, how has he/she emerged? Is he/she accepted by all?
− Are leading and facilitating functions concentrated in one actor or distributed over different actors? In the second case, how is the relationship between leader and facilitator, and how does this affect their functioning?