

David A. Lax and James K. Sebenius, "Thinking Coalitionally: Party Arithmetic, Process Opportunism, and Strategic Sequencing," in H. Peyton Young, ed. *Negotiation Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), pp. 153-194.

The essay focuses on characteristic dynamics in multilateral settings and their effects on negotiated outcomes; some of which uniquely belong to multilateral situations: coalitional alignments, and realignments, the potential for de facto alliances, natural coalitions and blocking coalitions.

Three tactics distinctive to multiparty situations:

- party arithmetic (actions to affect which entities are and/or are not actively involved in a given negotiation, that is, adding or subtracting parties)
- process opportunism (tactics that depend on more complex structural or process restrictions such as: who can directly talk with whom, how information is transmitted, who may speak for whom, and which parties must approve the actions of others)
- strategic sequencing (tactics that depend on the order and sequencing of how the different entities are approached and/or informed of actions of other players)

Review of some past theories about coalition:

- group's competition for recruiting an uncommitted third party into their coalition
- balance of power coalition
- coalition not as an entity, rather as a collection of individual parties each of whom playing two simultaneous roles: (1) seeking to attract and retain potentially pivotal

members of its coalition, and, (2) offering itself as a potentially pivotal member to other potential coalitions.

The classes of coalitional dynamics to be viewed as efforts to improve negotiated outcomes by favorably affecting the zone of possible agreement among the players. Zone of the possible agreement (bargaining set) = the set of possible agreements that are better (more satisfactory in terms of the perceived interests of the coalition members) for each potential coalition than the noncooperative alternatives to such agreement.

Three classes of favorable effects of coalitional action on the zone of possible agreements:

coalitional action

- to improve one's alternative to negotiated agreement or worsen that of other coalitions
- to realize joint gains
- to credibly commit the positions within the perceived zone of possible agreements

Emphasized that it is each party's perception (necessarily subjective in the short run though may be objective in the long run) of the zone of possible agreements that informs its actions.

-Add or subtract parties

-process opportunism: multilateral communication and indirect exchange of information through one or some parties