

Master Thesis

Sustainable Development, M.Sc.

Track: Environmental Governance

Academic Year 2015/16



Universiteit Utrecht

**Generating Policy Change in Situations of Equilibrium: Shifting
Discourse Networks in the Case of Wild Circus Animals in Germany**



Photo Source: <http://cdn.zmescience.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ele9.png>

Supervisor: Dr. Frank van Laerhoven

2nd Reader: Dr. Carel Dieperink

Student number: 5509629

Jan Starke
Roerstraat 85
3522 GT Utrecht

e-mail: j.r.starke@students.uu.nl
mob.: +31 6 16 11 38 86

July 28, 2016

Abstract

A ban of wild circus animals has been debated in Germany for more than 13 years. Although the issue is not very complex or contested and no technological improvements are needed, only incremental change has been occurred so far. According to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, this gridlocked situation is maintained by successful framing processes of status quo proponents. In a first, theoretical step, this project enriches the body of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory by identifying strategies for policy entrepreneurs as causal mechanisms behind the assumed – and frequently observed – dynamic of periods of only incremental change (equilibrium), disrupted by apparently sudden, drastic change (punctuations). Identified strategies for proponents of change are to reframe the policy image and to shift venues in order to generate attention. Once attention is high, new change proponents have to be included into the ‘change-coalitions’. Status quo proponents, on the other hand, can decrease the magnitude of a punctuation by adjusting their belief systems (policy learning). In a second, empirical step, the identified strategies have been measured for the empirical case of wild circus animals in Germany in order to generate policy recommendations for proponents of change. Discourse Network Analysis resulted to be a useful tool to track and measure framing processes in discourses over time. 521 German newspaper articles dealing with wild circus animals in the period 1991-2016 have been coded in two rounds, a first one to develop a coding scheme and a second one to code the data consistently. The coding scheme was cross-validated by a class of Sustainable Development students. After coding, the obtained qualitative data have been translated into network data. Visualized affiliation and actor congruence networks are used to track reframing and policy learning processes, as well as venue shifts and the integration of newly attracted change proponents over time. Shifts in the relative popularity of used concepts have been measured by changes in concept node degree centrality. The analysis is enriched by a supplementary, qualitative discourse analysis. Results show that in the case of wild circus animals in Germany, status quo proponents made significant adjustments in belief systems and hereby decreased the magnitude of change. Resting potential for change proponents lies in stressing economic and legal aspects of the debate and in using alternative policy venues. Political parties could include more regional party divisions in their striving for change by streamlining their argumentation centrally.

Key Words: Policy Change | Gridlock | Punctuated Equilibrium | Discourse Network Analysis | Circus Animals

Acknowledgements

First of all, my parents, Katja Starke-Heinbokel and Dr. Joachim Starke, deserve a great thank for their continuous support for my studies and this project. You helped me not only with helpful comments on content and language, but also cheered me up during rough times and encouraged me to also try new and risky approaches.

The same holds true for Dr. Frank van Laerhoven, my first supervisor. Frank, thank you for hearten me to try also new ideas, although the outcome was not certain or straightforward. I think, in the end it was a good idea to walk somewhat new paths in the course of this project. Thank you also for your flexibility, helpful comments and openness.

A further thank goes to my second reader, Dr. Carel Dieperink, who gave helpful comments during the design phase of this project. Furthermore, I would like to thank the following persons for comments on earlier versions of this report and during the design phase of this project: Frank Baumgartner (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Michael Schröter (Representation of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen at the Federal Republic, Bundesrat representative for environment and infrastructure), Julian Obholzer, Manuel Kramer and Kathrin Packham (office of Christina Jantz-Herrmann, member of the German parliament and SPD spokesperson for animal protection), Oliver Treib (University of Münster, institute for political sciences), Paolo Ruffino (Utrecht University / University of Amsterdam), Tessa Houwing (Utrecht University), and Philip Leifeld (Universities of Zurich and Bern).

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction..... | 6 |
| 1.1. Problem Definition | 6 |
| 1.2. Scientific Relevance..... | 9 |
| 1.3. Societal Relevance..... | 10 |
| 1.4. Research Framework..... | 11 |
| 1.5. Structure of the Thesis | 12 |
| | |
| 2. Theory | 13 |
| 2.1. Punctuated Equilibrium Theory | 13 |
| 2.2. Specifications by Discourse Network Theory..... | 19 |
| 2.3. Theoretical Model | 21 |
| | |
| 3. Institutional Setting in Germany..... | 24 |
| 3.1. German Federalism and Venue Shifts..... | 24 |
| 3.2. The German Party System..... | 26 |
| 3.3. The Judicial System..... | 28 |
| | |
| 4. Methods | 29 |
| 4.1. Case Selection..... | 29 |
| 4.2. Discourse Network Analysis | 30 |
| 4.3. Variables and Operationalization..... | 32 |
| 4.3.1. Image Reframing | 33 |
| 4.3.2. Venue Change | 34 |
| 4.3.3. Integration of New Actors | 35 |
| 4.3.4. Policy Learning..... | 35 |
| 4.4. Data Collection | 36 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.5. Data Analysis | 37 |
| 4.5.1. Time-Series Measurement | 37 |
| 4.5.2. Discourse Networks..... | 37 |
| 4.5.3. Qualitative Discourse Analysis..... | 38 |
| 4.6. Cross-Validation | 38 |
| | |
| 5. Results..... | 39 |
| 5.1. Cross-Validation | 40 |
| 5.2. Image Reframing | 42 |
| 5.2.1. Affiliation Networks..... | 43 |
| 5.2.2. Concept Node Degree Centrality Changes | 49 |
| 5.3. Venue Change | 51 |
| 5.4. Integration of New Actors | 55 |
| 5.5. Policy Learning..... | 60 |
| | |
| 6. Discussion..... | 63 |
| 6.1. Limitations..... | 63 |
| 6.2. Discussion of Results | 65 |
| | |
| 7. Policy Recommendations | 68 |
| | |
| 8. Conclusions..... | 71 |
| | |
| References..... | 74 |
| | |
| Annex 1: Coding Scheme | 80 |
| Annex 2: Exemplary Press Release | 82 |

1. Introduction

Scholars frequently observe that policy change occurs only incrementally most of the time (Jones et al., 1997; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Baumgartner et al., 2011): In spite of long discussions, only very little actual change happens. The discourse seems to be in a ‘gridlocked’ situation (Jones, 2001; Jones et al., 2003). Attempts to explain these dynamics focus for example on actor-based explanations like powerful parties blocking each other (Jones, 2001), or more structural approaches like the notion of institutional friction that needs to be overcome in order to generate policy change (Jones et al., 2003; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). However, how is it possible for policy makers to transcend such a gridlocked situation? A branch of scholars proposes that attention is the key to ‘free’ an issue from a gridlocked situation and shift the discussion to a broader public debate (Walgrave et al., 2009, Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015; John, 2006b). Since only very few issues are discussed in the daily news, most situations remain for a long time in a political expert circle discussions. They are perceived as rather uninteresting by the broader public, overall attention is low. Increased attention should result in the feeling of urgency and finally in drastic political change (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the problem remains: How can actors increase the attention for a topic in a gridlocked situation and finally achieve major policy change? The goal of this research project is firstly to refine the theory on policy change in gridlocked situations by identifying strategies for policy entrepreneurs on how to increase attention and generate major policy change. Secondly, an empirical case of a current gridlocked discourse is analyzed in order to inform proponents of change about the resting potential in the application of identified strategies.

1.1. Problem Definition

I start by explaining the problem, which I aim to contribute in solving. After a more general description of what is understood as a gridlocked situation, I describe an example of such an issue: the case of attempts to introduce a ban of wild circus animals in Germany.

‘Gridlocked’ Situations

In general terms, ‘gridlock’ describes a situation where no change occurs, although the problem and possible solutions are clearly identified (Jones et al., 1997; Jones, 2001). Reasons for such a situation could for example be dissent between policymakers (Jones et al., 1997), the mutual ‘blocking’ by strong political parties (Jones, 2001), or conservative rules-of-the-game (referred to as institutions), hindering drastic changes of the political system (Jones et al., 2003). “An institution may be defined as a set of individuals acting according to common rules resulting in collective outcomes” (Jones et al., 2003: pp. 153-154). These institutions impose costs on the translation of inputs into outputs within the political system and contribute to the ‘stickiness’ of political processes (Jones et al., 2003). For example, in a democracy, a parliament has to pass new, collectively binding and formal rules according to a strict and distinct set of rules. Not everybody can just invent a rule and use the police to enforce it. As a result, most changes in a political system need time and have to pass several institutional barriers. Nevertheless, if this institutional friction gets too high, a political system is not able to react to urgent demands anymore (Jones et al., 2003). An important institution increasing friction within a political system is that parliaments have limited space on their agenda

(Baumgartner et al., 2014): An issue needs a lot of attention to actually be debated in a parliament that could produce a law as an output to generate major political change. Since only a limited number of situations can be treated, most issues are only discussed in expert circles with very limited chances for actual drastic change. Such a discourse is 'gridlocked' in these expert circles until attention is high enough to shift the discussion to a more politicized level with a higher probability of major political change (True et al., 2007; Walgrave et al., 2009; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015). One example of such a gridlocked discourse is the discussion on wild circus animals in Germany: Despite frequent formal approaches to ban wild animals from circuses in Germany, the legislative situation has not changed since discussions started around the year 2003. The situation seems 'gridlocked' and change proponents are not able to cause policy change.

A 'Gridlocked' Legislative Situation: The Ban of Wild Circus Animals in Germany

The debate about banning wild animals from circuses is already going on for more than 13 years in Germany. Ban proponents argue that husbandry conditions in circuses are worse than in other forms of captivity and that circuses are generally not a suitable place for wild animals. Opponents of the ban, on the other hand, stress that circus life is a traditional culture and in addition to that point out economic reasons why wild animals are part of circuses. Despite of three formal attempts to introduce a ban, no major policy change has occurred yet.

Wild animals are exposed to more and more frequent stressors than other animals kept in captivity (Iossa et al., 2009). It is shown that circus animals exhibit more signs of bad welfare than animals living in the wilderness as well as in other forms of captivity, like in zoos or in private households (Iossa et al., 2009; Llorente et al., 2015; Freeman & Ross, 2014). A typical indicator of negative animal welfare are stereotypies. Stereotypic behaviors are defined as "unvarying, repetitive behaviors that have no obvious goal or function" (Gruber et al., 2000: p. 210). Wild animals are those animals that are non-domesticated (Iossa et al., 2009). Husbandry conditions are more stressful for circus animals than other forms of captivity, due to more frequent transportation, less suitable enclosure conditions, unnatural performance activities, and sometimes poorer feeding because of limited financial capacities of circuses.

Firstly, circus animals travel more frequently than their conspecifics in other forms of captivity. "Travel from one destination to another can occur weekly, if not daily" (Nevill & Friend, 2003: p. 329). In travel situations, movement is even more restricted than in ordinary cages or exercise pens, increasing the likelihood of stereotyping, as tested for tigers (Nevill & Friend, 2003). In addition to that, traveling involves more exposure to noise and humans, what is stressing especially for wild animals (Nevill & Friend, 2003).

Secondly, housing conditions in circuses are often more limited than for instance in zoos. This includes smaller compounds or cages, and more frequent keeping chained or picketed with minor movement capabilities than in exercise pens (Friend & Parker, 1999). Chaining negatively affects circus elephants, because the limitation of motivated, species-typical behavior increases the likelihood of stereotypic behavior (Gruber et al., 2000). In zoos, elephants are normally penned and not chained, what decreases the occurrence of stereotypies (Friend & Parker, 1999; Gruber et al., 2000). In circuses, social animals normally living in groups often have to be isolated, negatively affecting animals' welfare. For example, a history of performance captivity influences the social behavior of chimpanzees also in later stages of their lives (Freeman & Ross, 2014), indicating that a life in isolation or very small

groups (as typical in circuses and in contrast to wilderness or zoos) deeply influences the welfare of social animals like chimpanzees.

Thirdly, wild animals in circuses are performing activities that are not common in wilderness behavior, but perceived as entertaining by humans, or criticized as degrading by others (Bell, 2015). Examples are elephants standing on only three or two legs (Iossa et al., 2009), apes forced to imitate human behavior (Freeman & Ross, 2014), or wild cats jumping through rings of fire (Stokes, 2004).

Fourthly, financial resources of circuses are often more uncertain than those of zoos or private households keeping wild animals, which is likely to negatively influence the quality of feeding for circus animals (Iossa et al., 2009).

In addition to the factors negatively affecting the welfare of wild animals, also society bears related costs, for example the rehabilitation of a chimpanzee with a past in the entertainment sector costs about EUR 7.000 per individual and year (Llorente et al., 2015).

On the other hand, proponents of wild animals in circuses claim that captivity is preferred to the wilderness regarding the conservation of endangered species (Bell, 2015). Furthermore, it is attempted to reframe the image of for instance elephants as not wild, but rather already domesticized animals with performances as part of a promotional and encouraging activity (Bell, 2015). Proponents of wild animals in circuses stress that performance activities are important elements for a stimulating life of animals kept in captivity (ECA, 2016). Also educational aspects are highlighted: Circuses are said to educate children about relations between humans and animals and animals' special needs (Iossa et al., 2009). Plus, circuses are a traditional business, perennially integrating animals in their shows (Bell, 2015). In addition to that, this coalition stresses that husbandry conditions improved recently (ATgzc, 2016).

Wild animals in circuses are banned in 16 out of 28 EU member states (ENDCAP, 2016). A first formal attempt to ban certain species of wild animals also in German circuses dates back to the year 2003, when the government of the Federal Land¹ Hessen started a first initiative to ban apes, elephants, and bears from circuses and to establish a central register of traveling circuses that keep wild animals (BR 595/03). The Hessen government at that time was led by the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU, conservative). The decision was adopted in form of a resolution in the *Bundesrat*², which is used to bring issues to the attention of the federal government, but has no direct legal binding forces (Schubert & Klein, 2011; Bundesrat, 2013). Although the central register was introduced, the federal government made no attempt to also introduce the ban of wild circus animals. Consequently, in 2011, the social-democratic government of Hamburg initiated a new *Bundesrat* resolution with the goal to ban apes, elephants, bears, giraffes, rhinos, and hippos from circuses (BR 565/11). In 2013, the federal government passed a reform of the German animal protection act, but again ignored the *Bundesrat* resolutions and did not include the wild circus animals ban (BGBl., 2013). The omission motivated the Green party in the *Bundestag*³ to initiate a formal parliamentary request in 2014, asking when the regulation is coming. The federal government replied that the

¹ A Federal Land (German: *Bundesland*, plural: *Bundesländer*) is an autonomous regional state as part of the Federal Republic of Germany. Federal Lands have own parliaments and ministries and execute legislative power in their assigned fields of competence (mostly inner security and education) (Schubert & Klein, 2011).

² The *Bundesrat* is the representation of the governments of the Federal Lands and co-legislator in the German institutional system (Schubert & Klein, 2011).

³ The *Bundestag* is the first chamber of the German parliament and consists of directly elected representatives (Linn & Sobolewski, 2011).

situation is continued to be monitored, hence not giving a time planning on when to introduce the ban or even whether to do so at all (BT 18/2690). Meanwhile, a number of municipalities started own initiatives to regulate the situation, resulting in decisions to not rent public spaces to circuses using wild animals (Peta, 2016). However, such circuses can still use private properties. The third formal resolution was initiated recently, again by Hessen, but under a government coalition of CDU and Greens. The initiative includes the ban of apes, elephants, bears, giraffes, rhinos, and hippos from German circuses and further regulations for the keeping of animals in circuses (BR 78/16). Despite of formal attempts to introduce a regulation, several federal governments managed to ignore the call for a ban. Municipal regulations indicate only incremental change. Hence, fundamental change can only occur when humans are willing to bear costs on animals' welfare sake. This would be a paradigm shift. How can proponents of change thus bring the issue to the highly debated agenda and finally cause major political change in the form of a ban of wild animals in circuses?

Strategies to Increase Attention and Cause Major Political Change

A review on the literature on causal mechanisms behind processes of major political change reveals strategies to increase attention in order to 'free' an issue out of a gridlocked discussion. The aim is to extract strategies for policy entrepreneurs to 'politicize' an issue and finally cause major political change. In the empirical part of this study, I identify the unexploited potential for the theoretically derived strategies on how to cause major political change. More specifically, the research aim is thus to identify the resting potential for proponents of the ban of wild animals in German circuses to use strategies in order to increase attention and generate major policy change. Findings are translated into recommendations for policy entrepreneurs. In order to achieve this goal, this project makes use of the following research question:

What is the unexploited potential of strategies that proponents of the ban of wild animals in circuses can use in order to overcome the gridlocked situation of equilibrium and cause major political change?

To structure the argumentation, I use the following sub-questions:

- What are strategies to cause political change in gridlocked situations?
- To what extent have change proponents already exploited the identified strategies?
- What is the resulting unexploited potential of change strategies?
- What are resultant recommendations for proponents of the ban on how to cause major political change?

The first sub-question is answered by reviewing the literature on policy shifts in gridlocked situations. Sub-questions 2 and 3 form the analytical and empirical part of the thesis. I will deal with the last sub-question in an own section.

1.2. Scientific Relevance

This research project aims at broadening the knowledge base on how to cause political change in gridlocked situations. For this end, the theoretical basis of Punctuated Equilibrium (PE) theory is broadened, by not only analyzing the causal effects, but also the underlying causal mechanisms: Next to the often confirmed assumption of PE theory that public policy processes

consist of lengthy periods of near stasis (equilibrium), interrupted by bursts of radical change (punctuations), also strategies on how to generate a punctuation could be extracted from PE thinking. However, these causal processes received less scholarly attention than the overall effect.

Moreover, this project broadens the toolbox on how to test PE theory assumptions in empirical settings: Whereas PE studies mostly base their conclusions on the quantitative analysis of budget changes, this project analyzes strategies on how to cause punctuations in more detail. This is done by translating PE assumptions about underlying processes into terms that are testable by applying the method of Discourse Network Analysis. DNA is a particularly useful method to measure and analyze processes of issue reframing and resulting actor coalitions over time. This makes it possible to track for example the aspects of an issue that are discussed over time or the inclusion of newly attracted change advocates. In contrast to standard discourse analysis, DNA is generally more easily replicable, increasing thus the reliability of measurement by facilitating the generation of inter-subjectivity. DNA turns out to be a suitable tool to analyze PE assumptions, particularly to measure reframing processes. Hence, this study broadens the applicability of the DNA method, too.

In addition to that, the research aim of this study is to produce recommendations for policy entrepreneurs on how to cause major policy change. It is thus not only an analysis of policy, but also for policy. This study therefore helps translating scholarly discourses into actual policy and is an attempt to improve the communication of scientific findings into practice.

The thesis project is also relevant in the context of the research master program “Sustainable Development”, M.Sc. at Utrecht University. Sustainability science “seeks to understand the fundamental character of interactions between nature and society” (de Vries, 2013: p. 3). Since mankind is only one of the species living on this planet, this project helps to understand relations between humans and animals, by analyzing a situation where costs of change are borne by humans, while benefitting animals. Furthermore, sustainability science is transdisciplinary, problem-driven and “must be connected to the political agenda for sustainable development” (de Vries, 2013: p. 3). This thesis uses theories and methods born in transdisciplinary contexts and tries to generate recommendations for an actual and current political problem. It thus fulfills the requirements established by de Vries (2013) to be categorized as a sustainability science study.

The project is also relevant for the track “Environmental Governance”. This track specializes on the governance aspects of sustainability, specifically on how to cause collective actions to achieve sustainability goals. My analysis deals with strategies on how to generate major policy change in gridlocked situations, where a dominant coalition maintains stability by keeping an issue on the apolitical subsystem level. Strategies on possibilities to generate punctuations is one way of causing collective action. The research project aims at equipping change proponents with tools on how to cause major political change in democratic and pluralistic settings. Learned lessons could thus be applied in multiple other situations in both academia and practice.

1.3. Societal Relevance

The research project is also relevant for society, firstly by enhancing the knowledge base on how to cause policy change in gridlocked situations. Progressive policy entrepreneurs could use this knowledge on how to ‘politicize’ issues with low perceived salience.

Secondly, the project aims at identifying the coalitions and issue framing processes in the discussion on wild circus animals in Germany, thus helps forming an informed opinion for interested citizens. In a democratic society, it is crucial to be informed about which actors follow which goals in order to form policy preferences.

Thirdly, increased and detailed knowledge about inter-species relations helps society as a whole to maintain a livelihood for all forms of life on our shared planet.

1.4. Research Framework

The main research question, as well as the connected sub-questions will be answered by conducting the following steps (see figure 1.1). First of all, PE theory will be presented and assumed strategies on how to generate punctuations need to be identified. Further specifications are achieved by adding elements of discourse and network theory. These form the theoretical framework of this project. Theoretical insights will then be applied to an empirical case. For this end, data needs to be collected and coded. Resultant discourse networks can consequently be analyzed according to the operationalization presented in the methods section. Since every method is restricted (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010), limitations need to be made explicit, which affect conclusions and recommendations.

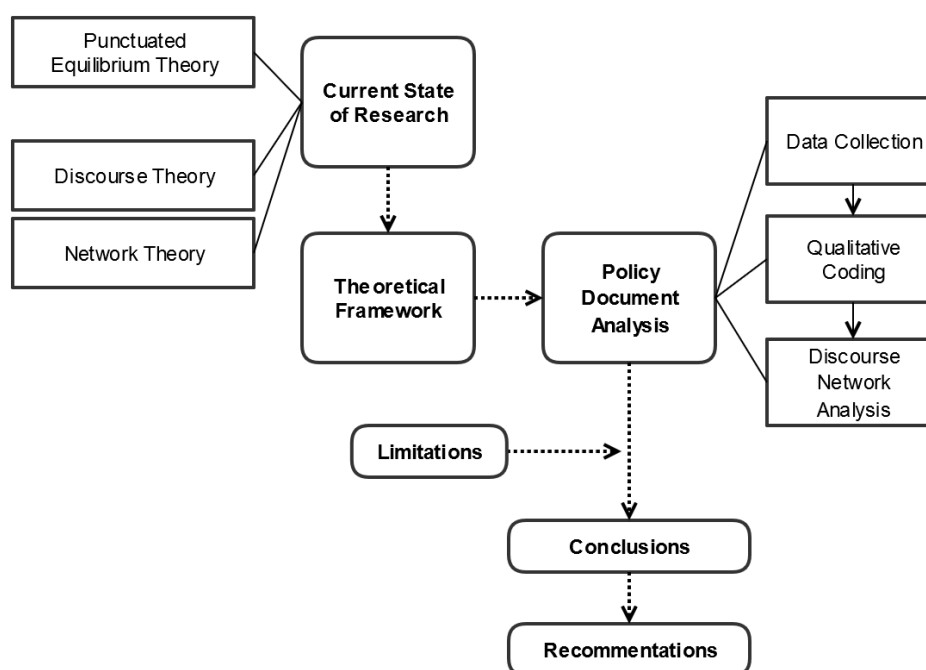


Figure 1.1 – Research Framework.

Expected results are visualized affiliation and actor congruence discourse networks that allow for an analysis of the resting potential to apply PE strategies to cause a punctuation in the gridlocked discussion on wild animals in German circuses. On basis of this analysis – and with the necessary limitations in mind – the research goal is to formulate recommendations for proponents of the ban of wild circus animals as policy entrepreneurs capable of generating major policy change. Results will be presented to German change proponents that are involved in the treated discussion.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

After having outlined the problem definition in this section, I continue by explaining the theoretical background (section 2). Punctuated Equilibrium theory provides insights into ways to cause policy change in highly stable situations. Theoretical assumptions derived from discourse (network) analysis specify underlying causal mechanisms. Section 3 contains a brief description of the institutional setting that helps the reader to follow my argumentation in the subsequent sections. In section 4, the method of Discourse Network Analysis will be explained and the before identified causal mechanisms operationalized. Moreover, data sources and the means of analysis will be clarified. Results will be presented in section 5. These results will be discussed in section 6, which also makes the limitations of this project explicit. Section 7 contains the derived recommendations for proponents of the ban of wild animals in circuses. The report is ended with concluding remarks in section 8.

2. Theory

A wide variety of theories deals with policy change and offers testable assumptions (summarized for example in Sabatier, 2007). A theory dealing specifically with the dynamics of gridlocked situations is Punctuated Equilibrium (PE) theory (Jones et al., 2003). PE theory explains stability and change in public policymaking (True et al., 2007). According to this theoretical perspective, highly stable phases of incremental policymaking are interrupted by punctuations of rapid policy change (Baumgartner et al., 2014). I use this theoretical lens in this research project, because it fits perfectly in the focus on increasing attention as a first and necessary step to ‘free’ issues from gridlocked situations in order to finally generate policy change. Hence, PE theory offers suitable and fitting explanation attempts for the problem in question. This particular theory seems thus suitable to shed light on strategies on how to increase public attention of ‘gridlocked’ discussions to achieve major political change. In this section, I firstly explain the assumed causal mechanisms behind this theorized and extensively empirically tested causal effect (e.g. Baumgartner et al., 2009; John & Margetts, 2003; Breunig & Koski, 2012; Jordan, 2012) of punctuated equilibria. For this end, I explicate the basic assumptions of PE theory: Limitations of human cognitive processing, subsystem and macro-politics decision-making, and the resulting interplay of static equilibria and rapid punctuations. Furthermore, critics added the notion of moderating variables that affect the magnitude of punctuated change. The findings will be synthesized into a theoretical model explaining which strategies increase the likelihood of generating a punctuation in a situation of equilibrium.

Secondly, the deduced PE model is enriched by notions of discourse and network theory. These notions result in a concretization of the PE model and further shed light on the causal mechanisms on how proponents of change can generate a punctuation.

Thirdly, the insights from these theoretical perspectives will be combined in the theoretical framework, which is the theoretical basis of this research project.

2.1. Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

Basis of the theoretical framework applied in this research project is Punctuated Equilibrium theory, mainly developed by Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones. PE theory was born out of criticism of prevailing theories of incrementalism that were not able to explain empirical observations of periodically occurring drastic changes (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). In contrast to incrementalists stressing the stability and path dependency of policy, according to PE theory, public decision-making is characterized by long and stable phases of only modest and incremental change (equilibrium), interrupted by apparently sudden punctuations of major change (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014). This model is rooted in similar observations in evolutionary biology (Prindle, 2012). Although this model was taken out of its specific context in the natural sciences and hereby was “loosed [...] from its empirical anchor” (Prindle, 2012: p. 25), also political scientists collected extensive evidence of the causal effect in the U.S. and elsewhere (Baumgartner et al., 2009; John & Mergetts, 2003). Main research object were changes in public budgeting in different policy sectors (John & Mergetts, 2003). The assumed (and extensively confirmed) hypothesis was that according to incrementalism, the magnitude of budget changes across financial years should be normally distributed (Baumgartner et al., 2009), whereas a leptokurtic distribution with a higher amount of no or minimal, a smaller amount of medium, and again a higher amount of drastic changes should

indicate a process in line with PE assumptions (John & Mergetts, 2003). Hence, the causal effect is based on a solid empirical basis, also in the social sciences; the PE notion resulted in a fruitful dialogue (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). However, fewer attention was given to the causal mechanisms leading to the observed effects (John, 2003). What causes a punctuation to occur? Are actors able to influence the probability of a punctuation and how? Theoretical answers to these questions can be deduced from assumptions explicitly stated by PE scholars (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014). These factors can be translated into strategies for proponents of change to generate a punctuation out of a stable policy situation of equilibrium. However, prior to the identification of factors increasing the probability of a punctuation, some basics of PE theory are explained.

Cognitive Processing and Serial Attention: The Importance of Agenda-Setting

One of the fundamental pillars of PE argumentation is the basic notion of human cognitive limitations: Humans are only able to process one issue at a time with their full attention (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014). Organizations consist of more human beings and are thus capable of limited parallel processing (True et al., 2007). This notion of limited cognitive carrying capacity is far reaching, because it is a universal assumption and thus not affected by the institutional context (Breunig & Koski, 2012). Applied to parliamentary decision-making, a parliament can only decide on a single issue at a time, to that it is paying undivided attention. This attention is institutionalized in the agenda of a plenary session with limited space: Only a limited amount of topics has space on the high-level agenda of parliaments producing policy change in form of universally binding rules in democracies. Not only formal decision-making organizations, but also mass media or political parties have a limited capacity to treat issues at the same time (Walgrave et al., 2009; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015; Princen & Rhinard, 2006). As a consequence, attention is scarce. This results in a struggle for attention in order to set issues on the agenda (John, 2006b; Walgrave et al., 2009; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010, Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2015).

According to PE scholars, reframing processes and the consequent attraction of new change proponents helps bringing an issue on the highly politicized and debated high-level political agenda, the so-called macro-politics (True et al., 2007). This agenda “access is a precondition for major policy punctuations” (Baumgartner et al., 2014: p. 63). However, in order to bring an issue on the macro-political agenda, it is necessary to overcome institutional friction, filtering the flood of information entering the political system and striving for attention (John, 2006a).

Media attention is typically assumed to increase the probability of fast and far-reaching policy change, by bringing an issue on the macro-political agenda (Baumgartner et al., 2011). In contrast, Wolfe (2012) states that the media could also slow down legislative processes by introducing new actors and arguments, causing “conflict expansion and attribute intrusion” (p. 116). This should be a sign of increased friction of the political system, so “the media contribute to negative feedback and dampen momentum for policy change” (Wolfe, 2012: p. 112). However, the time of legislative delay that is caused by media attention is measured in days, whereas PE theory normally treats time horizons of years, or even decades (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012; Baumgartner et al., 2009, John & Mergetts, 2003). Compared to the length of equilibrium, delays by parliamentary debates are quite marginal. Nevertheless, Wolfe (2012) provides important insights about the causal processes between media attention, agenda-setting and the actual introduction of a new bill: When an issue is on the macro-political agenda, it is still a way to go towards a policy punctuation.

Subsystems and Macro-Politics

As mentioned above, macro-politics are characterized by a limited amount of politicized issues that are debated in a venue of high public attention (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007). Previously uninvolved actors get concerned and a broader public discusses about the issue at stake that has won the previous struggle for attention and agenda-access (Baumgartner et al., 2014). This situation is characterized by positive feedback processes: small changes in the environment amplify changes within a system, giving the process dynamic momentum (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2011). The topic 'catches fire' and it is likely that major policy change occurs (Baumgartner et al., 2014). Positive feedback processes are usually maintained by a coalition of change proponents (Worsham & Stores, 2012).

The counterpart of the dynamic, visual, and 'loud' processes on the macro-politics level are the expert-based subsystem politics, characterized by low public attention and low perceived salience (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007). Subsystems - each one dealing with a narrow set of policies in a specialized sector - exist in order to prevent an overload of the general political system (Mortensen, 2007). These subsystems include actors from different sectors, but deal with the same narrow set of political issues (McCool, 1998). When a topic is situated in subsystem politics, the process is hallmarked by stability and only incremental change (Meijerink, 2008; True et al., 2007). Usually a supporting policy image or framing of the issue is reproduced on this stage by a policy monopoly (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007). Although subsystems might vary in size, characteristics of the particular policy sector, and actor constellations of the policy monopoly (Mortensen, 2007), they have one thing in common: The continuous reproduction of a policy image supporting the status quo situation causes a negative feedback process, maintaining a highly stable situation of equilibrium (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007; Mortensen, 2007), "somewhat like a thermostat maintains constant temperature in a room" (Baumgartner et al., 2014: p. 65). This means that subsystems are not static constructs, but rather dynamic institutions that constantly have to reproduce the policy monopoly's supportive policy image (Worsham & Stores, 2012).

All in all, political processes are characterized by a constant struggle of forces of stability (the policy monopoly maintaining the negative feedback in a situation of equilibrium) and forces of change (opponents of the status quo, striving to bring an issue on the macro-political agenda) (Baumgartner et al., 2011). Once the friction maintained in subsystem politics gets overcome by the build-up efforts of proponents of change, an issue becomes salient on the macro-political agenda and there located positive feedback processes increase the probability of major political change (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007). Proponents of change are assumed to be able to 'free' an issue out of subsystem politics and bring it to the macro-politics agenda by trying to make use of multiple venues and focusing on more dimensions of the issue in order to reframe the issue at stake (Meijerink, 2008).

Phases of Equilibrium and Radical Punctuations

The highlighted dynamics of subsystem friction and forces to cause policy change, combined with the notion of limited attention and agenda space, theoretically explain empirical observations of long periods of stability, interrupted by apparently sudden punctuations (Baumgartner et al., 2014). After the occurrence of such a punctuated policy change, the subsystem comes to a new equilibrium, with a reshaped policy monopoly and connected policy

image (Mortensen, 2007). This new equilibrium is again highly stable and might shape the political discussion of the particular issue for the next years or even decades (Baumgartner et al., 1991). Hence, only marginal changes can be expected, when an issue is debated in a subsystem, but if it gains momentum and gets attention at the macro-politics agenda, a radical punctuation is likely to occur (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014; Mortensen, 2007). Breunig & Koski (2012) found that this effect is even more pronounced in sectors that are not subject to continuous public attention. The notion of external events influencing the occurrence of punctuations (Cashore & Howlett, 2007; Dziengel, 2010) is included into the PE framework by treating these shocks as information from the system's environment (Baumgartner et al., 2011). This information can be used by change proponents in order to reframe the issue at stake or change the policy venue (Baumgartner et al., 2014) and hence constitute the fuel for dynamics in policy processes. PE findings hold true not only over different countries (Baumgartner et al., 2009; John & Margetts, 2003), but also over different levels: The causal effect of punctuated equilibria is also visible on sub-national (Breunig & Koski, 2012) and local levels (Jordan, 2003).

Critics: Moderating Variables

Critics and applicants of PE theory highlight the importance of moderating third variables that affect the possible magnitude of punctuations: namely institutions and policy learning.

Already the founding authors of PE theory note that the institutional arrangements in place are an important factor to take into consideration when deriving conclusions from PE assumptions (True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014): Institutional arrangements (like for example rules formalized in the constitution and other legal boundaries, or unwritten rules about processes of the debate) determine the magnitude and frequency of punctuations. In addition to that, institutions can be adapted by the policy monopoly when an issue is still on the subsystem level, preventing new actors from entering the arena and hereby generating stability in the subsystem (Wood, 2006).

During a process of debating an issue, policy learning might occur when coalitions adjust their belief structures (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007). This results in compromises or negotiated agreements, diminishing the magnitude of punctuations (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

Synthesis: Strategies to Generate Policy Change

Causal processes which are assumed by PE scholars could be translated into strategies to generate policy change (see figure 2.1): These mechanisms could be exploited by policy entrepreneurs favoring a punctuation and a new equilibrium. In a first step, attention for the gridlocked topic needs to be increased. Identified strategies to bring an issue on the macro-political agenda are venue changes and issue reframing. The second step is to solidify the desired changes: Once an issue is debated in the politicized arena of macro-politics, it is crucial for policy entrepreneurs to include newly attracted change proponents into the change coalition(s) and formalize institutional changes for the new situation of equilibrium.

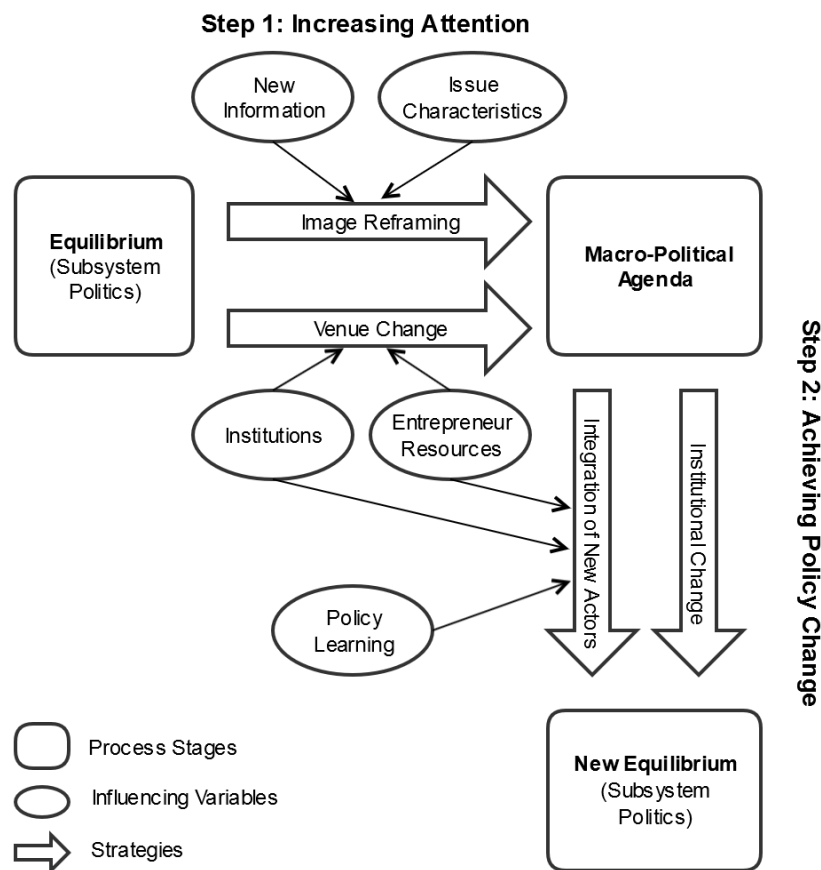


Figure 2.1 – Causal Processes in Punctuated Equilibrium Theory.

(1). First Strategy to Increase Attention: Image Reframing

A first strategy is the reframing of the policy image of the debated issue. A policy image is “a mixture of empirical information and emotive appeals” (True et al., 2007: p. 161). Policy images are either supportive of the status quo (and hence maintained by the policy monopoly in subsystem politics) or critical and favorable to change proponents (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Skillful policy entrepreneurs are able to redefine, which attributes of a problem get salient in debates, because political problems are often multi-faceted and only some dimensions can be treated at once (Mintrom & Norman, 2009). New information from the subsystem’s environment provides the opportunity to stress different aspects of the problem at stake (Cashore & Howlett, 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2011; John, 2003; John, 2006b). Chances for reframing also depend on issue characteristics, namely complexity and salience of the issue (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010; Pralle, 2003). When attention shifts from one element of the problem to another, preferences might get updated (Baumgartner et al., 2011) and new change proponents attracted (Mortensen, 2007; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Growing coalitions, new information and fresh ideas could challenge the policy image that is maintained by the policy monopoly and cause major reorganizations of the subsystem of interest (Mortensen, 2007). When an issue attracts more actors and the dominant policy image gets challenged, it is more likely that the issue gains salience and comes to the macro-political agenda (Baumgartner et al., 2014). Image reframing might thus even be a precondition to push an issue from a subsystem to the macro-politics. When reframing of an issue is not possible in the current subsystem, because the policy monopoly successfully excludes the stressing of

new problem dimensions, a venue shift might generate the opportunity to reframe an issue (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

(2). Second Strategy to Increase Attention: Venue Change

A second – and connected – strategy to push an issue on the macro-political agenda is for policy entrepreneurs to change the venue where the topic is currently debated. A policy venue is an arena of debate, each one with “its own language, set of participants, and limitations” (True et al., 2007: p. 162). The rules of the game (institutions) differ from venue to venue, causing different degrees of stability and resulting opportunities for the policy monopoly to exclude newcomers (Wood, 2006). Possibilities for venue changes are thus influenced by the institutional characteristics of the particular venue (Wood, 2006; True et al., 2007; Baumgartner et al., 2014; Meijerink, 2008). Examples for venues are courts, parliaments on different levels, private markets, the media, or even families and households (Baumgartner et al., 2014; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Federalist, open political systems provide multiple venues and thus multiple opportunities for policy entrepreneurs to change venues and treat the issue in multiple arenas (Baumgartner et al., 2014; True et al., 2007; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Actors may try to actively search for the most suitable venue for their interpretation of the problem at stake, a strategy labelled ‘venue shopping’ (Meijerink, 2008; Pralle, 2003). “Venue shopping refers to the activities of [...] policymakers who seek out a decision setting where they can air their grievances with current policy and present alternative policy proposals” (Pralle, 2003: p. 233). The dominant policy monopoly defending the status quo is usually only able to maintain a supporting policy image in only few venues (Mortensen, 2007). New venues on different levels might just provide the opportunity for change proponents to enter arenas where the policy monopoly is not dominant. This creates the possibility to bring in new information in order to redefine the problem definition and considered solutions. A venue change provides the opportunity to attract new, formerly uninvolved participants that might become new proponents of change (Pralle, 2003), a mechanism called conflict expansion (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). The ability of change proponents to shift venues further depends on their resources and venue shopping strategies (Pralle, 2003; Mintrom & Norman, 2009).

(3). First Strategy to Solidify Changes: Integration of New Change Proponents

A third strategy needs to take place once new change proponents are attracted by venue shifting and issue reframing. This strategy thus occurs subsequently to the first two presented strategies, hence in a second step: Newly attracted actors have to be included in the coalition(s) favoring policy change. “A new image may attract new participants” (Baumgartner et al., 2014: p. 67). However, these new actors are likely to have (slightly) other preferences and goals than the original policy entrepreneurs breaking up the policy monopoly by venue shopping and image reframing. Policy entrepreneurs thus need to include new proponents in strong coalitions in order to actually achieve the desired changes when an issue is on the macro-political agenda (Dziengel, 2010). The ability to do so is affected by the entrepreneur’s resources (Dziengel, 2010; Pralle, 2003). Also the institutional setting of the new arena determines what (new) actors are allowed to enter the stage and thus are suitable for coalition integration (Wood, 2006; Meijerink, 2008; Baumgartner et al., 2014).

The reframed policy image could be used by newly attracted actors that constantly look for ‘unowned’ issues in their competition of issue ownership (Walgrave et al., 2009). It is thus

in the very own interest of newly attracted actors to embrace newly upcoming (or reframed) issues. Furthermore, new actors bring in new resources that can be used by the coalition(s) striving for policy change (Pralle, 2003). Hence, it is in the mutual interest of both 'old' and 'new' proponents of change to form coalitions in the process of solidifying desired changes. New ideas, resources, and knowledge can consequently be used to generate and institutionalize the desired changes, causing the discourse to settle in a new situation of equilibrium.

(4). Second Strategy to Solidify Changes: Institutional Change

Once an issue is on the macro-political agenda, change advocates could try to change the rules of the game for the particular subsystem in which the problem was settled before, in order to establish a new policy monopoly (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). This is a crucial step in creating a new equilibrium, since former status quo proponents could be excluded from the newly evolving subsystem, generating a high stability of the desired change once it is achieved (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Newly involved actors shift the balance of power and strive for institutional changes in order to solidify the new power relations and lock in achieved reforms for the future (True et al., 2007; Pralle, 2003). This results in the reinforcement of conservatism and the creation of negative feedback processes that keep the new policy image alive in the next phase of equilibrium (Baumgartner et al., 2014): Change proponents form the new policy monopoly with new institutional rules and bring the issue back into a new subsystem. However, members of the old policy monopoly could adjust their belief systems (policy learning) in order to avoid far-reaching institutional changes (Baumgartner et al., 2014). This would result in negotiated agreements that are likely to limit the magnitude of punctuations by hampering institutional reforms (True et al., 2007).

2.2. Specifications by Discourse Network Theory

Some specifications are achieved by applying Discourse and Discourse Network theory. These regard the role of language in human interactions such as policy-making, the possibilities to frame a problem at stake, and the formation of networks by connecting used discourse concepts and actors.

The Role of Language

Scholars analyzing discourses highlight the central role of language in all human interactions (Hajer, 2005; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). A discourse is "an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer, 2005: p. 300). Actors give meaning to what they perceive as reality by the use of language (Hajer, 2005). Language is hereby not only seen as a neutral tool to describe reality, but rather as an instrument that itself shapes reality (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Meanings of reality are thus closely related to practices: Formed mindsets influence which actions actors choose from the possible set of actions in a given situation (van Herten & Runhaar, 2013). "Language is used to accomplish personal, social, and political projects" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: p. 1372). The possibility of multiple interpretations of situations results in multiple realities: A situation has one meaning for one actor and might have another meaning for another actor, resulting in multiple perceptions of what is happening and what is seen as true,

problematic, just, et cetera (van Dijk, 2006). Consequently, language is seen as a central tool to give meaning to situations and the possibility of multiple realities is acknowledged. Why is this important for this research project? First of all, this notion justifies my claim that the framing of an issue (that is the way how an issue is perceived and communicated to others by an actor) has an actual impact on policy-making: Language is seen as a tool not only to describe, but also to shape reality. Connected to this notion is a second assumption, that language shapes action and it is therefore possible to analyze possible actions by analyzing involved actors' use of language. This notion is crucial particularly for the strategy of reframing: It is claimed by PE scholars that the way of using language has an impact on the outcomes of policy-making. By shifting the used terms, definitions and attached meanings, statements address other (and in the best case broader or more powerful) actor circles: New actors become interested in a previously unnoticed situation and start 'owning' a problem. Language and the means of using words are thus key concepts in PE thinking.

However, it is also acknowledged that language and connected mindsets are only one way that shape the actions of actors. Also structural variables (like institutions, characteristics of the situation, resources, power relations etc.) play a role (Hammersley, 2003). My third assumption based on Discourse Analysis thinking is that actors are able to use language strategically in order to achieve their political goals. All three assumptions underlie the claim that issue reframing can be used as a strategy to cause major policy change.

Framing a Problem

The existence of multiple realities for multiple actors makes it possible that the same issue is perceived by actors in different ways. Framing is "the discursive construction of shared interpretations" (Leifeld & Haunss, 2011). Actors framing an issue in a (nearly) similar way form so-called discourse coalitions. More precisely, a discourse coalition is "a group of actors that, in the context of an identifiable set of practices, shares the usage of a particular set of story lines over a particular period of time" (Hajer, 2005: p. 302). For actors, it is hence possible to describe the same social or physical situation in different ways. The way a situation is perceived by one actor depends on which storylines and metaphors are used by another actor to communicate the situation (Hajer, 2005). When many actors agree on a particular 'framing' of a situation, this particular interpretation of reality and connected given meaning 'thicken' and form a new (or changed) institution (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Given meaning – the framing of a situation – thus limits the range of possible actions actors might choose (van Herten & Runhaar, 2013). This notion underlies the assumptions that (1) the way a situation is described matters; (2) interpretations (issue framings) are an identifiable matter; (3) actors form coalitions around shared interpretations; and (4) changing framings have an impact on the currently used rules of the game (institutions). A new framing of an issue attracts new actors, increasing the probability of political change (Baumgartner et al., 2014), when these actors are successfully included into discourse coalitions striving for change. Furthermore, framing processes could be used as strategies to increase the salience of a problem for the broader public (Birkett, 2014).

Networks of Actors and Concepts

Since actors form discourse coalitions regarding their shared interpretation of reality (Hajer, 2005), it is possible to identify resulting networks by connecting actors to used discourse concepts (Leifeld, 2013). A concept can be defined in different ways: It could for example be a

preferred policy instrument to solve an already defined problem (Leifeld, 2013), issues defining a situation as problematic (Fisher et al., 2013), or dimensions that are employed by actors to describe an issue (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). Generally, a concept could be understood as a dimension (as fragment of the experienced social or physical reality) that is used by actors to communicate their perception of problem or solution to others. It is assumed that actors mutually agreeing or disagreeing on a concept form belief similarity coalitions, also if they are not involved in formalized cooperation (Leifeld, 2013). Within coalitions, there might also be sub-coalitions with slightly different belief structures (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). However, network formation is not only influenced by belief similarity, but also by the particular institutions of the venue where network formation takes place (Leifeld & Schneider, 2012). By broadening the range of treated concepts, coalitions might try to establish connections to concepts that are in turn connected to actors which are not involved in any major coalition yet. It is possible to establish concept congruence and attract previously uninvolved actors who might become new change proponents (Hurka & Nebel, 2013). Integrating new actors helps broadening the change coalition network, establishing further concept congruence links with already proximal actors helps deepening and consolidating existing coalitions (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012; Leifeld, 2013; Hurka & Nebel, 2013). Hence, assumptions of DNA thinking substantiate the assumptions that (1) actors form identifiable networks with various identifiable coalitions corresponding to the congruence of shared concepts, (2) the inclusion of newly attracted change proponents into existing coalitions is crucial; (3) shifting to venues with other rules in place affects network formation, resulting in new opportunities to manage network structures and to build coalitions: and (4) shifts in the structure of coalitions increase the probability of political change.

All in all, assumptions of scholars dealing with Discourse (Network) Analysis help clarifying the previously highlighted claims, why causal mechanisms of PE theory could be regarded as strategies to cause major policy change. They substantiate the role of language and the impact of issue framing as well as resulting discourse networks on policy making.

2.3. Theoretical Model

For the end of answering the research question and to fulfill the research goal, theoretical insights need to be translated into measurable units. In order to achieve a promising operationalization of the identified strategies to realize major policy change in units that are measurable by DNA, a first step is to synthesize a theoretical model. Such a model gives insight into which variables are dealt with in the empirical analysis and makes assumptions about causal relations explicit. In particular, I am interested in strategies to bring an issue that is debated in a subsystem on the macro-political agenda and generate a punctuation. I hereby draw upon the causal mechanisms displayed in figure 2.1, but try to simplify the model in order to identify measurable variables and demarcate the research project's scope.

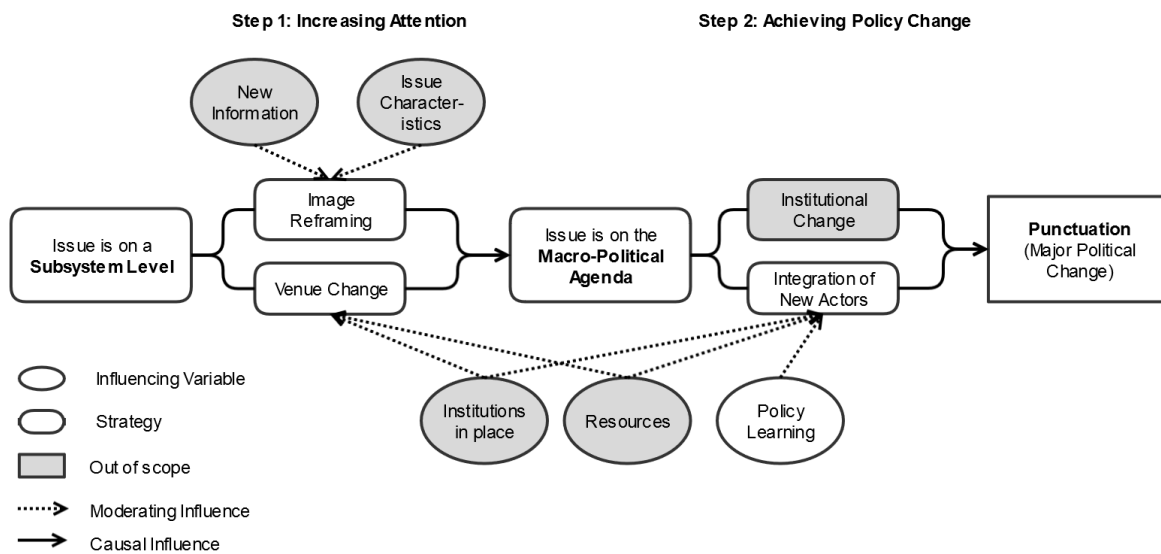


Figure 2.2 – Theoretical Model.

Strategies to cause political change according to PE theory form the heart of the theoretical model (figure 2.2). Namely successful image reframing, venue change, the integration of new actors, and institutional changes for the to-be-established new subsystem increase the probability to cause a punctuation. However, institutional changes are considered out of the scope of this project, because such changes can only be visible during the occurrence of a punctuation: Change proponents design new rules-of-the-game in the process of political change. Furthermore, an extensive institutional analysis would be necessary to determine the resting potential of institutional change.

The same argument holds true for the institutions already in place that mediate the magnitude of a punctuation. Further influencing variables are newly incoming information entering the debate (like focusing events or new scientific findings), characteristics of the issue at stake (salience and complexity, but also the extent of ethical dimensions that are debated), and resources of the proponents of change as policy entrepreneurs. All these variables influence the magnitude of a possible punctuation, but cannot be included in my analysis. Main reason is that they are not measurable with the DNA method (see section 4). An assessment of influencing variables would require other analysis tools and methods (like institutional and economical assessments).

However, also policy learning influences the magnitude of a punctuation: Status quo proponents could adjust the concepts they are dealing with and hereby reframe their policy image towards the perception of change proponents. Resultantly, the competing coalitions approximate each other and the political tension and institutional friction decrease. Likely results are then more negotiated, incremental changes rather than a major punctuation (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

A major concern is the problem of intentionality (van Dijk, 2006): Is there a purposeful strategy of actors behind observed empirical effects? Or in other words: Have actors actually intended the outcome by purposeful strategic behavior? For the purpose of this study, I claim that outcomes of increased attention are indeed the result of successful strategies of skillful policy entrepreneurs. An alternative explanation would be that situations just pop up as problems on

the macro-political agenda by chance. In contrary, we observe that the case of wild circus animals found a way to the politicized arena already three times, always in a similar fashion. Another factor that might favor increased attention apart from purposeful strategies might be external events generating media attention (Cashore & Howlett, 2007; Dziengel, 2010). I am convinced that increased attention is not solely due to chance, but the notion of external events is somewhat more convincing. However, I also use this critique by regarding external events as the influencing variable “incoming new information” in my theoretical model: Also external events do not increase attention per se: They are used by policy entrepreneurs for reframing strategies. For example, if a citizen gets killed by an escaped circus elephant, this incident might not automatically increase attention for the case of wild circus animals. This might rather be the case when policy entrepreneurs frame the newly incoming information in a certain way: The escaped circus elephant is a result of low safety standards in circuses. Wild animals in circuses are thus a safety risk for humans. However, I admit that the notion of intentionality specifically affects the notions for the second strategic step: Solidifying change by the inclusion of new change proponents and institutional changes. As presented in section 4, I measure only argumentative discourse networks that should not imply the actual sharing of knowledge or resources. Actors might thus integrate newly attracted actors in their coalition without actually intending it. I elaborate further on this limitation in section 6.

To summarize, I have identified causal mechanisms of PE theory as possible strategies to cause major political change in this section. Claims are substantiated by theoretical assumptions of scholars dealing with discourse (network) analysis. Next to strategies, also influencing variables are identified and summarized in a theoretical model (figure 2.2). This research project has the goal of identifying the resting potential of these strategies that proponents of the ban of wild animals in German circuses could exploit. Four variables (three change strategies and one moderating factor) are identified that will be operationalized in the methods section. In a next step, I describe the institutional setting of the analyzed discourse.

3. Institutional Setting in Germany

The analysis of every discourse is context-dependent and requires knowledge of the general formal and informal institutional setting, where a discourse is located. In this section, I briefly describe the most important institutional aspects of the German case. This is particularly relevant for the strategy of venue shifts: Venues are in fact institutions. Knowledge of these institutions is essential to determine the possibilities for venue shifts. For my argumentation in light of the theoretical framework established before, I focus on the (1) German federalism and connected possibilities for venue shifts, (2) the German party system with distinct political actors, and (3) some important characteristics of the judicial system.

3.1. German Federalism and Venue Shifts

The German federalism with 16 relatively autonomous Federal Lands, provides unique possibilities for venue shifts. The German territory is divided into 16 Federal Lands, two of these (Hamburg and Berlin) consist of only one city, and the Federal Land Bremen embraces only two cities (Schubert & Klein, 2012).

Competencies and Federal Levels

Every Federal Land has an own parliament and own ministries (Aden, 2012). Although the Federal Lands are generally the main legislator (art. 70 German Constitution), most policy fields have been transferred to the competency of the federal level. The Federal Lands still have exclusive fields of competence – like inner security and education – and can regulate other policy fields, if and to the extent that the federal level has not made conclusive regulations (Schubert & Klein, 2012; art. 72 and 74 German Constitution), the so-called concurrent jurisdiction. This makes the federal level the factual main legislator for the policy fields named in art. 74 of the German Constitution. The field of wild circus animals falls in the policy field of animal protection (art. 74 nr. 20 German Constitution), and therefore a case of concurrent jurisdiction. Both at federal and Federal Land level, the ministries for agriculture are the competent authority (Böcher & Töller, 2012). Hence, the issue of wild circus animals can be debated on both levels of German federalism, but the Federal Lands are only able to make regulations to the extent that there are no federal rules. The federal level can thus be interpreted as the more important level.

Cooperative Federalism

The federal system in Germany is described as cooperative: Different levels of administration are connected and intertwined (Aden, 2012). “Advocates of environmental protection issues can bring in their interests on more than one level of the German federal multi-level-system” (Aden, 2012: p. 70). The cooperative system is also displayed in the fact that comparatively few policy fields lie in the exclusive competence of one federal level (Thorlakson, 2003), and for most policy fields, both levels are able to formulate regulations.

“In contrast to federalist arrangements throughout much of the world, postwar German federalism is not arranged like a ‘layer cake’ of fully autonomous political units with

distinct functional and geographical jurisdictions. Germany's interwoven system of federalism resembles a 'marble cake' instead" (Silvia, 1999: p. 171).

Hence, the administrations have to coordinate. An important (mainly informal) institution is the subsidiary principle, regulating that an issue should be regulated on the level closest to the citizen (Schubert & Klein, 2012). This gives also the municipalities an important role in everyday political business. Furthermore, in most Federal Lands, there is a coordinating level between municipalities and the Federal Land administrations with different names (most commonly *Landkreis* level). This intertwining of different levels, administrations, and fields of competencies makes the Federal Republic of Germany a very suitable case to study venue shifts. The European level adds a further level for legislative coordination (Böcher & Töller, 2012).

The Bundesrat

It is now shown that there are many intertwined levels within the legislative structure of Germany. However, there are also important connecting points between the different levels that make it possible to shift an issue from one level to another. For this analysis, the most important connecting point is the connection between Federal Lands and federal level, the Bundesrat. The Bundesrat is the second chamber of the parliament (in the sense of co-legislator) on the federal level and consists of representatives from the governments of the Federal Lands (Schubert & Klein, 2012; Silvia, 1999). Every Federal Land has between three and six votes, depending on their population size (Silvia, 1999; see also table 3.1). The votes can only be emitted as a block and not be spread (Bundesrat, 2013; Silvia, 1999).

The Bundesrat has veto power for a lot of German laws passed by the first chamber of the German parliament, the *Bundestag* (consisting of directly elected parliamentarians (Schubert & Klein, 2012)) (Bundesrat, 2003). Often, the composition of the Federal Land governments differs from the government coalition holding the *Bundestag* majority on the federal level (Silvia, 1999). As highlighted in table 3.1, most Federal Land governments are supported by other coalitions than the current *Bundestag* coalition of CDU and SPD supporting Chancellor Angela Merkel. This is the reason why the Bundesrat is seen as a rather conservative institution, blocking political change (Silvia, 1999).

However, the Bundesrat is also a possibility to bring topics debated in the parliaments of the Federal Lands to the federal level, which generally receives more public attention. A means to do so is the passing of a resolution (Bundesrat, 2003), also in policy fields where Federal Lands do not have (exclusive) legislative power. These resolutions can for example contain the demand of action of a federal ministry, like in the analyzed case. By bringing in such a resolution, policy entrepreneurs are able to stress the salience of a problem also on the federal level. By shifting the issue from the Federal Land level to the more politicized federal level, attention for the topic is likely to increase. According to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, this is a precondition for major political change (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993).

| Federal Land | Capital City | Population [in mio.] | Bundesrat Seats | Government |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Baden-Württemberg | Stuttgart | 10.7 | 6 | Winfried Kretschmann (Greens) Greens – CDU |
| Bayern | München | 12.5 | 6 | Horst Seehofer (CSU) CSU |
| Berlin | Berlin | 3.4 | 4 | Michael Müller (SPD) SPD – Greens |
| Brandenburg | Potsdam | 2.5 | 4 | Dietmar Woidke (SPD) SPD – Left Party |
| Bremen | Bremen | 0.7 | 3 | Carsten Sieling (SPD) SPD – Greens |
| Hamburg | Hamburg | 1.8 | 3 | Olaf Scholz (SPD) SPD |
| Hessen | Wiesbaden | 6.1 | 5 | Volker Bouffier (CDU) CDU – Greens |
| Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | Schwerin | 1.7 | 3 | Erwin Sellering (SPD) SPD – CDU |
| Niedersachsen | Hannover | 8.0 | 6 | Stephan Weil (SPD) SPD – Greens |
| Nordrhein-Westfalen | Düsseldorf | 18.0 | 6 | Hannelore Kraft (SPD) SPD – Greens |
| Rheinland-Pfalz | Mainz | 4.0 | 4 | Malu Dreyer (SPD) SPD – Greens – FDP |
| Saarland | Saarbrücken | 1.0 | 3 | Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (CDU) CDU – SPD |
| Sachsen | Dresden | 4.2 | 4 | Stanislaw Tillich (CDU) CDU – SPD |
| Sachsen-Anhalt | Magdeburg | 2.4 | 4 | Reiner Haseloff (CDU) CDU – SPD – Greens |
| Schleswig-Holstein | Kiel | 2.8 | 4 | Thorsten Albig (SPD) SPD – Greens – SSW (Danish Minority Party) |
| Thüringen | Erfurt | 2.3 | 4 | Bodo Ramelow (Left Party) Left Party – SPD - Greens |

Table 3.1 – The 16 Federal Lands with their capital city, population, number of seats in the Bundesrat and current (June 2016) head of government and supporting party (coalition) (BPB, 2013; Deftz, 2016; RP-online, 2016).

3.2. The German Party System

Further venues shifts could be achieved by bringing in a topic into the democratic representations on the municipal or European level. Here, the political parties are the combining element of policy entrepreneurs on different levels. In democracies, political parties

perform the functions of encouraging public participation, they transmit interests from the citizens into the legislative institutions, select and filter interests and personnel, communicate between state and citizens, educate, observe public opinion, and legitimize the political system (Frevel, 2009; Böcher & Töller, 2012).

In Germany, most parties are active on all levels of federalism. Resultantly, the party system is rather clearly arranged: Traditionally, the biggest and most successful parties are the two “catch-all parties” (Silvia, 1991: p. 169): the conservative CDU (Christian-Democratic Union) and the social-democratic, labor-oriented SPD (Social-Democratic Party). Roughly speaking, and as also visible in table 3.1, the German North is dominated by the SPD, whereas in the South, the CDU is traditionally strongest. In Bavaria, instead of the CDU, the slightly more conservative sister party CSU (Christian-Social Union) represents the center-right electorate (Schubert & Klein, 2012). The CSU only exists in Bavaria and there is no division of the CDU in Bavaria. Because of outstanding results in Bavaria, the CSU also represents more than 5% of the federal votes and is therefore also present on the federal level, where the party forms a group in parliament together with the CDU (Schubert & Klein, 2012). The FDP (Free Democratic Party) is the market-liberal, business-oriented party in Germany and has been an important third pillar of the German post-war party landscape (Schubert & Klein, 2012). The party has lost some importance in the last years and is not represented anymore in the *Bundestag*. Since the 1980s, a relatively strong Green party has joined the party system (Schubert & Klein) and has established a solid place in the recent party system. In Baden-Württemberg, even the head of government is from this party. In 2007, the PDS (Party for the Democratic Socialism), the follow-up of the party governing the former German Democratic Republic (DDR) formed the new Left Party together with a Western German left-wing party (Schubert & Klein, 2012). This party became a steady voice in the opposition on the federal level and is represented and most successful in East German governments. Recently, the new nationalist party AfD (Alternative for Germany) joined the party system. However, this party has not made any statements regarding wild circus animals yet and is therefore not included in the analysis. Another party with limited relevance on the federal level, but supplying some members of Federal Land parliaments, is the Pirate Party, advocating for digitalization and direct democracy.

Since parties have amongst others the function of canalizing public opinion (Frevel, 2009; Böcher & Töller, 2012), I assume them to be a suitable key indicator actor when trying to find out on which venue an issue is debated: I assume that statements of a distinct party division (local, Federal Land, or federal level) indicate that the issue is also debated in the respective venue. In other words: If for example the SPD Bavaria makes a statement about wild circus animals at a given moment in time, I assume that the issue was debated in the policy venue Bavaria at that moment. Main reason for this assumption is also feasibility: Media focus on statements of political parties, because they represent channeled public opinions (Frevel, 2009; Böcher & Töller, 2012; Schubert & Klein, 2012). Party statements are thus found frequently in newspaper articles and indicate channeled opinions of the public discourse. Hence, they are a feasible indicator actor for my data base (see also section 4: methods).

3.3. The Judicial System

Also courts are seen as actors influencing political processes, hence political actors (Aden, 2012). Most important for our case is the administrative jurisdiction. In Germany, this section of jurisdiction consists of three levels: Local administrative courts, higher administrative courts as appellate court, and the federal administrative court in Leipzig as last instance for lodging an appeal on points of law (Schubert & Klein, 2012). Next to the administrative jurisdiction, legal recourses are also given in front of the German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe. Every citizen is able to file a lawsuit if she/he feels restricted in fundamental rights (Stone Sweet, 2002). The Constitutional Court is the main organ interpreting and defending rights guaranteed by the constitution (Appel, 2014). Decisions are also shaping policies and politics (Stone Sweet, 2002). The Constitutional Court is therefore also an important political player (Schubert & Klein, 2012). Since decisions in the legal system also shape processes and outcomes of the political system, the legal arena is included as alternative venue in my analysis.

All in all, institutional characteristics of the German system provide multiple opportunities for venue shifts. Multiple concerned actors on multiple levels and from multiple sectors are able to join the discourse, act in image reframing processes and generally strive for political change. Next to legislative bodies, political parties and courts, also NGOs, companies, official government agencies, and the ministries with their subordinated administrative subbase are important political actors (Jänicke et al., 2003). The German system is thus an interesting and suitable case for this study.

4. Methods

In this section I turn toward the question on how to measure the unexploited potential of change strategies. Firstly, I justify the selection of the case of wild animals in German circuses. Secondly, I introduce the method of Discourse Network Analysis and explain the possibilities of this method to shed light on the resting potential of identified strategies. Thirdly, I explain the operationalization of the variables identified in the theories section. Fourthly, the data collection strategy and used data sources are explicated. Fifthly, I describe the software-supported means of data analysis.

4.1. Case Selection

Case studies are used to give the researcher “a profound and full insight into one or several objects or processes that are confined in time and space” (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010: p. 178). More precisely, this study can be categorized as a theory-guided idiographic single case study (Levy, 2008). These are studies which aim at interpreting a single case “structured by a well-developed conceptual framework that focuses attention on some theoretically specified aspects of reality and neglects others” (Levy, 2008: p. 4). The conceptual framework is based on PE theory and was developed in section 2. Furthermore, parts of this research project are also hypothesis-generating. Such studies “suggest refinements in the theory, which can be tested on other cases (Levy, 2008: p. 5). As described in the section on theories, the causal mechanisms behind PE are rather undertheorized and need refinement. The part of using (and refining) causal mechanisms behind PE thinking as strategies for policy entrepreneurs to cause major political change is thus hypothesis-generating and theory-building. For both purposes, a single case study design can generally be suitable, since it is not the goal to test hypotheses or make generalizable claims. For these kinds of studies, a comparative, multi-case design is more suitable in order to generate causal inference. This study could, however, form the basis for further comparative studies.⁴ Hence, a single case study design is generally suitable for the aim of this study. However, what are the motives to choose this particular case, namely (1) the case of the ban of wild circus animals, and further (2) in Germany? A good case selection in a theory-guided idiographic single case study design demonstrates that the evidence fits the hypothesized theoretical framework in the case, and that the fit between theory and case is better than other cases (Levy, 2008). The research aim is to generate recommendations about a particular case, guided by a theoretical framework guided by PE claims on strategies to cause policy change. Hence, a suitable case for my study needs an identifiable situation of equilibrium and a possible punctuation.

⁴ An example would be to test the claims regarding strategies to cause political change by comparing the treated German case with the Dutch case. In the Netherlands, wild circus animals were banned from circuses in September 2015, after ten years of discussion (Dierenbescherming, 2015). The Netherlands and Germany share important case-related characteristics (lengthy discussion; same issue), as well as institutional (open, pluralistic, Western-European societies) and cultural characteristics. Since the ban was achieved in one case (the Netherlands), but not in the other (Germany), this design could be a first (but not sufficient) step to test the claims generated in this study or make somewhat generalizable claims about PE theory.

Banning Wild Animals from Circuses

First of all, the case of wild animals in circuses is a good case to research PE strategies to generate major political change. The discussion has a clearly demarcated, narrowed topic. Furthermore, in this case there exist only limited alternative solutions and all of them only regard the extent of the desired situation (examples are the ban of one or few specific species of animals in circuses, a ban of all wild animals in circuses, a ban of all animals in circuses, or the ban of keeping wild animals at all and not only in circuses). Moreover, the debate concerns a limited number of actors with genuine interest in the topic, particularly for example circus proponents, animal protection activists, some concerned politicians, and the public servants designing a desired regulation. However, by reframing the issue, it is plausible that also other actors get concerned (like for example municipalities fearing the loss of tax/fees money when circuses get less visitors, people concerned about the general circus lifestyle, or even citizens frequently visiting circus shows). Moreover, the issue has multiple dimensions that could be used for emotionally appealing issue reframing, for example animal rights, the right to conduct a traditional circus life, professional freedom, the value of circuses for education and species conservation, economic reasons and so forth. Lastly, regarding the applied method of DNA, possible opinions about the issue are likely to be situated at extremes (either a ban or no ban). It is hard to imagine an opinion favoring 'a sort of ban', like only for a limited time or only in some regions. So, statements are easily coded into agreement or disagreement on concepts.

In sum, the case of banning wild animals in circuses is a suitable case to study strategies to cause major political change: The issue is clearly demarcated and has a limited amount of alternative solutions and involved actors. The discourse is thus 'clearly laid out' and a possible punctuation can be easily defined.

The Discussion in Germany

The debate of banning wild circus animals was conducted not only in Germany, but also elsewhere (ENDCAP, 2016). Nonetheless, the debate in Germany is more useful for my analysis than other cases. Although the ban is debated in Germany already since more than 13 years, there is still no clear solution of the situation, visible in the still upcoming formal initiatives for the ban. The debate could thus be defined as gridlocked, indicating a situation of equilibrium. Furthermore, the German case is particularly interesting, because the discussion is still in process. Recommendations on base of this analysis could thus be used in practice, increasing the relevance of this study.

Hence, the German case is more suitable and interesting than discourses in other countries: The case of banning wild animals in German circuses contains an identifiable situation of gridlocked equilibrium, a desired policy punctuation and results of the analysis can be applied in practice. In a nutshell, the pre-selected case is suitable for a theory-guided idiographic single case study design with the aim of formulating recommendations for policy makers in a specific, clearly demarcated situation.

4.2. Discourse Network Analysis

Discourse Network Analysis is a tool to visualize connections between actors and concepts that they use in a discourse as well as resulting actor networks based on their mutual agreement or disagreement on concepts (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012; Hurka & Nebel, 2013). For the purpose of this study, DNA is used to track the reframing of issues, the

participants of the discourse, and resulting coalitions over time. Although DNA is a rather new method (originating in the early 2010's), the method was used to analyze rather different discourses, such as pension funds (Leifeld, 2013), firearm ownership policy (Hurka & Nebel, 2013), online deception behavior (Wu & Zhou, 2015), climate governance (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015), or software patents (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012).

I will first explain some basic concepts of DNA terminology, and continue by explaining the used forms of analyzed discourse networks in this study: affiliation networks and actor congruence networks.

Some DNA basics

DNA links discourse and network analysis (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015), by visualizing the linkages between actors and used concepts to describe an issue or a situation (Leifeld, 2013). It hereby combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015): Qualitative data of a content coding process is translated into network data that can also be analyzed quantitatively, for example by measurements of centrality (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012; Wu & Zhou, 2015).

Basic element of the qualitative coding is the *statement*, which is “a text portion where an actor utters his or her policy preferences in a positive or in a negative way” (Leifeld, 2013: p. 173). Each statement is thus coded for five different features: actor, organization, concept, agreement/disagreement, time (Hurka & Nebel, 2013; Leifeld, 2013). The differentiation between actor and organization allows for the analysis of differences between organizations and strong individuals having a (slightly) different opinion, for example a local major and his national party. The feature agreement/disagreement is seen as a binary variable. A time-series measurement is possible by adding the time feature. Lastly, every statement is coded for the concept, an actor agrees or disagrees on. A *concept* is the part of meaning, the researcher is interested in, for example policy instruments or issue dimensions (Leifeld 2013; Hurka & Nebel, 2013). In my case, the concepts are dimensions of the issue at stake (ban of wild circus animals), as described in the coding scheme (annex 1). The data base are newspaper articles, as described in section 4.4.

Affiliation Networks

The basic type of DNA networks is the affiliation network (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). An affiliation network illustrates relations between the set of actors $A = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n\}$ and the set of concepts $C = \{c_1, c_2, \dots, c_n\}$ by edges $e_{r,t}^{aff}(a, c) \in E_{r,t}^{aff}$ that represent the agreement/disagreement $R = \{r_1, r_2, \dots, r_l\}$ with $l = 2$ (agreement or disagreement) at a particular point in time $T = \{t_1, t_2, \dots, t_k\}$ (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). Resultantly, the affiliation network Graph G^{aff} can be modelled as (Leifeld, 2013: p. 174):

$$G_{r,t}^{aff} = (A, C, E_{r,t}^{aff}) \quad (1)$$

This network data is visualized by help of the *visone* software, which translates the raw network data into visualized networks of actors and concepts. Different kinds of nodes (for example circles and squares) display actors and concepts (Hurka & Nebel, 2013). Edges are the agreement/disagreement relations between actors and concepts, as described above. Different line colors could be used for agreement (r_1) or disagreement (r_2) (Leifeld, 2013).

Actor Congruence Networks

Congruence networks are used to measure the degree of belief overlap and similarity of the different involved actors (Leifeld, 2013). This is done by measuring the amount of mutual agreement or disagreement relations between actors and concepts based on the coded statements (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). The edge weight in network data represents the number of shared perceptions, with the set of weights $W = \{w_1, w_2, \dots, w_j\}$ (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). The set of shared perceptions is described as vertex a (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). Actor congruence network graphs can thus be modelled as (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012: p. 392):

$$G_t^a = (A, W_t) \tag{2}$$

Also this network data is visualized with *visone*. Actor congruence networks display actors as nodes; edges describe (the degree of) belief overlap, operationalized as the amount of mutual agreements or disagreements on concepts.

4.3. Variables and Operationalization

Building on the theoretical model developed in the last section, I analyze three variables as causal mechanisms for the generation of a punctuation: Image reframing, venue change, and the integration of new proponents of change. Furthermore, the mediating variable of policy learning is explored. All four variables need to be translated into units and terms that are measurable by DNA. Figure 4.1 summarizes the operationalization process with the first step of operationalization (white, left boxes) defining the variable and the second step (white boxes with rounded edges) translating the definition into DNA terms.

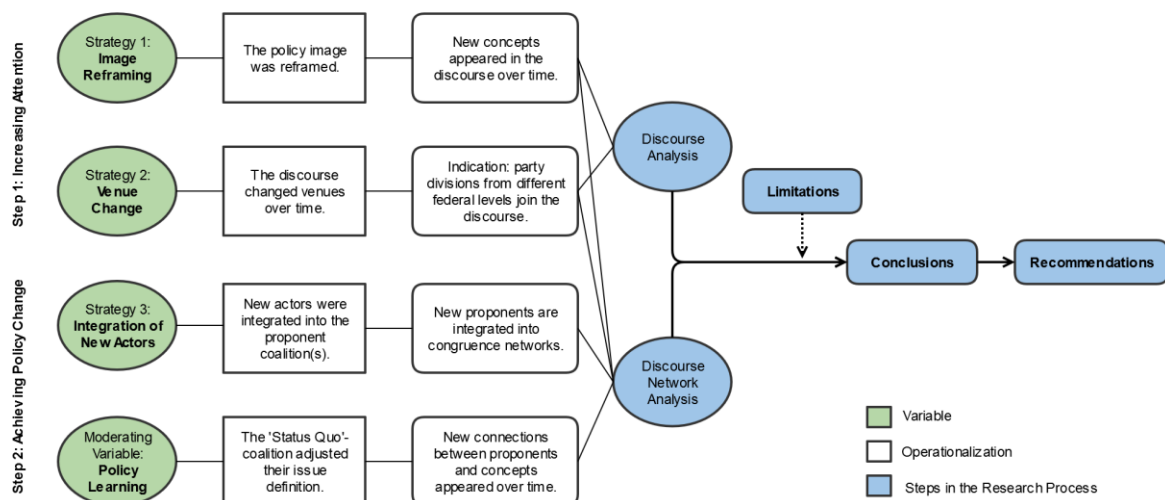


Figure 4.1 – Operationalization of the Variables.

All variables can be analyzed by help of affiliation and/or actor congruence networks. However, some variables (image reframing and venue change) call for additional qualitative interpretation by means of a further discourse analysis. However, also for these two variables, the basis is a DNA. The operationalization of the four variables is explained in more detail in continuation.

4.3.1. Image Reframing

Image reframing means that the dimensions of the issue that are highlighted by actors, change over time. When these dimensions are understood as concepts in the DNA, a suitable operationalization would be that new concepts appear in affiliation networks over time: Actors come up with - and utter - new dimensions of the issue that were not visible in the discourse before. An example would be actor A highlighting the issue of animal welfare regarding wild circus animals in the year 2000 (namely disagreeing that good husbandry conditions can be guaranteed in circuses). In 2010, actor A also points out that children get a wrong image of relations between wild animals and humans in circus shows: She disagrees that wild animals in circuses provide educational value. The example is illustrated in figure 4.2.

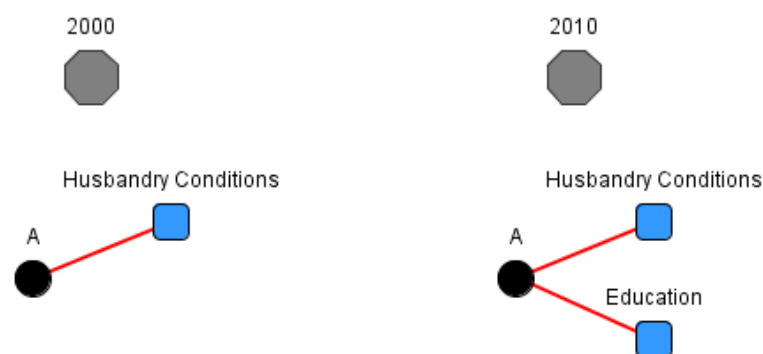


Figure 4.2 - Example Image Reframing.

This operationalization takes only a 'broadening' of the discourse into account: Only added variables are assessed. However, actors might also change the relative importance of already used concepts within the discussion. For example, actor A uses many different concepts in 2000, but animal welfare is the most important. In 2010, she not only adds the concept of education, but the animal welfare dimension gets also less important in comparison with other previously used concepts. This aspect can also be assessed by means of a DNA, namely by measuring the relative *concept node degree centrality*. "The centrality of nodes, or the identification of which nodes are more 'central' than others, has been a key issue in network analysis" (Opsahl et al., 2010: p. 245). More specifically, the degree measurement of a node describes the number of other nodes the analyzed node is connected to (Opsahl et al., 2010) and is a popular measurement in social network analyses (Valente et al., 2011). Degree centrality $d(i)$ of a node i is described as (Otte & Rousseau, 2002: p. 443):

$$d(i) = \sum_j m_{ij} \quad (3)$$

with $m_{ij} = 1$ when we observe a link between the two nodes i and j , and $m_{ij} = 0$, when there is no such link (Otte & Rousseau, 2002). The obtained value can be standardized and presented in per cent values by dividing it by the total number of edges (Newman, 2004; Otte & Rousseau, 2002; Opsahl et al., 2010; Abbasi & Altmann, 2011). In affiliation networks, actor/organization nodes can only be connected to concept nodes (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld & Haunss, 2012). If we thus analyze the degree of a concept node, we measure the number of connections with actors/organizations. This is assumed to indicate the popularity of the concept: A concept used

by more actors gets a higher degree value. This measurement is only possible, because edges only exist between concepts and actors, otherwise edges between concepts or between actors would need to be subtracted when calculating degree values. By only including concept nodes in the calculation of degree values, I measure which concept is most popular at a distinct moment in time. By measuring changes in the ranking of concept node degree centrality values over time, we can analyze which concepts got more (or less) popular during the course of the discussion. This indicates reframing processes within the discourse, in addition to the measurement of added concepts described above. However, newly appearing concepts cannot be interpreted logically and have to be excluded from analysis: Only changes in the ranking of concepts that have already been used in previous years can be interpreted as reframing processes.

However, it is not always clear, whether actors indeed added new concepts in a strategic way. Further qualitative analysis is needed in form of a short discourse analysis based on the question: Do the added (or recently omitted) concepts indeed represent a strategic shift in image reframing by the particular actor? This is done in the section on results. The descriptive DNA is thus supported by a short, interpretative discourse analysis.

4.3.2. Venue Change

A venue change is indicated by new actors entering the stage: When actors from different venues (for example different levels in the federal structure) appear in affiliation networks, it is a sign that the discourse has ‘swashed’ into a new venue. More specifically, I assume that party divisions on different levels are a suitable indicator of where a discourse takes place (see also section 3): When different party divisions make statements in newspaper articles, it is assumed that the discourse also shifted to the respective level of federalism as policy venue. Hence, if a frequent occurrence from Federal Land party divisions is observed, I assume that the discourse shifted to the Federal Land level. This is assumed analogously for the local level, too. Further venues are represented by distinct actors that are only active on that particular level: The occurrence of courts indicates a shift to the judicial venue, and European actors a shift to the European level. An example is provided in figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3 - Example Venue Change.

In this example, a local CDU division joined the federal party in the disagreement on animal welfare. This indicates a shift from the federal to the local level as policy venues. However, also here the purely descriptive DNA graph needs further interpretation. It has to be evaluated whether actors stem from different venues and if the joining indeed represents a purposeful venue change.

4.3.3. Integration of New Actors

The integration of new change proponents takes place once an issue is on the macro-political agenda. In order to actually cause a punctuation, newly attracted actors have to be included in the coalition(s) striving for policy change. In DNA terms, this is indicated by the integration of new actors into previously existing 'proponents of change'-coalitions. For this end, we have to analyze actor concept co-occurrence congruence networks. An example is provided in figure 4.4.

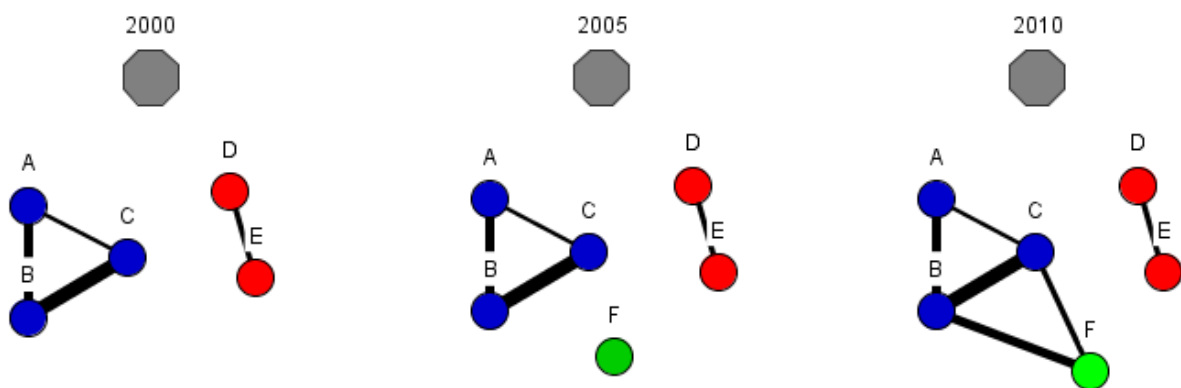


Figure 4.4 - Example Integration of New Actors.

In this situation, in 2000 we recognize two coalitions: Actors A, B, C form the coalition striving for policy change (blue coalition), actors D and E are status quo advocates (red coalition). Congruence networks are weighted networks (Opsahl et al., 2010; Newman, 2004), where edges between actors get wider when they mutually agree or disagree on more categories. Edges with different weights thus indicate different amounts of belief overlap between actors. In 2005, actor F enters the stage, but is not included into any of the coalitions. In 2010, connections between actors F and B as well as F and C appeared. The 'proponents of change'-coalition has successfully integrated the new actor F.

4.3.4. Policy Learning

The explored mediating variable is policy learning, namely adjustments in the belief systems of status quo advocates. The 'status quo proponent'-coalition could modify their definition of the problem at stake, hereby approach the change advocates on the policy content dimension and limit the magnitude of a possible punctuation. In DNA terms, this would firstly be visible in affiliation networks: New connections between status quo proponents and concepts appear. A visual example is provided in figure 4.5.

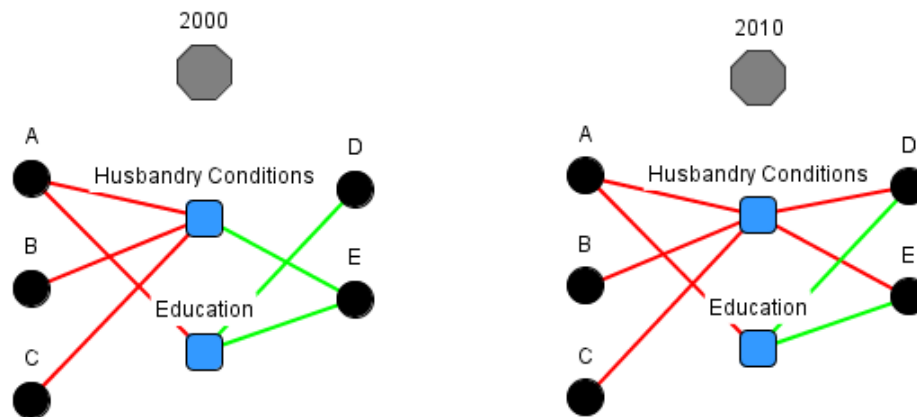


Figure 4.5 - Example Policy Learning.

In this example, actors A, B, and C form the policy change coalition and actors D and E the ‘status quo proponents’-coalition. In the year 2000, actor A disagrees on both concepts, husbandry conditions and education, B disagrees on the claim that circuses provide good husbandry conditions, and C on the concept education. E agrees that circuses provide both suitable husbandry conditions and educational value. In 2010, however, D also established a link towards the concept animal welfare, namely disagreement – just like the change proponents coalition. Also actor E changed her opinion about animal welfare and from now on disagrees. Both D and E continue agreeing that circuses provide educational value, what would still make them an identifiable, separate coalition in actor congruence networks. Nevertheless, their opinion shifts towards the policy change coalition regarding the animal welfare dimension. They might be able to achieve a compromise in this regard (for example bigger exercise pens for elephants instead of a total ban), and hereby decrease the magnitude of the punctuation, if the policy change coalition’s preference was to ban elephants from circuses in general.

4.4. Data Collection

Data base for the DNA are newspaper articles about the discussion on banning wild animals from German circuses. Newspaper articles contain statements of different kinds of actors and are seen as a valid source of displaying the actor’s ‘true’ opinion (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015), decreasing the risk of coding statements that were not intended (Hammersley, 2003). Furthermore, in contrast to policy documents, all kinds of actors (NGOs, politicians, individuals, courts et cetera) have a chance to utter their policy preferences and issue interpretations. In policy documents, some kinds of actors are institutionally excluded, for example courts or NGOs are normally not allowed to make statements in parliamentary debates. Nevertheless, it should be aimed at reaching a triangulation of sources (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Statements of a single source provide significant risk of political bias. Therefore, I use a multitude of newspapers from many political directions.

Data is collected by using the *LexisNexis Academic* database of popular newspaper articles. I applied the filter of only German newspaper articles and the grouping of duplicates (high similarity) to make sure that the articles treat the German case and not discussions in other countries. A query with the search term *Zirkustier*⁵ resulted in $N = 995$ articles (April 25,

⁵ *Zirkustier* is German for circus animal. The * indicates that all grammatical forms (genitives, plurals) of the word are included.

2016) with the oldest one dating back to 1991. However, the data set requires manual cleaning: By scanning the content and including them in the coding tool *Discourse Network Analyzer* version 1.31, duplicates and articles obviously not treating the topic are sorted out, resulting in $N = 521$ of valid cases.

4.5. Data Analysis

The collected data (newspaper articles) needs to be coded in order to generate analyzable statements for DNA. A statement in a newspaper article is a phrase where a particular actor at a particular point in time (date of the article) utters his or her agreement or disagreement on a concept. The full list of concepts is provided in the coding scheme in annex 1. As coding software, the JAVA tool *Discourse Network Analyzer*, developed by Philip Leifeld, is used. All articles are fed into the software and manually coded regarding the five features actor, organization, concept, agreement/disagreement, and time. In continuation, the software translates the coded data into raw network data: Connections between actors and concepts with the relations agreement, disagreement, or missing for affiliation networks; and connections and edge weights between actors based on mutual agreement/disagreement for actor congruence networks.

In continuation, I explain the necessary time-series measurement, the analysis of resulting discourse networks, and the supplementary interpretative, qualitative discourse analysis. All form the methodological package of data analysis.

4.5.1. Time-Series Measurement

A time-series measurement is necessary to track changes in the discourse networks that occurred over time. As shown above, this concerns all of the four explored variables. Such a measurement requires the identification of crucial moments in time that could represent a 'crack' or a focusing event in the discourse (Stoddart & Tindall, 2015). As such, I identified the three *Bundesrat* initiatives: The issue of banning wild animals in German circuses was debated in 2003, 2010, and 2016 in the second chamber of the German parliament. This should result in increased media attentions in that periods, but not in an actual change of the legal situation, because in this policy field, the *Bundesrat* can only agree on resolutions that have no formally binding effect. That instrument is used to generate attention for an issue and call for action of the federal government (Schubert & Klein, 2011). Hence, snapshots of discourse networks are provided for the periods 1991 (oldest newspaper article) – 2003, 2003 – 2010, and 2010 – 2016.

4.5.2. Discourse Networks

Main part of the analysis is the visual interpretation of affiliation and actor congruence networks as described in section 4.3. For image framing and venue change, the interpretation of affiliation networks is sufficient. The variable "integration of new change proponents" requires the interpretation of actor congruence networks. For the mediating variable of policy learning, the analysis is primarily based on affiliation networks. However, the aspect of approximation of the 'status quo'-coalition towards the 'proponents of change'-coalition should also be visible in actor congruence networks.

4.5.3. Qualitative Discourse Analysis

The pure analysis of discourse networks has only limited sense for the goals of this study, if it is not supported by a further interpretative, qualitative discourse analysis. For the variables image reframing and venue change, changes in the discourse network structure have to be supported by a further analysis of the raw text data material. The interpretation aims at finding out whether the discourse indeed shifted between venues and whether key actors indeed reframed the issue in a strategical manner. For the results, DNA and supporting discourse analysis are presented along with each other.

4.6. Cross-Validation

The total set of text data has to be reduced to a smaller set of text units (statements) (Laver & Garry, 2000) and combined with the coding of actors and concepts in order to be meaningful. Therefore, a coding scheme (annex 1) is applied. However, coding is always connected with a set of subjective choices of the researcher. For example, I had to define which dimensions are existing in the discourse, which are important enough to be manifested in a concept and how to define the borders of organizations, where actors are summarized in. These subjective choices could be made differently by other researchers. This fact decreases the replicability of this study and therefore makes my measurement less reliable. I try to deal with this limitation by applying a cross-validation of my coding scheme and the way statements are coded.

A reduced data set ($N = 12$) was translated into English and given to the course “Advanced Research Methods” in the academic year of 2015/16 of the program “Sustainable Development” at Utrecht University.⁶ Students worked in 25 pairs and were assigned to code the reduced data set. The twelve articles were preselected according to the following criteria: Is the article informative enough, meaning are there many passages that could be coded as a statement? Are enough and diverse actors named? Are the articles evenly distributed over the three periods of time measurement?

Moreover, an introduction into the topic was given to the students and the background information that reframing processes could be measured by affiliation networks and the inclusion of new actors by actor congruence networks.

After the finalization of the assignment, I obtained the results. These were used to cross-validate the coding scheme and the choice of which organizations to include. Regarding the coding scheme, I had a look whether my colleagues also included animal-related, human-related, legal, economic, and strategic concepts. For the organizations, statement coding should have included the organizations NGOs, political parties, administrative actors and circus actors.

⁶ I wish to thank dr. Frank van Laerhoven for this opportunity.

5. Results

Results are based on two rounds of coding: During an initial round, the coding scheme was developed inductively on the base of what dimensions of the topic were stressed by the involved actors and organization. This procedure resulted in a coding scheme of 26 categories. It resulted that this coding scheme was too complex: The affiliation networks became too messy to derive useful interpretations and the actor congruence networks did not display any coalitions in the later years of the discourse. This was the case, because with many concepts, there are also more mutual agreements and disagreements resulting in a higher amount of displayed belief overlap: It seems that there is only one coalition, because all actors are mutually agreeing or disagreeing on at least one of the different concepts. In order to discriminate more accurately, some concepts were merged and the coding scheme was collapsed to only 15 concepts for the second - and final - round of coding. Both schemes are provided in annex 1. All presented results are on the basis of the second round of coding with the second coding scheme.

Furthermore, the actor organization “circuses” was split into three organizations: Large, small, and alternative circuses. The reason is to avoid a too heterogeneous actor group, resulting in many ambivalent statements in the affiliation networks (blue lines). I did not apply a fixed number of circus employees or yearly volume of sales to discriminate between small and large circuses, because the research work would have been inadequately high. Rather, it was sufficient to use the information provided in the newspaper articles themselves: Small circuses were often described as small family enterprises, large circuses are the famous big German circuses (Krone, Busch, Renz, Probst, Althoff) and often national circuses of other countries touring through Germany as well (Russian State Circus, Barley (Spain), Charles Knie and Royal (Switzerland)). Alternative circuses are also named in the newspaper articles as such. They either willingly abstained from using animals of all kinds in their shows (like Cirque du Soleil, FlicFlac, or Roncalli) or specifically have the aim to educate primary school students that it is possible to have a circus without animals (Project Circus Regenbogen, Family Circus Europa and others). There might be a chance that some of the very few medium-sized circuses are coded inadequately. This does not influence the main line of argumentation, though.

In the final round of coding, 976 statements of 330 actors, merged into 53 organizations, were extracted from 521 newspaper articles. This represents the total amount of German newspaper articles about wild circus animals found in the *LexisNexis Academic* database. Statements from ministries were coded as stemming from the minister him- or herself (with her/his party as organization). Statements from Federal Land governments were attributed to the head of government at that time, but for the case that the coalition partner specifically confirmed the position (in that case the statement was attributed to both parties). Please note that in the network graphs, accumulated statements are displayed (for example, the 2011 graph illustrates all statements from 1991 until 2011, not only since 2003). All statements until one month after the Bundesrat plenary debate are included into the graph of the respective time step year, because some articles treating the debate were released in newspapers some days after the plenary session. To set the date of included statements on exactly the day of the Bundesrat debate hence would have been inadequate to display the discourse situation of the respective time step. Statements are not only direct quotes, but also informative newspaper article fractions revealing the position of an actor. When for example a newspaper reports that there is a circus show with tigers, rhinos and lions of Circus Krone, then the fraction is coded

as *Actor*: Circus Krone, *Organization*: Large Circuses; *Category*: Wild Animals; *Agreement*: Yes.

The descriptive summary figure of articles and statements per year (figure 5.1) reveals that there are more statements and articles around the years 2003 and 2011, when the topic was debated in the Bundesrat, thus being on the macro-political agenda. Only four months of the year 2016 were coded, but there is already a high number of articles and statements for this year, too. Moreover, attention increased in the last years. These short notions indicate a confirmation of the general assumed causal effect of PE theory, that it is possible to measure increased attention while an issue is on the macro-political agenda.

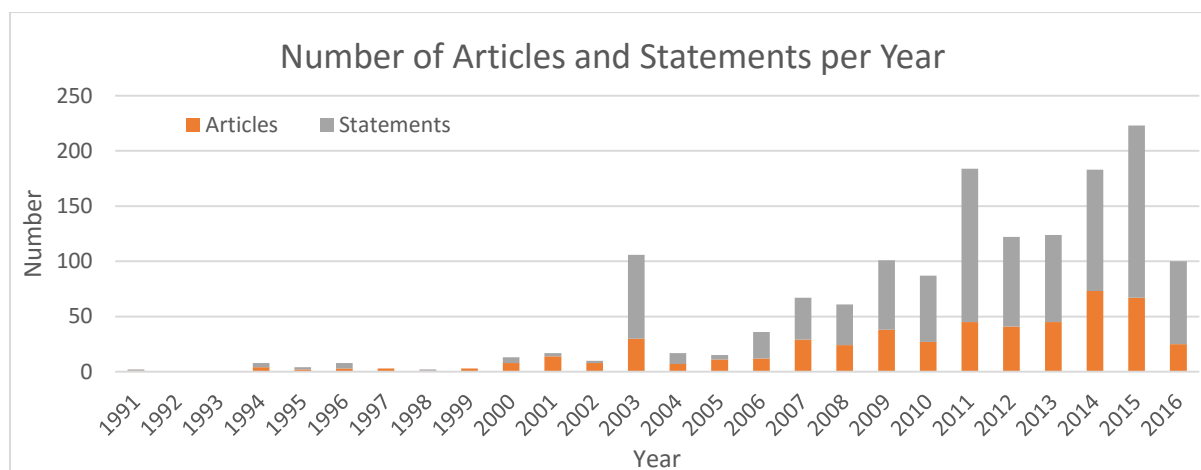


Figure 5.1 – Number of Statements and Articles per Year

The goal of this study is to look into the causal mechanisms of this effect in more detail. Therefore, the resting potential of the three theoretically derived strategies to generate policy change (image reframing, venue change, and consequently the integration of newly attracted change proponents in a second step), as well as the intervening strategy of policy learning are measured. This resting potential is determined by measuring the already used potential (this section) and indicating room for improvement (section 7: policy recommendations). In continuation, first indicate shortly the results of the cross-validation. Furthermore, I present in what extent involved actors already used the identified strategies on the base of extracted discourse networks of coded newspaper articles. Since these networks can be interpreted in light of the specific context only, also a short subsidiary ordinary discourse analysis is provided.

5.1. Cross-Validation

First of all, the results of the cross-validation of the coding scheme (section 4.6) are presented. Firstly, students were asked to craft a coding scheme based on a reduced data set. It was assessed whether the pairs came up with animal-related, human-related, legal, economic, and strategic concepts. Secondly, it was assessed whether my colleagues used the same form of summarizing actors into organizations, which are political parties, NGOs, administrative actors, and circus actors.

Coding Scheme

The results of the cross-validation reveal that especially the definition of dimensions used in the discourse – and coded as concept for analysis – varies between teams of researchers.

Most couples used concepts of the broad animal- or human-related concepts. When it gets more specific, though, only roughly two thirds of the pairs also treated the categories of legal and economic aspects. Only 20 per cent used a category related to political strategies like distraction or victimization.

| Category | Percentage of pairs using this form of category |
|----------------|---|
| Animal-Related | .96 |
| Human-Related | .92 |
| Legal | .64 |
| Economic | .64 |
| Strategic | .20 |

Table 5.1 – Cross-Validation Coding Scheme.

Students used between 2 and 23 concepts, indicating the wide range of choices on how to code the data. However, especially the concept ‘Husbandry Conditions’ was used by almost all teams of researchers. Furthermore, students often used concepts that I included in the first coding scheme, but then merged with other concepts for the second round of coding (see also annex 1). Some pairs even used the broader concepts, which I apply for this cross-validation assessment. This indicates that at least the broad lines of conflict (animal welfare, legal conflict with constitutional rights, economic impact) were defined by other researchers the same way as I did. Another interesting concept that was sometimes used is the role of knowledge: Tamers provide unique expert knowledge that could be used to improve current regulations. The role of knowledge was not included explicitly in my assessment. Moreover, most of the research groups conclude that reframing processes took place, what is a broad conclusion also drawn by myself (see sections 7 and 8). In a nutshell, the broad cleavages of the discourse seem to be identified in a valid, inter-subjective way. With a higher degree of precision, the definition of categories becomes more subjective.

Actor Organizations

The assessment of which actors have been identified reveals that nearly every other pair of students identified the same central discourse participants as I did. Only one group (of 25) did not identify any administrative actor as important participant in the discussion. However, due to the smaller data base, most pairs coded actors as separated organizations, which I have summarized into a broader category. For example, most students coded every circus as a single organization, whereas I summarized them into the three groups of alternative, small and large circuses.

| Organization | Percentage of pairs using this form of organization |
|-----------------------|---|
| Political Party | 1 |
| NGO | 1 |
| Administrative Actors | .96 |
| Circus Actors | 1 |

Table 5.2 – Cross-Validation Actor Organizations.

There was no actor included in one of the assessments that has not been identified by me. One major difference between some studies and mine is that I chose to attribute statements of ministries to the respective minister (and his/her party) at the particular point in time in order to account for changes in government. Most students used the ministry as actor while coding statements. All in all, the identification of central actors reveals to be inter-subjective to a very high degree.

Interim Conclusions on the Validity of Coding

To conclude, it seems that most researchers working on the same data set would agree on the central participants of the discourse. More discordance regards the coding of concepts. Whereas most students also identified namely husbandry conditions and safety issues as important concepts to frame the situation, less groups agreed on more specific concepts, like the use of the issue as political strategy. Still more than half of the student pairs also identified economic and legal disputes as important discourse dimensions. Furthermore, all groups generally identified a reframing process over time, but do not necessarily share my interpretation of results, presented in continuation. To summarize, the applied coding scheme and measurement seem to be valid regarding the identified broad lines of discourse. The assessment is highly dependent on the researcher's interpretation, though. I try to control for this issue by visualizing the obtained discourse networks in detail, so that other researchers are able to come to own interpretations.

5.2. Image Reframing

Image reframing is the strategy to strategically redefine, which dimensions of a multi-faceted situation are stressed and get salient (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Mintrom & Norman, 2009). A redefinition of salient aspects might cause an update of actor preferences (Baumgartner et al., 2011), the attraction of new change proponents (Mortensen, 2007; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991), and hence policy change. With more actors backing up the call for change, an issue is more likely to get attention on the macro-political agenda (Baumgartner et al., 2014), what is a precondition for major policy change in open democracies.

The strategy is operationalized in DNA terms by newly upcoming concepts in affiliation networks over time, as well as by a change of degree centrality of concepts (relative to the other categories). The visualization of affiliation networks on different time steps makes it possible to visualize and measure reframing processes during the course of the discourse. I

first present the affiliation networks and afterwards the changes in relative *concept node degree centrality*.

5.2.1. Affiliation Networks

Actor organizations are connected graphically with the concepts (image dimensions) they either agree (green) or disagree (red) one. Concepts are standardized in a way that agreement displays the views of pro-circus actors, and disagreement the positions of proponents of a ban of wild circus animals. If an organization gives ambivalent statements (both agreeing and disagreeing), this is displayed by a blue line. These connections are the so-called edges in network analysis terms. Edges are directed from organizations towards concepts. Nodes are firstly the concepts (blue rounded squares), and secondly the actor organizations (dots with different colors). Actor organizations consist of various persons. I chose to visualize organizations instead of persons to reduce the graph's complexity. The dot color represents the broader ideological position of the actor organization, as indicated in the legend.

The Situation in 2003: First Bundesrat Debate

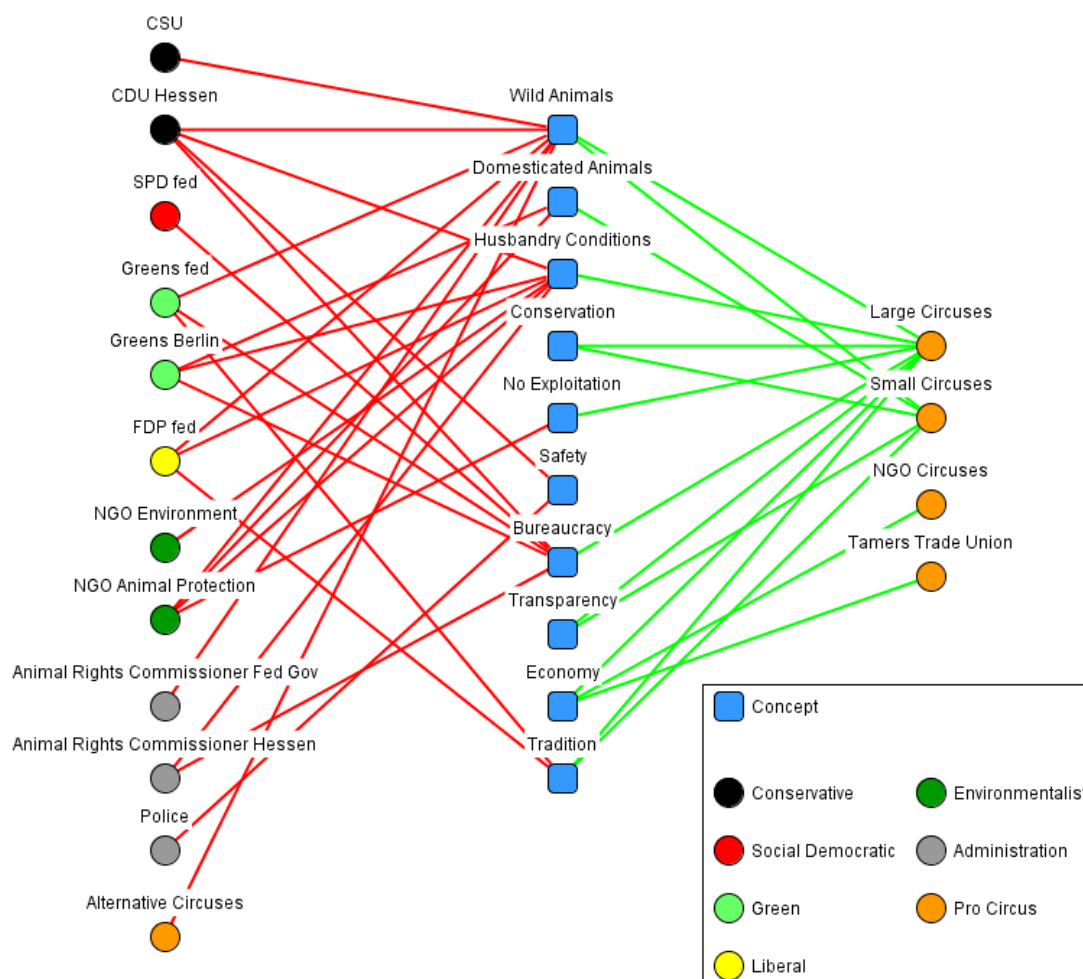


Figure 5.2 – Affiliation Network 2003.

In 2003, we observe that there are two clear coalitions, one agreeing on concepts (the pro circus coalition) and one disagreeing on the used dimensions (proponents of change). Only

ten out of the 15 concepts are used: The animal-related concept of 'Retirement', the legal concept 'Fundamental Right', the human-related concept 'Education' and both concepts displaying political strategies ('Victimization' and 'Distraction') have not been used yet. Also the amount and diversity of involved actors is limited: Large and small circuses, as well as Animal Protection NGOs like Peta are involved in the discourse since the beginning. They are the experts debating the issue in the policy subsystem, as formulated in Punctuated Equilibrium Theory terms. Political parties joined the discourse in 2003⁷, when the issue came to the Bundesrat level the first time. However, only very few Federal Land divisions of political parties participated in the discourse until 2003. The supplementary ordinary discourse revealed that statements of involved Federal Land level parties stem from very committed individual politicians "pushing" the topic, like for example Roland Koch, former CDU minister president of Hessen.

"Koch has introduced a proposal for a resolution in the Bundesrat. He requests the federal government to ban the keeping of apes, elephants and big bears in circuses after a transition period. [...] Koch denies the claim that the resolution bears a certain oddness. In the last years, some elephants died and primates disappeared under unknown circumstances" – Spiegel Online, 26/09/2003: Roland Koch, the elephant protector.

The ordinary discourse analysis reveals that the discourse until 2003 deals with two main contested questions: Are husbandry conditions sufficient for wild circus animals? And: Are there enough controls of circuses by official veterinary agencies and are circus enterprises actually controllable when they constantly change places and territorial competencies of administrative agencies? The first question is a general question treated during the whole course of the discourse. The second one, however, is specific for the debate around the year 2003. This is also displayed in the Bundesrat solution of 2003 that includes the demand of a central register for moving circuses and wild circus animals (BR 595/03). Large circuses stressed that there are already a lot of veterinary controls and that circuses are transparent about husbandry conditions:

"Circus Krone points out that circus enterprises are controlled 50 times a year – unannounced, says Susanne Matzenau, a press spokeswoman of the circus." – Frankfurter Rundschau, 09/08/2003: Hessen wants to take out big animals of the circus round.

Animal Protection NGOs and politicians of different parties, on the other hand, stressed that circuses are constantly traveling through different areas of veterinary agencies' territorial competences. They are therefore hard to control and get away with poor husbandry conditions:

"She [Undine Kurth, parliamentarian Green Party] proposed the introduction of a circus control system including a central register, where all circus animals are registered. In this way it would be easier to control husbandry conditions." – Agence France Presse, 23/06/2003: Greens Politician Kurth wants a ban of wild circus animals.

⁷ I also created animated versions with yearly time steps of affiliation and congruence networks. Since they cannot be presented on paper, I handed them in digitally. For other interested readers, the animations can be requested by e-mail.

Some other, less treated controversial subjects were whether circus animals are an intrinsic part of traditional circus life and also whether animals are exploited during circus shows, which is also a constantly re-appearing point of debate. The economic factor is only treated by a Circus NGO and the Association of Professional Tamers, a form of trade union or lobby group for tamers in circuses. The legal factor of whether a ban of wild animals is a disproportionate limitation of the constitutional right of professional freedom has not played a role in the discourse until 2003.

The Situation in 2011: Second Bundesrat Debate

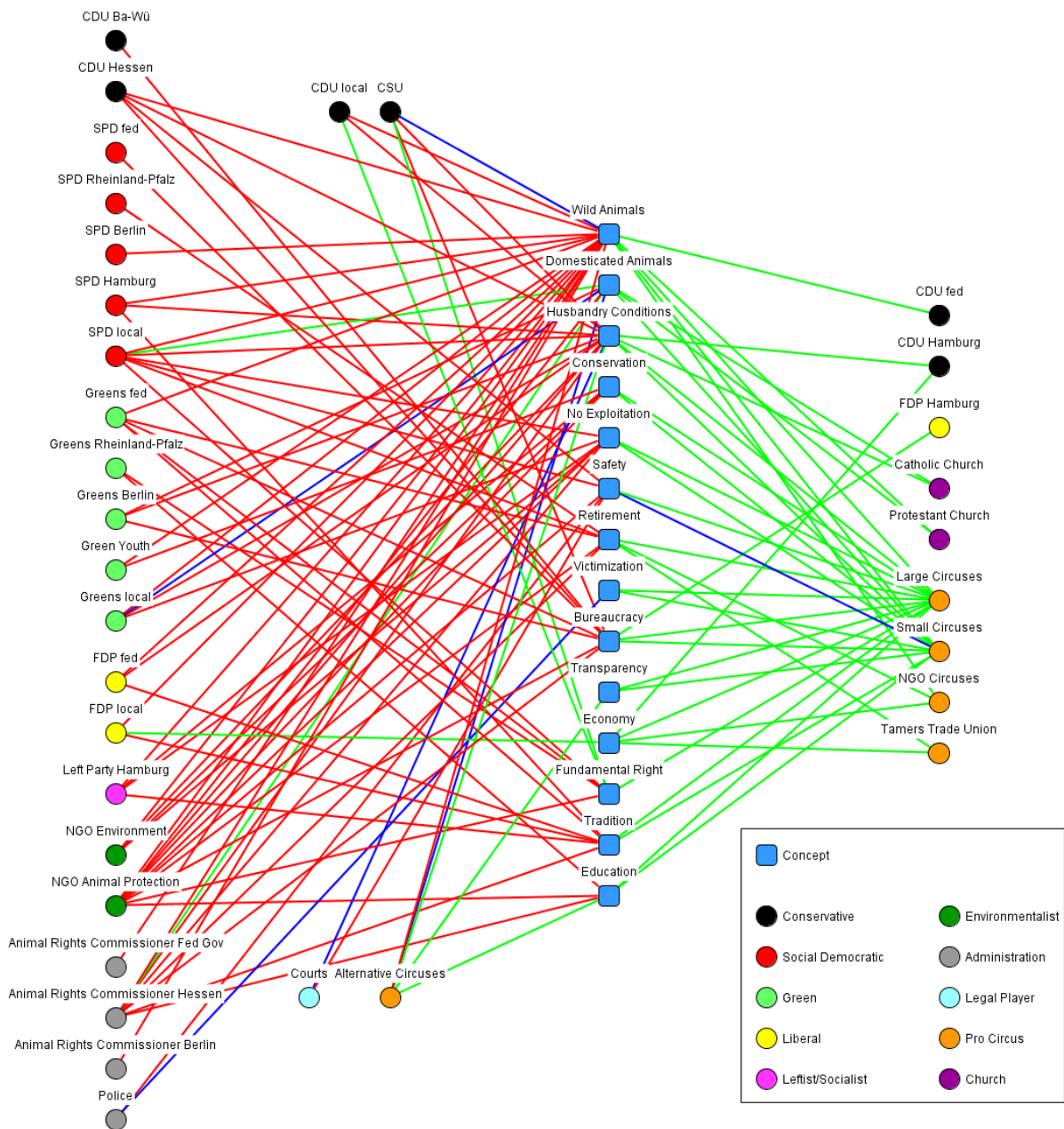


Figure 5.3 – Affiliation Network 2011.

In 2011, the discourse has become more complex, displayed in the increased amount of nodes in the affiliation network. In the ‘proponents of change’-coalition, more divisions from the Federal Land level joined the discourse, indicating that the topic spread beyond the area of interest of some individual committed politicians. Particularly the spread over different divisions of the Green Party and the Social-Democratic Party indicates an attempt to ‘own’ the topic. For the pro-circus status quo advocates coalition, they found a new partner in the two big Christian churches: They frequently cooperate with circuses to make the story of Noah’s ark vivid by using wild animals without uttering concerns about husbandry conditions or whether these shows are in line with the dignity of the used animals. However, the churches also did not make clear statements to support the keeping of wild circus animals, making them only a loose partner of the pro-circus coalition. The core of this coalition still consists of small and large circuses, as well as organizations of tamers. But also some conservative CDU divisions and liberal FDP divisions entered the pro-circus coalition, mostly supporting the claim that circuses are already controlled enough and a ban would endanger tamer jobs.

Regarding attempts to reframe the topic, it is visible that the concepts ‘Fundamental Right’, ‘Retirement’, ‘Education’, and ‘Victimization’ are now used in comparison to the 2003 network. Large circuses started the debate whether a ban of wild animals would disproportionately restrict the fundamental right of professional freedom of the tamers of wild circus animals, thus shifting the debate from animal-related dimensions (like husbandry conditions) to concepts used in purely human social systems (like the legal argument). Some ban proponents replied by denying the disproportion of the restriction and stress that the ban is a mere restriction of the manner of professional activity, what is more easily in line with German constitutional law:

“He [Michael Kissel, mayor of Worms, SPD] is of the same opinion as the Animal Protection Association Nordrhein-Westfalen that a ban of wild animals is not conflicting with the right of professional freedom. [...] ‘We need the political courage to enter legally grey areas’, said Kissel.” – Wormser Zeitung, 26/05/2011: No to wild animals in the circus.

Furthermore, pro-circus actors started arguing that militant animal rights activists use illegal means to attack circuses using animal performances. Examples are property damages to advertisement boards and posters (activists are said to steal or damage them), but also animal liberations, death threats to circus directors or arson attacks.

“When he [Ludwig Neigert, Circus Amany] thinks about what happened to his small circus on Wednesday night, his glance turns. Unknowns destroyed or smeared more than 200 advertisement posters in Mechernich, where the circus is residing at the moment. [...] Insults like animal torturers, murders and sods were written in black or silver gloss paint on most of the boards.” – Kölnische Rundschau, 05/08/2011: Circus family insulted and cursed.

The ‘proponents of change’-coalition, on the other hand, tried to stress two new aspects: Firstly, the animal-related question of what happens to old circus animals that are not able to perform anymore. Mostly animal protection NGOs (but also SPD, Greens, and official animal protection commissioners) accuse circuses of not having suitable solutions for the retirement of old circus animals. This mostly concerns elephants that get very old and it is challenging to

provide good husbandry conditions for them. In the affiliation network, this reframing process is displayed by the popping up concept of 'Retirement'.

"What happens to circus animals that are too old to perform? The Animal Protection Organization 'Four Paws' is certain: Only rarely lions, tigers or bears can hope for some sunset years. Nearly no circus is able to feed old and weak animals. So they put such animals down or sell them, leaving them to an uncertain future. Those animals that stay in circuses suffer in small cages or tiny compounds." Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 12/08/2010: When circus tigers retire.

A further reframing attempt regards a human-related dimension: The question whether circus animals provide an educational value. Circuses claim that children learn about human-animal relations and the importance of good husbandry conditions for animals in captivity. Ban proponents, on the contrary, claim that children get a false image of captive animals by attending circus shows. They only see unnatural performances and the dominance of mankind over the wilderness, but do not learn about the importance of the conservation of endangered species. In the affiliation network, the concept 'Education' appeared and got immediately contested.

"[Madeleine Martin, animal rights commissioner Hessen:] Circus animals are part of the entertainment business. The pedagogical value? None! About wild animals you only learn there [in circuses] how they would never behave in the wilderness." Main-Taunus-Kurier, 23/11/2011: A ban of wild circus animals? Pros & Cons.

The Situation in 2016: Third Bundesrat Debate

In 2016, the network became even more complex, but mostly due to the appearance of more actors. Only the concept 'Distraction' appeared between 2011 and 2016 as new blue rounded square in the affiliation network. However, this concept is mostly used by private persons and journalists. These actor 'organizations' are excluded from the network visualization, because they display highly divergent opinions that are not suitable for meaningful interpretation if they are accumulated as organizations. The visualization of individual persons would make the network too complex, hence the organizations 'Private Persons', 'Celebrities', 'Local Administrations', 'Scientists', 'Tamers', 'Veterinarians', and 'Journalists' are not displayed in the affiliation networks.⁸ Only some political parties (Greens Hessen and SPD Bavaria) deny the claim of distraction and stress the importance of the topic in order to justify the time spent on parliamentary debates and decision-making process.

In order to analyze the reframing processes (particularly between 2003 and 2011) in more detail, I have a closer look at the popularity of concepts and shifts in the ranking of the concept nodes' degree centrality.

⁸ However, it might be useful for other purposes to display the networks including these actors. Hence, I left them in the data base. The full statement and coding data (.dna file) and the resulting network data (.graphml or .csv files) can be provided for interested readers.

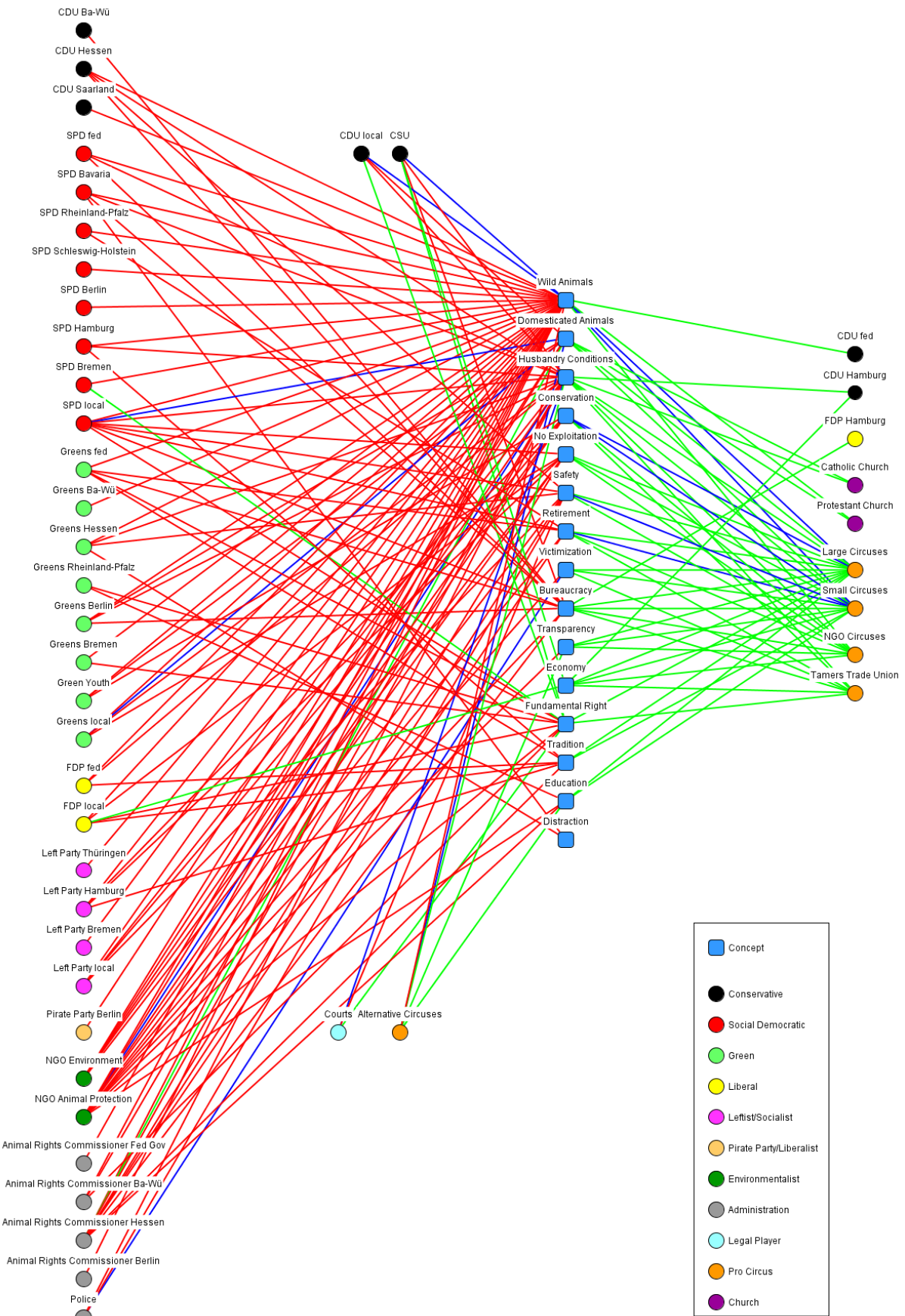


Figure 5.4 – Affiliation Network 2016.

5.2.2. Concept Node Degree Centrality Changes

Every node in a network has a degree centrality, determined by the relative amount of edges the node is connected with. If only the concept nodes are included, the degree centrality measure can be ranked meaningfully and indicates the popularity of concepts: If a concept has a higher degree centrality measure, it is connected to more actor nodes. That means that the concept is used by more actors, hence more ‘popular’. Changes in popularity indicate which concept was more popular during the different measured time steps. More popular concepts are assumed to indicate what dimensions are more salient during the respective time step. This method makes it possible to analyze the relative importance of concepts during reframing processes in addition to the general appearance of new concepts presented above.

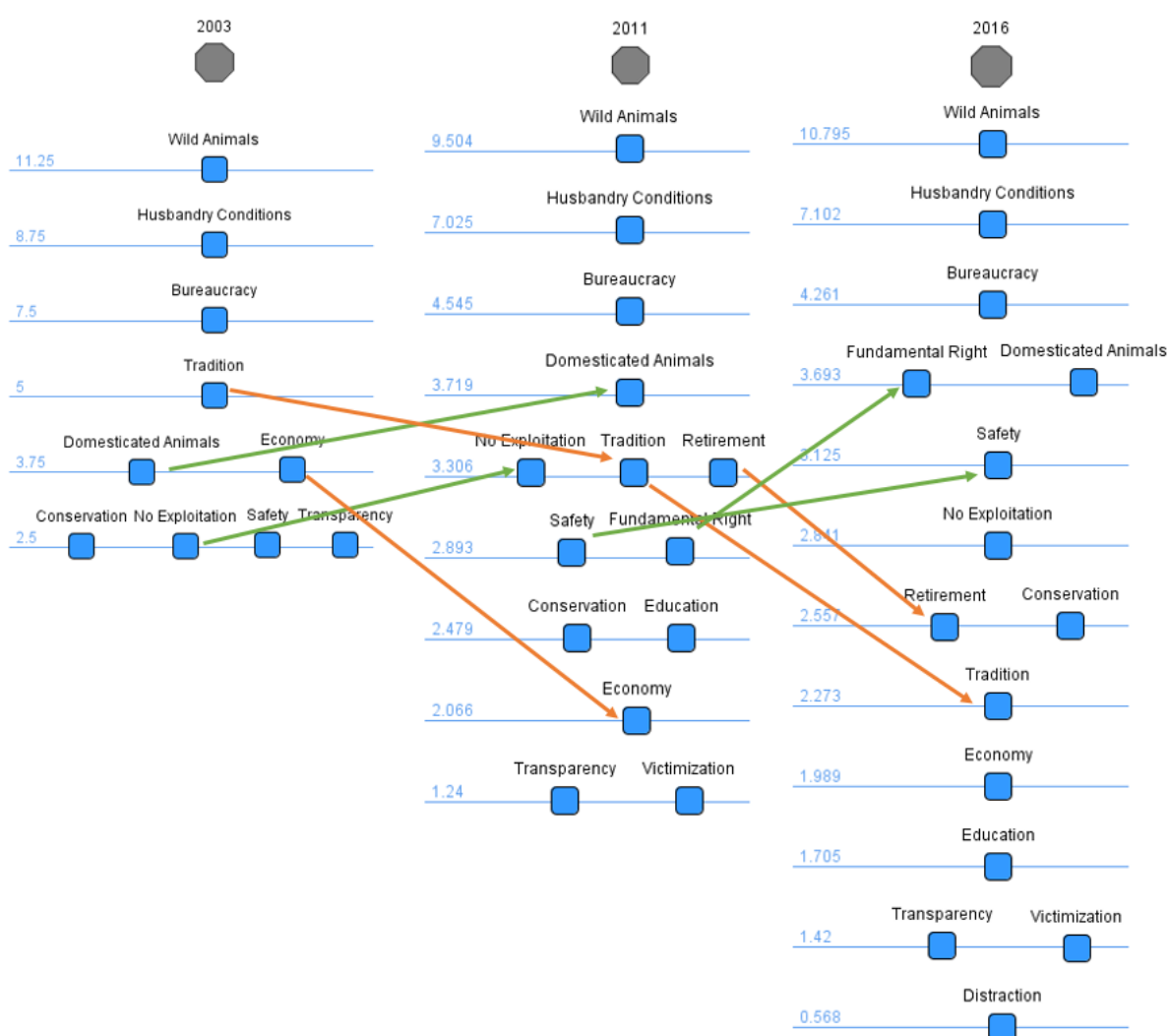


Figure 5.5 – Changes in Degree Centrality of the Different Concepts, 2003-2016.

During the whole discourse, most actors use the general concept ‘Wild Animals’, displaying general opinions on the topic without framing specific dimensions of the problem. However, most actors also make statements about the animal-related concept of ‘Husbandry Conditions’. Also the bureaucratic burden stayed a very popular topic throughout the discourse. Political strategies like ‘Victimization’ and ‘Distraction’ stayed rather marginal.

More interesting are the changes in the midfields of the graphs in figure 5.5. Between 2011 and 2016, we observe a change in the ranking of concept popularity, from animal-related concepts ('No Exploitation', 'Retirement') to concepts related to (wo)men-made systems ('Fundamental Right', 'Safety', 'Economy'). This indicates that the situation was reframed from a purely animal-concerned discourse towards a discourse that stresses the problem's importance also for human beings. However, it is not observable which coalition caused this reframing process, because this particular reframing could be advantageous for both coalitions: Proponents of change could manage to attract new change proponents from other sectors, pro-circus actors could either shift attention from costly improvements of husbandry conditions or the keeping of circus animals in general, or towards concepts that do not endanger the institution of circus animals itself. Improved safety means, for example, would mean only incremental change. The question of who caused the reframing process is not so important for my research goal to identify the resting potential of reframing (see also sections 7 and 8), though.

Interim Conclusions

All in all, it seems that great part of the framing processes took place shortly before the first Bundesrat debate on the topic in 2003. Here, already 10 out of 15 concepts have been used. However, important image reframing processes took place between 2003 and 2011. Both coalitions used the image reframing strategy, one in order to maintain the status quo and refute arguments of change proponents, the other to stress new dimensions and attract new change advocates. New concepts were introduced by both coalitions in an attempt to reframe the issue by broadening the discourse. Between 2011 and 2016, we observe a slight shift in popularity, from animal-related to human-related concepts. So, what is the resting potential for image reframing strategies? To answer this question, we have to look at the used concepts in more detail:

Firstly, literally no actors of the 'proponents of change'-coalition disagreed on the concept 'Economy'. This means that all actors seem to agree that a ban of wild animals would harm the circus sector. However, the ban of wild animals affects mostly large circuses, small family enterprises nowadays do not own wild animals anymore. Pro-ban actors could state this aspect and hereby decrease the fear of economic losses for small and medium enterprises.

Secondly, the discussion about the legal aspect of the problem (Is a ban disproportionately restricting the fundamental right of professional freedom?) is not finally decided yet. Pro-ban actors could continue stating that tamers could re-educate and work for example in zoos.

Thirdly, the safety issue seems to be trending at the moment and comes up after incidents where circus animals escaped. Proponents of change could state that there is a latent danger that wild circus animals escape or injure people in the circus round. This is connected with police, ambulance, and insurance costs.

Fourthly, an idea for a further reframing issue is to highlight the image of circus animals we have as society. This concerns the concepts 'Conservation', 'No Exploitation', and 'Education', which are used only by a limited set of actors (mainly the main participants like circuses and environmentalist NGOs). Also pro-ban political parties could state that circuses are not a useful enrichment for conservation efforts, because shows do not display the natural behavior of animals. Animals are best preserved in the wilderness and second-best in zoos or safari parks with sufficient husbandry conditions, where animals could live in natural settings. This would furthermore increase the educational value of animals in captivity.

Fifthly, the qualitative discourse analysis reveals that mostly private persons and Animal Protection NGOs use emotional claims like animal dignity or possibilities for the retirement of circus animals. Political parties often just use the more general categories 'Wild Animals' or 'Husbandry Conditions'. Especially these actors could start being more specific and stress concepts like 'No Exploitation', 'Conservation', or 'Education'. This would shift the discourse away from ongoing discussions on whether the ban is in line with constitutional law or would increase the bureaucratic burden for circus enterprises too much. A more emotional appeal could attract more supporters from the general public.

5.3. Venue Change

Venue changes are operationalized by new actors of different political arenas appearing in the affiliation networks. It is assumed that an issue is debated in a particular political arena, when actors situated in that arena are uttering statements in newspaper articles. Debates about the treated topic in a particular arena – where it has not been debated before - display a venue change, what can be used by policy entrepreneurs to increase the attention of a problem and push it to the macro-political agenda (Baumgartner et al., 2014; Pralle, 2003). In my case, different venues are the different legislative levels in Germany (local, Federal Land, federal), as well as the judicial arena in courts (Baumgartner et al., 2014; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012), and the European level. We observe that (1) there is a constant use on the Federal Land venue in order to enter the federal stage by help of the Bundesrat institution, (2) a lot of local players appear, particularly between 2003 and 2011, (3) courts enter the debate between 2003 and 2011, and (4) European actors stay rather uninvolved.

Attempts to Use the Bundesrat Institution

The federal structure of Germany allows the governments of Federal Lands to bring issues on the federal agenda by bringing in initiatives into the Bundesrat (Schubert & Klein, 2012). In the affiliation networks, this is visible by party divisions of the different Federal Lands appearing in the networks, because statements of government institutions are coded as stemming from the head of ministry or government, thus as from the political party, she/he belongs to (what is the actor's organization in DNA terms).

We note that political parties from different Federal Lands are constantly joining the discourse. Peaks are however in the years 2011 and 2016, when the issue was debated in the Bundesrat. Throughout the time, the issue was nearly constantly debated on the Federal Land level. However, the Federal Lands have only limited legislative competency in the policy field of animal protection. Therefore, it has been tried three times to get attention on the federal level by starting a Bundesrat initiative. Until 2003, the topic was debated only in expert circles of circuses, animal protection NGOs, and Animal Protection Commissioners.

| Party Division | Year | Divisions per Year |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------|
| CDU Hessen | 2003 | |
| Greens Berlin | 2003 | 2 |
| CDU Bavaria (CSU) | 2004 | 1 |
| CDU Baden-Württemberg | 2008 | |
| SPD Rheinland-Pfalz | 2008 | 2 |
| SPD Berlin | 2009 | 1 |
| CDU Hamburg | 2011 | |
| SPD Hamburg | 2011 | |
| Greens Rheinland-Pfalz | 2011 | |
| FDP Hamburg | 2011 | |
| Left Party Hamburg | 2011 | 5 |
| SPD Bremen | 2012 | |
| Greens Bremen | 2012 | |
| Left Party Bremen | 2012 | 3 |
| Greens Hessen | 2013 | 1 |
| Pirate Party Berlin | 2014 | 1 |
| Greens Baden-Württemberg | 2015 | 1 |
| CDU Saarland | 2016 | |
| SPD Bavaria | 2016 | |
| SPD Schleswig-Holstein | 2016 | |
| Left Party Thüringen | 2016 | 4 |

Table 5.3 – Federal Land party divisions and the year of their first recorded statement.

These findings are confirmed by the supplementary, ordinary discourse analysis of the newspaper articles. In 2003, Roland Koch, Wilhelm Dietzel (Hessen minister for the environment) and their Hessen CDU pushed the issue from the Federal Land level to the federal level the first time:

“Koch has brought in a draft for a resolution in the representation of the Federal Lands [the Bundesrat]. He requests the federal government to ban the keeping of apes, elephants, and big bears in circuses after a transition time by means of an edict.”
Spiegel Online, 26/09/2003: Roland Koch, the elephant liberator.

Another attempt to shift venues from the Federal Land to the federal level dates back to 2011, the year of the second Bundesrat initiative. In this year, the topic was mainly debated in Hamburg, as the appearance of political parties from Hamburg in that year shows (table 5.3). This time, the SPD Hamburg started a Bundesrat initiative with the goal to shift venues.

“Circus Krone, Europe’s biggest circus – according to own declaration – builds up his circus tents in Heiligengeistfeld [a neighborhood in Hamburg]. But there are no welcome cheers from the city hall. Quite on the contrary: Just in time for the start of the shows, the senate [the government of the Federal Land of Hamburg] presents a decision to start a Bundesrat initiative for a federal ban of wild circus animals. Not quite a warm welcome. The senate specifically aims at banning apes, elephants, giraffes, rhinos, and hippos. ‘Because especially these animals have a distinct need for movement and a highly developed social behavior’, is stated in the justification. ‘It is not possible to provide suitable husbandry conditions for certain wild animals in circuses, already because of the mobility of these companies. Animals miss their species-specific possibilities for movement due to small cages during transportation

and the installation of tents and other circus facilities’, comments Cornelia Prüfer-Storcks (SPD), minister for consumer protection.” Hamburger Abendblatt, 14/09/2011: Out of the circus round.

In 2016, the topic was debated in the Federal Lands backing up the third Bundesrat initiative, again started by Hessen. This time, the Hessen government consisted of CDU and Greens. Especially the personal enthusiasm of Priska Hinz, Green minister for the environment in Hessen, brought the issue back to the agenda.

“The goal of the [Bundesrat] initiative is not only to free animals suffering from cramped captivity. It is also about human safety. Many still remember the tragic death of a man who was killed last summer in Baden-Württemberg by an escaped circus elephant. We can’t just continue like that”, explained Hinz, minister for the environment. It has to be safeguarded that it is not allowed to keep for example elephants, bears or big cats in traveling circuses anymore. The Greens politician accused the federal government of inactivity for years. ‘It is mournful that such a tragic accident is needed to stress the urgency of regulation.’” Frankfurter Rundschau, 14/12/2015: Call for a federal ban.

All in all, it was highlighted that individual policy entrepreneurs situated on the Federal Land level frequently tried to shift the discourse towards the federal venue. These intentions are visible by the appearance of new political party actors in the affiliation networks over time.

Initiatives on the Local Level

Next to the shift from the Federal Land to the federal level, some policy entrepreneurs on the local level also tried to ‘own’ the topic, by dragging it to the local policy venue in order to increase attention for the topic.

In the affiliation networks, this is visible by local party divisions entering the discourse. In order to reduce the network’s complexity, only the ‘organizations’ (coded as “party local”) are displayed. The individual divisions are coded as ‘persons’ and presented with the year of their first appearance in table format (table 5.4).

We see that local party divisions frequently entered the discourse, particularly between the years 2009 and 2015. Between these years, a lot of local administrations tried to introduce a municipal or local ban of wild circus animals. The supplementary, ordinary discourse analysis shows that this is done by contract law: Municipalities stopped renting public spaces to circuses using wild animals.

Also debates on the local level indicate intended venue shifts. This resulted in an unclear legal situation, depending on the municipality where a circus is currently residing, connected with legal uncertainty. On the other hand, these policy entrepreneurs managed to bring the issue into local politics, hereby increasing attention for the topic.

| Party Division | Year | Divisions per Year |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Greens Munich | 2009 | |
| Greens Aachen | 2009 | |
| SPD Aachen | 2009 | 3 |
| Greens Düsseldorf | 2010 | |
| Greens Stuttgart | 2010 | |
| SPD Worms | 2010 | |
| FDP Worms | 2010 | 4 |
| Greens Mannheim | 2011 | |
| Greens Worms | 2011 | 2 |
| Greens Krefeld | 2012 | |
| SPD Spandau | 2012 | |
| Left Party Bonn | 2012 | |
| Left Party Düsseldorf | 2012 | 4 |
| Greens Ockstadt | 2013 | |
| SPD Ockstadt | 2013 | 2 |
| Greens Mörfelden-Walldorf | 2014 | |
| SPD Mörfelden-Walldorf | 2014 | |
| FDP Mörfelden-Walldorf | 2014 | |
| CDU Mörfelden-Walldorf | 2014 | 4 |
| Greens Bonn | 2015 | |
| Greens Ulm | 2015 | |
| SPD Bonn | 2015 | |
| FDP Bonn | 2015 | |
| CDU Bonn | 2015 | 5 |

Table 5.4 – Local party divisions and the year of their first recorded statement.

Integration of Legal Players

According to the applied broader definition of political venues, policy entrepreneurs might also try to shift venues from legislative to judicative players, the courts (Baumgartner et al., 2014; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). Between 2003 and 2011, some courts entered the discourse by rulings that were reported in the newspapers forming the data base of this study. This is visible in the affiliation networks by the appearance of the turquoise dot labelled 'Courts'.

The supplementary, ordinary discourse analysis revealed that this is due to rulings of the lower administrative courts in Stuttgart and Darmstadt, dealing with the legal question of whether a ban of wild circus animals would disproportionately restrict the constitutional right of professional freedom.

Other rulings were not reported in the analyzed newspaper articles. Hence, there is still a lot of potential for skillful policy entrepreneurs to use the legal venue, maybe by generating a decision of the German Constitutional Court, what would have direct effects for the execution of existing regulations.⁹

The European Venue

The European venue is barely used yet. Only some European NGOs like Elephant Protection Europe or the European Circus Association are participating in the discourse. Political parties from the European level have not yet been able to appear with statements in German

⁹ For more specific recommendations, please see section 7: Policy Recommendations.

newspapers. Although the European Union is not able to introduce binding legislation in this regard, the European parties could increase attention for the topic by making public statements. Another possibility for skillful policy entrepreneurs is to generate a ruling of the European Court of Justice. Furthermore, European NGOs and other civil society actors, as well as associations of cities and municipalities could increase the problem's attention, also by providing comparative information.

Interim Conclusions

In a nutshell, the potential for venue shifts in the legislative institutional structure of Germany is nearly exhausted. In 2003, the discourse was dominated by concerned experts, but finally pushed to the macro-political agenda by policy entrepreneurs on the Federal Land level. Between 2003 and 2016, the issue was frequently pushed to the local venue or again by help of Bundesrat resolutions to the federal level. It is not sufficient to get attention on the local level to generate major policy change, because municipal bans are legally uncertain, only affect public spaces (circuses can still rent private spaces), and this procedure causes a confusing legal rag rug. However, there is still resting potential in alternative venues, like the legal or European venue. For further specifications in this regard please see the policy recommendations in section 7.

5.4. Integration of New Actors

Image reframing and venue changes are strategies to increase attention for an issue in order to 'liberate' it from apolitical expert discussions and push it to the more politicized macro-political agenda (True et al., 2007). However, the mere shift of the discourse to the macro-political level is not sufficient to generate a punctuation that is major political change. In a second step, desired changes need to be solidified. This is visible in the case of wild circus animals in Germany, since the topic has been on the macro-political agenda (the three Bundesrat resolutions), but resulted in only incremental change. One strategy to generate a punctuation once an issue is on the macro-political agenda is to include the newly attracted change proponents into the coalition(s) favoring policy change (Wood, 2006; Meijerink, 2008; Pralle, 2003).

By help of a DNA, the integration of new actors is measurable by actor congruence networks, based on statement co-occurrences (Leifeld, 2013). In these networks, an edge between two nodes (actor organizations) is established, once actors mutually agree or disagree on a concept. Hence, concepts are not displayed in co-occurrence networks. The line width indicates the number of shared agreement or disagreement. Note that networks in later years are based on the accumulated statements of all years, so it is more likely that edges get thicker. The line width is thus only meaningfully interpretable within one year. Actor congruence networks indicate belief similarity: Actors with a high belief overlap are displayed next to each other (Leifeld & Haunss, 2012; Leifeld, 2013) and with thicker edges connecting them. Unconnected actors have no belief overlap at all. Thus, actor congruence networks highlight the coalitions prevailing in a discourse. The plus compared to affiliation networks in this regard is that it is possible to visualize coalitions more accurately and to display more than two coalitions, as well as more integrated sub-groups within a coalition.

The Discourse in 2003: Two Opposing Coalitions

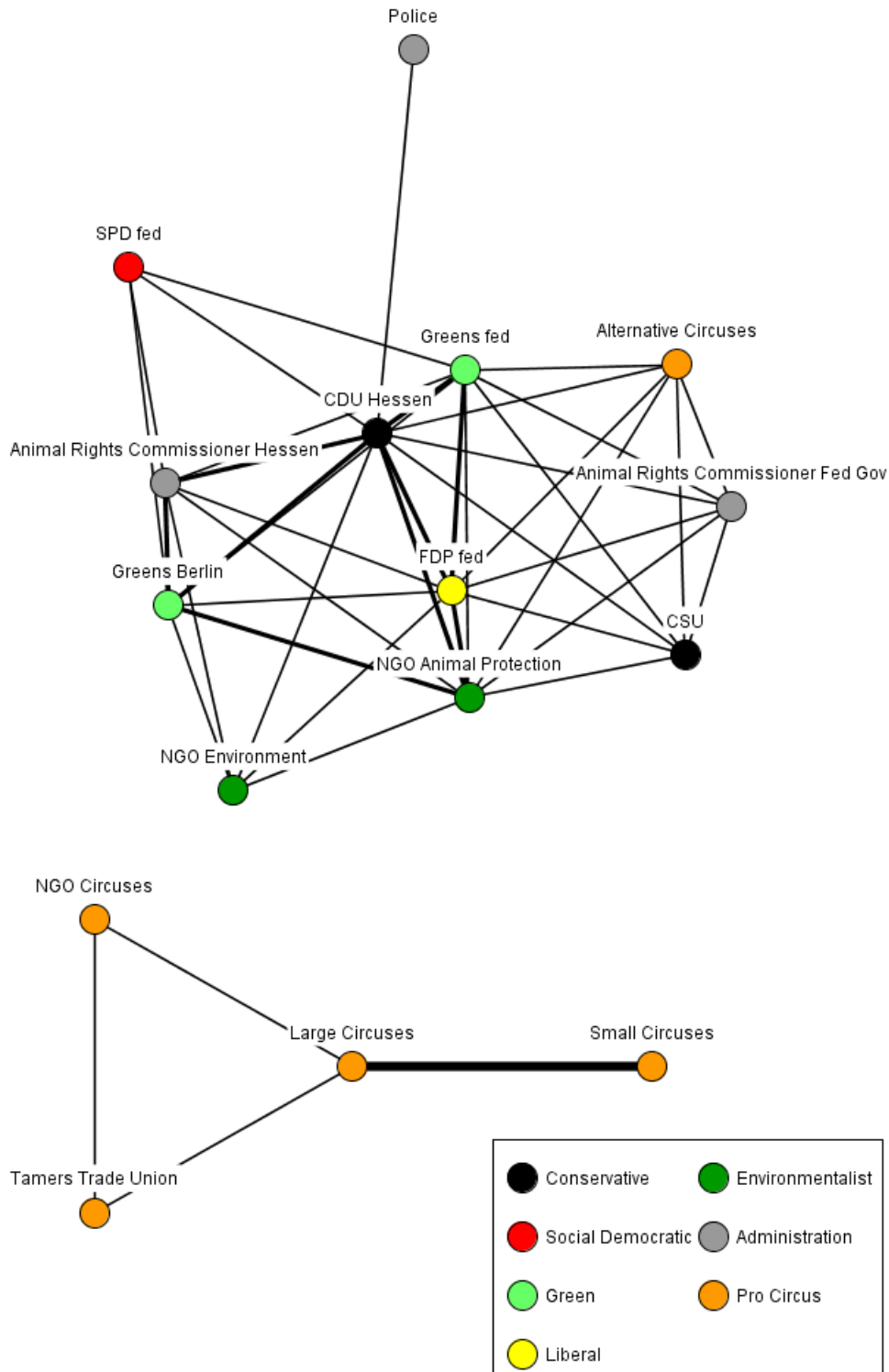


Figure 5.6 – Actor Congruence Network 2003.

In 2003, we observe two separated coalitions: On the lower side is the pro-circus coalition of small and large circuses, a circus NGO and the tamers’ association. On the upper side, we identify the coalition favoring policy change with the CDU Hessen (Roland Koch), animal

protections NGOs, the Green party, and the Animal Rights Commissioner in Hessen (Madeleine Martin) as central actors and a federal FDP connected to many different actors (Greens, CDU, NGOs and Animal Rights Commissioners). Only the federal SPD and local police stations appear somewhat on the outside of the coalition, because they made statements about a limited number of concepts. For example, police officials mostly made statements about safety issues, but uttered no normative positions regarding animal-related concepts. Alternative circuses form part of the coalition favoring a ban of wild circus animals.

Especially the pro-circus coalition is highly integrated, indicated by the relatively broad edges between them, particularly between small and large circuses, highlighting a large belief overlap on many different concepts. In the 'proponents of change'-coalition, the Hessen CDU is connected by broader edges to many other actors, indicating a frequently stated mutual concern about many dimensions of the discourse. The Hessen CDU was a very active discourse participant in 2003.

The Discourse in 2011: Connection, Expansion and Integration

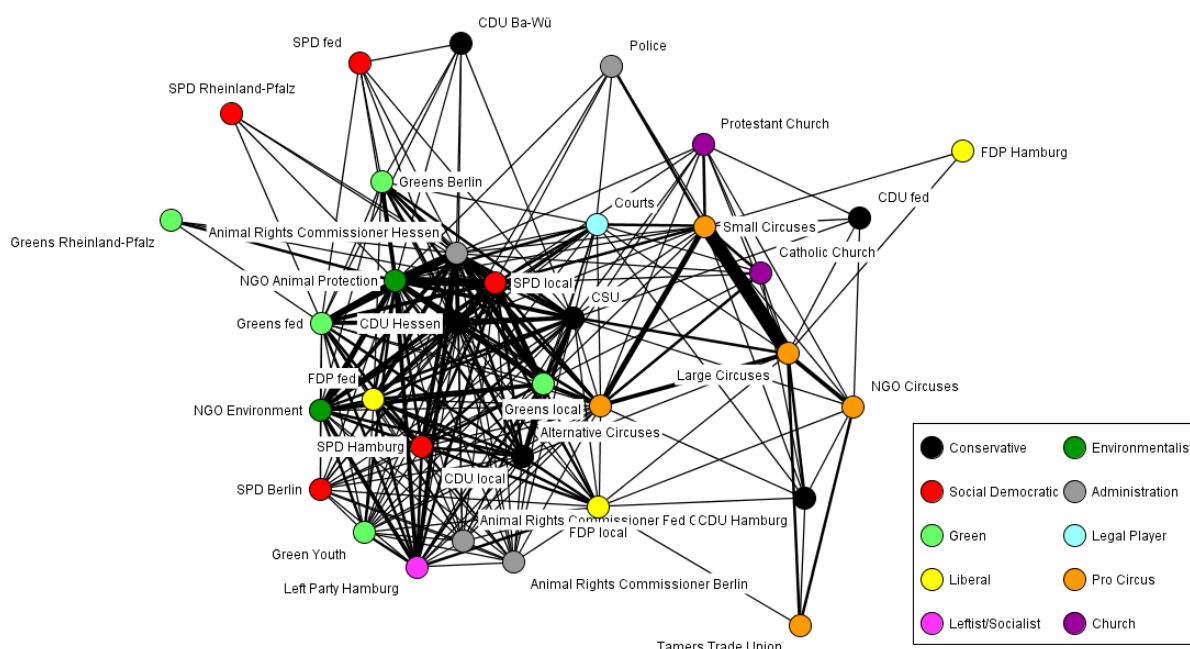


Figure 5.7 – Actor Congruence Network 2011.

In 2011, the situation shifted to a large extent: Firstly, the two formerly unconnected coalitions got loosely connected. Reasons are policy learning effects explained in section 5.5. Large and small circuses managed to establish links to connecting actors, such as alternative circuses (that to a large extent agree that circuses are generally suitable places for animals), but also to political actors such as local FDP and CDU groups, or the Bavarian CSU (mostly agreeing that a ban of wild circus animals would restrict professional freedom). Courts managed to find a balanced argumentation and did not integrate in one of the coalitions. A first observation is thus a connection of the two main coalitions.

Secondly, the network expanded, because new actors joined the discourse. One part of the newly attracted actors got only loosely connected to one of the main coalitions and formed sub-groups. These actors are located at the outsides of the network. For the pro-circus coalition, especially the federal CDU, as well as the CDU Hamburg and the FDP Hamburg got

only connected to pro-circus actors. For the 'proponents of change'-coalition, the actors on the upper left side of the network (federal SPD, SPD Rheinland-Pfalz, Greens Rheinland-Pfalz and the CDU Baden-Württemberg) got loosely connected. They only share a similar opinion on some concepts with a limited number of other actors. If they could be convinced to share a similar opinion on more dimensions of the discourse, the belief overlap would increase and they would be more integrated into the main coalition. This would make them stronger partners in the attempt to generate policy change. Hence, a second observation is the expansion of the network by newly attracted actors. Some are only loosely connected to the main coalitions. Here lies potential for the further integration of coalitions.

Thirdly, and on the other hand, some new actors got closely integrated into the main coalitions. Especially the 'proponents of change'-coalition managed to form a densely integrated main coalition, visualized by the highly connected 'ball' on the lower left side of the network. This group also contains newly appeared actors like the Green Youth, Animal Rights Commissioners or the Left Party Hamburg. These actors are safeguarded to be active change proponents with a high belief overlap with the initial proponents of change, mainly animal protection NGOs.

The Discourse in 2016: Highly Integrated, Large 'Proponents of Change'-Coalition

For the situation in 2016, I make three observations: The 'proponents of change'-coalition got even more integrated; the pro-circus coalition is highly integrated, but also stays connected with intermediary actors of the change-coalition; and there are few loosely connected actors left.

Firstly, the 'proponents of change'-coalition is characterized by a very good integration and strong ties, indicating a large belief overlap. This is visible in the actor congruence network, because the 'ball' on the right side became even more dense and compact. New actors that appeared between 2011 and 2016 got integrated in the main group of the change-coalition.

Secondly, also the status quo defending pro-circus coalition is highly connected by strong ties between them. Political actors like the FDP Hamburg or the federal CDU stay isolated from the 'proponents of change'-coalition, but highly connected to pro-circus organizations. Nevertheless, the pro-circus coalition also manages to stay connected to change proponents. Namely small and large circuses started agreeing on more concepts with change proponents. They managed to become intermediary actors in the network structure. Further intermediary actors are local CDU divisions and the CSU, both having mixed opinions about wild circus animals. Courts remained in a rather neutral position, connected to both coalitions.

Thirdly, there are only few loosely connected actors left. The 'proponents of change'-coalition managed to integrate the federal SPD and the SPD Rheinland-Pfalz. Both were actors of an only loosely connected subgroup in 2011. Only the Greens Rheinland-Pfalz and the CDU Baden-Württemberg could be more active proponents of the ban of wild circus animals.

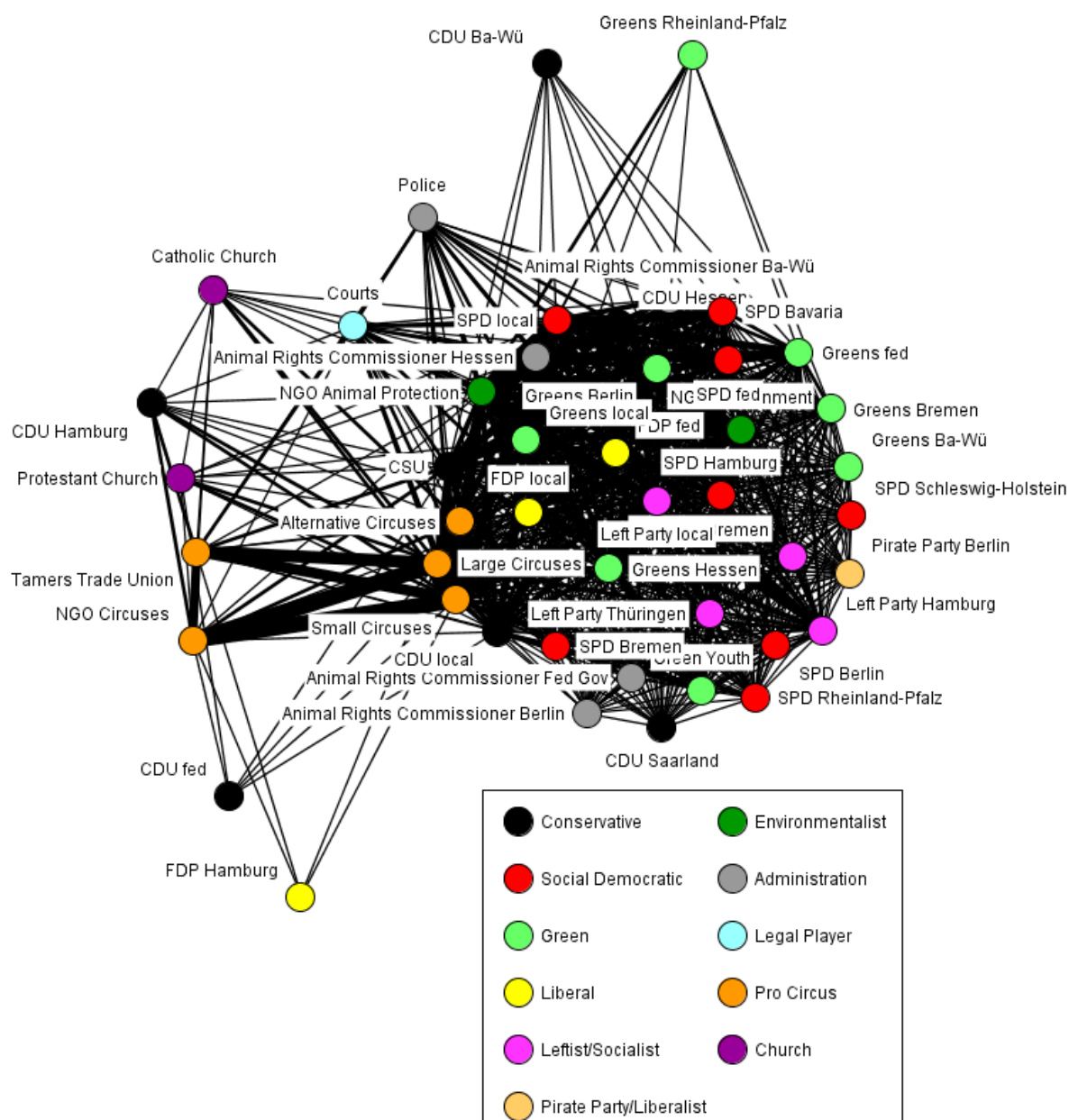


Figure 5.8 – Actor Congruence Network 2016.

Interim Conclusions

Already between 2003 and 2011, circuses managed to connect themselves to the ‘proponents of change’-coalition. Since the analysis is based on public newspaper articles, this means that circuses do not appear isolated in their argumentation. They managed to improve their network position. The pro-circus coalition contains considerably less actors. These are, however, highly integrated, very active actors sharing a high belief overlap. The coalitions managed to integrate some political actors and hold them isolated from the ‘proponents of change’-coalition.

The ‘proponents of change’-coalition, on the other hand, consists of many and diverse actors. Especially between 2011 and 2016, the coalition managed to integrate new actors to a high degree, explaining the high agreement for the last Bundesrat resolution and the power to bring the issue to the macro-political agenda even a third time. The potential to integrate already

active actors is limited to the CDU Baden-Württemberg and the Greens Rheinland-Pfalz. However, no major policy change has occurred yet. This means that more actors from different fields of society have to be attracted by further issue reframing and venue shifting attempts and integrated immediately by the main pro-change coalition. A high belief overlap is needed, what could be achieved by a coordinated, stringent and unambiguous argumentation, treating as many dimensions of the problem as possible. More detailed policy recommendations are provided in section 7. However, the real-world consequences of the co-occurrence networks based on statements in newspaper articles must not be overestimated (see limitations in section 6) and have to be interpreted in a careful way (see section 8).

5.5. Policy Learning

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory was criticized for not taking into account factors delimiting the magnitude and frequency of punctuations (John, 2003). One attempt to do so is to include the notion of policy learning: Changes in the belief systems of status quo advocates could lead to negotiated agreements and therefore only incremental change (Baumgartner et al., 2014). Argumentative changes (policy learning) are visible in DNA affiliation networks by changes in line color. Particularly interesting for my purposes are blue lines indicating ambiguous standpoints: An actor first agreed on a concept, then disagreed on it later on, or the other way around. This is assumed to indicate adjustments in belief systems, what are policy learning effects. In 2003 (see figure 5.2), there are no blue lines, hence no policy learning effects are observable for the period until 2003: All actors had clear positions. Therefore, I only analyze argumentative adjustments for the two periods 2003-2011 and 2011-2016. Moreover, I focus on the pro-circus coalition, since these actors are theoretically assumed to try to decrease the magnitude of a punctuation.

2003-2011: Small Circuses Admit Safety Chinks; Domesticated Animals: Mixed Positions

Regarding the pro-circus coalition, the only blue line that appeared in the 2011 affiliation network (figure 5.3), connects small circuses and safety issues. Some small circuses started to agree that wild animals might be too dangerous to keep in circuses, because they can escape or attack humans or other animals in circus shows. This might also be a strategical move to decrease the magnitude of policy change, because most small circuses are not able to afford wild animals that are demanding in husbandry conditions, anyway. Small circuses might be willing to agree on higher security standards for wild animals, because they want to achieve a competitive advantage relative to large circuses. This conclusion cannot be derived with certainty from this analysis, however. On the other hand, it is observable that some small circuses adjusted their position on safety issues and hereby moved argumentatively towards the 'proponents of change'-coalition.

On the other hand, there are some actor organizations of the 'proponents of change'-coalition connected by a blue line with the concept 'Domesticated Animals', meaning that these actors are against wild circus animals, but openly agreed that domesticated animals are suitable for a circus life and performances. For the concerned organizations in this regard (local Greens and alternative circuses), the ambiguous statements are due to the heterogeneity of actors summarized in these organizations: Some local Green groups / alternative circuses agree on the concept, some do not. A true policy learning effect, however is observable for the CSU and their position on wild circus animals: In 2003, Horst Seehofer was main CSU spokesperson for

agricultural issues and opponent of wild circus animals, in 2011, Ilse Aigner became the main CSU actor regarding animal protection issues. She uttered statements against the ban of wild circus animals. This argumentative change made the CSU a more intermediate actor.

2011-2016: Circuses Shift Towards the Change-Coalition on Many Dimensions

By comparing the affiliation network of 2016 (figure 5.4) with the one of 2011, more blue lines appeared for small and large circuses in the pro-circus coalition. More specifically, some large circuses shifted from wild to domesticated animals and also followed the small circuses in agreeing on weak points in safety issues. The overall argumentation, however, stayed clearly in line with other pro-circus actors. Small circuses continued approaching the 'proponents of change'-coalition in more argumentative aspects. Next to the before mentioned safety topic, some small circuses started to admit that zoos are more suitable to conserve endangered species and that not all circuses have concepts to deal with old animals that cannot perform anymore. However, it has to be kept in mind that both 'organizations' (small and large circuses) consist of somewhat diverse circus enterprises. The blue line does not mean that all circuses summarized in the two categories followed the described argumentative shift. All in all, more and more circuses started disagreeing on animal-related categories, shifting them argumentatively towards the 'proponents of change'-coalition. This prevented that circuses appear isolated in the public discourse. Circuses were busy maintaining an animal-friendly image for the broader public. Nevertheless, the pro-circus coalition is still united in the mutual, strong agreement on human-related categories like legal or economic arguments.

The 'proponents of change'-coalition lost some initial ban proponents like the CSU or some local CDU groups that are ambiguous about their position on wild circus animals. Moreover, within the coalition there is not much unity regarding the position on domesticated circus animals. Some actors (more radical animal protection NGOs, but also some Greens and Left Party divisions) disagree that domesticated animals are suitable for circus life, others (like local SPD and other Greens groups) think that circuses should be allowed to use domesticated animals. This aspect, however, plays a minor role in the discourse, as illustrated by the centrality ranking (figure 5.5).

Interim Conclusions

Policy learning effects are particularly observable for circus enterprises. It could be assumed that circuses wanted to decrease the magnitude of a possible punctuation by agreeing on better safety regulations. For small circuses it was easy to give away their position on wild animals, because they are too costly for them to keep anyway. More and more circuses switched to domesticated animals. This is an aspect of the discourse, where the 'proponents of change'-coalition is more ambiguous in their position and therefore less integrated.

Especially large circuses were busy picking up every new concept that appeared during the course of the discourse and responding to the new dimensions immediately. Most large circuses remain strong defenders of wild circus animals, along with tamer associations and circus NGOs.

Churches remained part of the pro-circus coalition, but made only very general statements. It is probable that these actors change positions when it comes to more specific questions (like husbandry conditions or whether performances are in line with animal dignity). If change proponents could force churches to position themselves in these regards, there might be a chance to drag them towards the 'proponents of change'-coalition.

In a nutshell, some important policy learning effects are observable that are suitable to decrease the magnitude of a punctuation. It now seems highly unlikely that a total ban of all animals (what would be a larger punctuation) will even be discussed. Circuses tried to reach negotiated agreements on less costly adjustments, mainly for safety issues.

6. Discussion

No research design is perfect and results have to be interpreted in light of the limitations due to the selected research design and compromises that had to be made. Therefore it is important to make limitations explicit and consider them in the concluding interpretations of results (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). In this section, I highlight the limitations of this research and discuss the implications for the interpretation of results and the conclusions that could be drawn from this study.

6.1. Limitations

More general limitations are related to the case study design. Furthermore, there are general limitations of discourse analysis. Somewhat more specific concerns regard the limitations of the DNA method. Lastly, I state specific limitations of my particular research design in this peculiar case.

First of all, a typical disadvantage of case study designs is the limited external validity of results (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). By choosing for a single case study design, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the accuracy of claims made in the theories section. It is not possible to conclude whether the identified strategies for policy change are indeed important causal mechanisms to explain the causal effects assumed (and frequently observed empirically) by Punctuated Equilibrium scholars. Furthermore, it is neither possible to directly generalize the results to discussions about wild circus animals in other countries, nor to transfer my conclusions to other discussions, nor to extrapolate the results to the future and predict how certain actors will behave. Nevertheless, other researchers could use my theory-building ideas in further projects. However, these questions are also not necessary to answer in order to fulfill the research goal: To make recommendations for policy entrepreneurs about the resting potential for strategies to gain attention for the topic and finally generate major policy change. In addition to that, this project is not designed to predict future behavior. It is unclear how actors will behave strategically in the future. However, this factor could influence the recommendations I make.

Secondly, a general problem of discourse analyses is the large extent of subjective choices and interpretations of the researcher (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Other researchers might code the data in different ways, apply another theoretical foundation, or even interpret the results in another way. The choices on how to define actors, organizations and categories are highly subjective, yet very important for the obtained results. All of these are factors negatively affecting the reliability of my results. It was tried to decrease this limitation by letting part of the data coded and analyzed by other students in order to increase the inter-subjectivity of results. Furthermore, I tried to be as transparent and explicit as possible about the choices I made and on what factors I base my conclusions. The DNA method proved to be a very helpful tool in making discourse analyses more 'objective', reproducible, and valid. Nevertheless, the high amount of subjective interpretation, especially during coding, is a drawback of the applied research design.

Thirdly, regarding the use of statements in newspaper articles as data base, I have to face the problem of 'intentionality': There might be a difference in meaning of a message between sender and receiver (van Dijk, 2006). Especially the twofold translation of meaning from sender to journalist to reader further increases this problem. It cannot be guaranteed that every interpretation of a statement was indeed intended by the original sender. I tried to control this limitation by using a very large data base: Differences in interpretation are less likely to prevail over many articles.

Furthermore, it is not guaranteed that all important statements are also published in newspaper articles, or even in the newspapers listed in the *LexisNexis Academic* database. Thus, it might be that I was not able to identify all actors and positions that deserve a place in the discourse networks.

Another difficulty for discourse network analyses is the importance of context when analyzing statements (van Dijk, 2006). Every statement depends on a largely unknown context. This is controlled for by choosing a narrow discourse in a well-known institutional setting: It is unlikely that actors are talking about a completely other context when uttering statements about the specialized discourse on wild circus animals.

Fourthly and lastly, there are several drawbacks of my particular research design for studying the peculiar problem.

The theoretical base of this study is rather narrowly restricted mostly to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. Main reason is that I am partly able to bring in some ideas on how to fill the empty holes of this theory regarding underlying causal mechanisms, as well as the ideal fit between problem and applied theory. But also time restraints played a role. It is important to note that also other theories provide useful insights in political strategies to 'free' issues out of gridlocked situations. My theoretical framework is far from complete. A more comprehensive theoretical framework of strategies to generate policy change would deserve more future research.

The DNA method shows only useful results, when explained and enriched by a supplementary qualitative analysis of the underlying data base. Graphs are often not self-explanatory enough, so that other scholars not knowing the data base in detail could derive their own interpretations. Therefore, I tried to explain the method and my interpretations of the obtained discourse networks in detail. Every schematic representation is furthermore only a rough representation of reality. A coded statement of Actor, Concept and Agreement/Disagreement cannot represent the full complexity of an argument. Nevertheless, DNA proved to be a fruitful way to visualize also complex discourses comprehensively and make network-based conclusions of discourse analyses. DNA is a useful attempt to make discourse analyses more replicable and valid. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods increases the internal validity of discourse analyses.

An important limitation is moreover, that my conclusions regard only argumentative strategies. These mostly concern the public attention for the problem and the coherence of argumentation within coalitions. However, also other factors such as resources, information, and knowledge most certainly play a huge role in generating policy change as well. Even on the contrary, some might say that it is a rather strong claim that argumentation plays a significant role in policy making. The negotiation or power struggle part of politics is not covered by this analysis. This decision was made to demarcate the scope of this research project. However, I cannot draw ultimate or self-sufficient conclusions on how to generate policy change. This is an ongoing project of a whole research branch in social sciences.

6.2. Discussion of Results

In light of the limitations named in the previous sub-section, I continue by highlighting the effects of these limitations on the conclusions I draw (section 7), based on the analysis results presented in section 5.

The goal of this project is to inform policy entrepreneurs about the resting potential to use the identified strategies to first increase attention for a gridlocked topic and then generate major policy change. For this end, this research project adds to the theoretical base of causal mechanisms behind causal effects assumed by PE theory. The most important limitations affecting the interpretation of results are the limited focus on argumentative strategies and a possible incompleteness of discourse networks. Furthermore, my results imply a steering capacity of policy entrepreneurs that calls for some points of discussion. In addition to that, I evaluate the possibilities to use the generated knowledge in an *ex ante* perspective. I further reflect on the restricted generalizability of results.

Theoretical Implications

Reviewing the explicit and implicit claims on causal mechanisms in PE literature resulted to be a productive way to extract strategies for policy entrepreneurs to increase the likelihood of a punctuation. Purposeful reframing processes and venue shifts are likely to increase attention and perceived urgency for a debated situation. However, increasing attention seems to be a necessary, but on no account sufficient pre-condition for major policy change. Once an issue is 'liberated' from gridlocked subsystem discussions and pushed on the macro-political agenda, newly attracted change proponents have to be integrated and institutional change solidified. There are important influencing variables that might limit the magnitude of a policy punctuation. In the analyzed case, for example adjustments in belief systems might have been the reason for a significant reduction of policy change.

More specifically, I add the following assumptions to the body of PE literature: (1) Increasing attention by venue shifts and image reframing processes is not sufficient to actually generate a punctuation, (2) actors are able to increase the likelihood of major political change by purposeful strategic behavior, (3) actor strategies can be regarded as causal mechanisms behind the extensively confirmed observed causal effect of generally incremental change, disrupted by major punctuations, and (4) influencing variables significantly affect these strategies.

These theory-building aspects of this study have to be tested in comparative settings, though. Since I apply a single case study design, my theoretical assumptions cannot be confirmed or neglected with certainty.

Steering Capacity of Policy Entrepreneurs

A connected notion is that I assume a high steering capacity of policy entrepreneurs. My actor-based assumptions assume powerful and purposefully acting actors. The debate of whether actor behavior or the system structure have a higher impact on political outcomes is an old and recurrent debate in social sciences. My assumptions are at least partly based on pragmatic

reasons: Assuming potent actors is a necessary fundament for the research aim to provide policy recommendations. The other extreme alternative would be to assume a world of highly important structural features with impotent actors. In my point of view, actor capacities and structural features influence each other: I assume that actors are able to willingly make choices with actual effects on the real world, but the impact is affected by structural features. It might thus be the case that I overestimate the steering capacity of policy entrepreneurs. However, actors should at least try to engage in purposeful strategic behavior to fulfill their goals. The actual impact might be limited by structural features, but this does not justify an omission of purposeful, strategic behavior.

Connected to this notion is the fact that I explicitly chose sides: I decided to provide proponents of change with recommendations on how to raise attention for a gridlocked issue with the goal to finally achieve policy change. Nevertheless, also status quo proponents could also use this knowledge for their purposes. In any case, either utilization of the generated knowledge would increase the utility of this study for policy advisor tasks, hence augmenting scientific and social relevance.

Focus on Argumentative Strategies

In order to demarcate the project, I chose to focus on argumentative strategies provided by Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. No conclusions regarding knowledge transfer or common resource use can be derived from the discourse networks that are elaborated in this research project. Unlike other network analyses, the forming of an argumentative coalition does not mean that involved actors actually share knowledge or resources with each other. Discourse networks only display belief similarity. It cannot be concluded that actors of one coalition also act in a coordinated way. However, it might be easier for policy entrepreneurs with knowledge about discourse network constellations to identify possible collaboration partners or to decide what information could be useful to share with which actor. Hence, I only derive conclusions on how proponents of a ban of wild animals should argue, not on how they should spend resources or use exclusive information. Nonetheless, this demarcation makes it possible to analyze the argumentation of many actors similarly and to visualize and analyze the whole complexity of the discourse in the achieved level of detail.

Possible Incompleteness of Discourse Networks

My data base is a very large collection of newspaper articles with $N = 521$ of valid cases. This large N is barely achieved in traditional discourse analyses. However, it still cannot be guaranteed that every important actor and every important position is included into the discourse networks. Reasons are that it is not certain that all newspaper articles treating wild animals (especially for the period 1991-2003) are listed in the *LexisNexis Academic* database. Furthermore, it is likely that not all positions are uttered in public newspaper articles, although popular newspapers provide a fair chance for very different political actors to publish their opinion, because newspapers have (unlike parliaments or courts) few institutional entrance rules. This means that basically everybody can try to express a position in newspapers, at least in free democracies. Main implication for the interpretation of results is that there might be other actors that can be included in coalitions or that try to reframe the problem at stake. In addition to that, the choice to only use 15 concepts in order to reduce the networks' complexity, has the drawback that not every detail of image reframing attempts can be displayed in affiliation networks. For the evaluation of my conclusions and recommendations, readers have

to bear in mind that there might be other actors and problem dimensions that I failed to include into my analysis.

Possibilities for Ex Ante Assessments

I already indicated that assumed strategies need to be validated in comparative settings. Once validated, knowledge about successful strategies to 'free' topics from gridlocks would provide possibilities for ex ante assessments. By formulating policy recommendations in an actual and still ongoing process, I already assume that there is resting potential for purposeful strategic behavior. Validated knowledge on strategies to increase attention and solidify policy changes provides the opportunity to inform policy entrepreneurs about prospects of success already in early process stages, if they want to bring a gridlocked issue to increased public attention. However, due to changes in influencing variables, it is not possible to estimate ex ante, which coalition actually 'wins' and achieves the desired changes. I have the opinion that complete and certain knowledge of the whole complex social reality (that would be needed to calculate discussion progresses ex ante) is not attainable. Nevertheless, we always have to deal with incomplete knowledge and I am convinced that knowledge about the resting potential for purposeful strategic behavior can strengthen policy entrepreneurs in their pursuit for policy change or defending the status quo. This pragmatic argumentation helps connecting the generation of scientific knowledge and the work of practitioners in politics.

Generalizability of Results

Due to various explained reasons, the generalizability of obtained results is highly restricted. Readers need to consider that useful interpretations of this analysis could only be drawn regarding the particular discourse of wild circus animals in Germany in the years 1991 through April 2016. Although the research aim was not to generate generalizable theoretical or methodological implications, neither, the combination of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and Discourse Network Analysis produced some interesting implications and ideas for further research that are presented in section 8. Moreover, the research design proved to be useful and suitable to generate the precise policy recommendations in section 7.

7. Policy Recommendations

The research aim is to inform the ‘proponents of change’-coalition about the resting potential for the three identified argumentative strategies to generate policy change: Image reframing, venue changes, and the inclusion of new actors, as well as the effects of the fourth strategy of policy learning that status quo advocates could use to decrease the magnitude of policy change.

Image Reframing

Much of the potential for image framing was already used shortly before 2003 and between 2003 and 2011. However, there is still some potential to stress weak points in the reframing attempts of the pro-circus coalition and some ideas for reframing attempts beyond the dimensions that are used until now.

Firstly, much potential for reframing lies in economic arguments, that are barely used in the current discourse. Proponents of a ban of wild circus animals could stress that this ban would mostly affect large circus enterprises, most small family enterprises have already switched to domesticated animals. This would shift the competitive advantage from large to smaller enterprises, what is a popular argument for actors favoring market interventions by the state. A framing towards more economic arguments could increase the perceived salience of the issue and make it attractive for societal actors that normally do not participate in discussions about animal welfare. Furthermore, it would decrease the image of the topic as being a topic only a small group of environmental and animal protection activists is interested in.

Secondly, many circuses still claim that wild circus animals provide educational value or that circuses play an important role in the conservation of endangered species. Although for example Circus Charles Knie is committed in elephant conservation programs, circuses do not show animals in their natural environment. They thus cannot provide the same educational value about wild animal behavior as nature documentaries or (to a lesser extent) safari parks or zoos do. There is still potential for many actors (especially political parties) to deny the claims of the circuses in this regard. Proponents of change should utter critical statements about the role circuses play in education and conservation. These are weak points in the argumentation of the pro-circus coalition.

Thirdly, the legal discussion about the area of conflict between animal protection and professional freedom is not decided yet. In combination with a venue change to the legal arena, change proponents could try to generate a ruling of the constitutional court. A ruling in favor of animal protection would be a very strong argument for a ban of wild circus animals. This strategy is risky in the regard that the constitutional court could also rule in favor of professional freedom. A successful framing of the public discourse could influence the public opinion into a desired direction. Although the constitutional court has to rule on the base of existing legislature and jurisdiction, every legal decision is also political and the public opinion can play a role for proportionality considerations. A procedure in front of the constitutional court would in any case raise attention for the topic.

Fourthly, emotional appeals could be a good way to increase attention for the topic and attract uninvolved actors. Specialized discussions about the bureaucratic burden or the exact

size compounds need to be suitable for wild animals bear the danger of only resulting in incremental change and shift the discourse to specialized expert circles.

Venue Change

Also venue changes have already been used frequently to bring the issue to the macro-political agenda. Especially between 2003 and 2011 I observed frequent approaches to shift the issue to the local level or from the Federal Land to the federal level. Resting potential lies in some alternative venues that are barely used until now.

Firstly, and as indicated above, the legal arena could be a possibility for a venue shift that increases attention for the issue. Particularly NGOs that are entitled to sue (like Peta or the BUND) are asked to bring the issue in front of the courts.

Secondly, the European venue is barely used. The European political parties could argue that those countries not having banned wild circus animals yet are lacking behind when it comes to animal protection topics. European umbrella organizations of NGOs could provide comparative knowledge about the situation in other EU countries and how a ban has been achieved there. Alternative circuses could complain about the varying competitive situation for circuses within the EU. The argument of a heterogeneous legal situation for husbandry conditions of wild animals would bring a new dimension into the discourse, which is used only in a very limited extent.

Inclusion of New Actors

Attention for the topic is still relatively high at the moment (see figure 4.1). More potential for policy entrepreneurs lies therefore in the inclusion of newly attracted change advocates. The following recommendations can be made in this regard:

Firstly, especially Greens and SPD should streamline their argumentation throughout the divisions. In both parties (but to a higher extent in the SPD), there are some very active divisions on the Federal Land level but a lot of rather uninvolved divisions, too. A means to do so is to bring in a motion covering as many argumentative dimensions as possible in a federal conference.

Secondly, the CDU is rather ambiguous in their argumentation regarding wild circus animals: There are some very active proponents of a ban, but also opponents. SPD and Greens should make use of this and stress the fact that especially the CSU uttered different opinions throughout the discourse and that the overall CDU argumentation is not coherent. For example, most divisions agree that husbandry conditions cannot be sufficient for wild animals in circuses, but nevertheless disagree on a ban of wild circus animals.

Thirdly, it is rather surprising that churches form a steady part of the pro-circus coalition. This is, however, only due to very general statements that also wild circus animals are suitable for performances, for examples shows about Noah's Ark. Churches might change coalitions if they are asked about the issue more specifically.

Finally, broader societal actors could be attracted by economic, social or legal arguments (as indicated in the paragraphs on image reframing and venue change). Especially the claim that a ban of wild animals could shift the competitive situation from large to small circuses might attract new societal actors (like trade unions or welfare associations) that can be included into the 'proponents of change'-coalition. It is important that these actors

streamline their argumentation to a high extent with original proponents of change. NGOs or highly committed politicians could inform uninvolved societal actors specifically about the (also positive) economic effects of a ban of wild animals.

Policy Learning

Adjustments in belief systems (or policy learning) are a strategy to generate belief similarity with another (presumably stronger) coalition in order to prevent major policy change. Proponents of the ban of wild circus animals should be aware that circuses are currently trying to avoid discussions of the impacts of a ban on human-made systems (like the legal or economic system). Indeed, they try to steer the discussion towards issues that are less costly to change than a total ban of wild circus animals: Husbandry conditions and safety issues. Ban proponents could prevent this shift in the following ways:

Firstly, especially circuses try to approach argumentatively the 'proponents of change'-coalition. It should be made clear that these are probably attempts to decrease the magnitude of political change.

Secondly, change proponents should further stress that circuses provide no value for education about human-animal relationships or for the conservation of endangered species. These are more fundamental categories that would steer the discourse toward major change. Discussions about safety issues and husbandry conditions might result in only incremental change (larger cages and compounds or better security measures). This might be a step in the right direction, but might also close a valuable window of opportunity.

In a nutshell, proponents of a ban of wild animals should try to achieve argumentative coherence by dealing with as many dimensions of the discourse as possible. However, discussions about husbandry conditions or safety issues bear the danger of relocating the discourse towards only incremental change. An exemplary press release for Christina Jantz-Herrmann, spokesperson for animal protection of the SPD, can be found in annex 2. This indicates a practical and concrete example for the application of my recommendations. A reframing in economic terms could attract further change proponents, attempts should be made to also use the European and the legal venue, and there is resting potential to include Federal Land divisions of political parties into the 'proponents of change'-coalition.

8. Conclusions

Coming back to my research question of “*What is the unexploited potential of strategies that proponents of the ban of wild animals in circuses can use in order to overcome the gridlocked situation of equilibrium and cause major political change?*”, I come to the following conclusions. More specific recommendations have been summarized in the previous section.

First Strategy to Cause Attention: Image Reframing

In order to generate major policy change, according to Punctuated Equilibrium, an issue first has to gain attention on a macro-political level, beyond closed and apolitical discussions in expert circles. One strategy to increase attention of the broader public for an issue is to reframe the policy image of a situation.

The resting potential for image reframing attempts is mediate: The issue has already been framed in an advanced way, before it first gained federal attention in 2003. Between 2003 and 2011, the discourse was broadened and enriched by some new concepts: Concerns about old animals came up and the educational value of circus shows was questioned. Furthermore, the important legal discussion about the area of tension between animal protection and professional freedom came up. Between 2011 and 2016, a slight shift in discourse was observed, from animal-related concepts like the dignity of animals or whether force is used by tamers to make animals perform in circus shows, towards more human-related concepts. For example, safety issues and the legal discussion gained popularity.

However, resting potential lies in the stressing of economic factors: A ban of wild animals would mainly affect large circuses, because small circuses cannot afford the keeping of wild animals and are often switching to domesticated animals anyway. A ban would shift the competitive advantage in the direction of small family enterprises. Moreover, questioning the image of human-animal relations that circus shows convey, seems a promising way to reframe the image in a more emotional way. In the end, there is some limited potential for image reframing.

Second Strategy to Cause Attention: Venue Shifts

Image reframing attempts are often not enough or not possible, because a strong status quo favoring coalition dominates a particular politics venue. Venue shifts are a promising manner to find new ways to generate attention for a gridlocked problem. Skillful policy entrepreneurs could bring in the topic in other venues, such as legislative organs of different levels in federal states, the legal arena or the EU level.

The Discourse Network Analysis revealed that the potential for venue shifts within the institutional structure of Germany is nearly exhausted. In 2003, the discourse was dominated by concerned actors, until active politicians from the Federal Land level pushed the issue to the federal level by making use of the Bundesrat institution. Between 2009 and 2015, many local party divisions tried to reach factual municipal bans. The venue was shifted to the local level.

However, alternative venues are barely used yet. Proponents of the ban of wild animals could try to generate a ruling of the German constitutional court. Until now, only lower level administrative courts are concerned with the issue. In addition to that, European organizations

could generate attention on the EU level by stressing that the legislative rag rug restricts the free movement of services and workers. To summarize, venue shift potential lies in alternative venues, such as the EU level or the judicative arena.

Strategy to Cause Policy Change: Integration of New Actors

Once an issue is on the macro-political agenda, attention needs to stay high and newly attracted change proponents need to be included into existing coalitions striving for major policy change.

Especially between 2011 and 2016, the 'proponents of change'-coalition managed to integrate various diverse actors argumentatively. Newly appearing actors are mostly political parties from the Federal Land level or animal protection NGOs. However, no major policy change has occurred yet. This means that also broader societal actors need to be included into the main coalition striving for change. Further image reframing attempts and venue shifts might attract also actors, whose main concern is not particularly animal protection. These actors need to be integrated into change coalitions as strong argumentative partners. One example are the churches: Currently argumentative partners of the pro-circus coalition, they are likely to change coalitions, when asked about the more specific circumstances and ethical implications of wild circus animals. Parties could streamline their argumentation by motions on federal conferences. To conclude, the resting potential for the integration of new actors lies in the streamlining of argumentation, but is rather low.

Moderating Variable: Adjustments of Belief Systems (Policy Learning)

Adjustments of the belief systems of the pro-circus coalition are a means to decrease the magnitude of political change: Status quo proponents might be able to reach negotiated agreements (what is typically only incremental change) by approaching argumentatively the 'proponents of change'-coalition.

These policy learning effects are especially observed for circus enterprises: By giving in on security positions, circuses managed to shift the discourse to security details, which are less costly than a general ban of wild animals. In order to avoid discussions about the ethical implications of keeping wild animals, many small circuses switched to domesticated animals. This strategy of taking the wind out of the change proponents' sails apparently worked until now. A ban of also domesticated animals (what would be an even larger punctuation) has not been discussed at all. In a nutshell, circuses tried to reach negotiated agreements on less costly adjustments, mainly for safety issues.

The potential for proponents of change is to make these strategies explicit: Strong proponents of a ban of wild animals should abstain from discussing safety issues or cage and compound sizes, because this might lead to negotiated incremental change.

Ideas for Further Research: Theoretical Implications

Next to the policy recommendations, this research project also produced some ideas for further research regarding the theoretical foundation of this study: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory.

The assumed causal effect of PE theory – usually incremental change, interrupted by occasional major punctuations – is frequently confirmed empirically and is built on a solid theoretical foundation. Causal mechanisms, however, underlying the observed effect, remain

still undertheorized and are barely tested in empirical settings. Strategies of policy entrepreneurs to generate punctuations are an idea to fill in this theoretical hole. However, more detailed theoretical work needs to be done in order to generate plausible and testable hypotheses. These could be tested in comparative settings.

A connected notion is that apparently the creation of attention alone (hereby bringing the issue to the macro-political agenda) is not enough. Theoretical elements have to be added on how to generate policy change once an issue is on the macro-political agenda. Critiques on PE theory, like the inclusion of elements from the Advocacy Coalition Framework or other theoretical branches seem a promising way to refine the theory in this regard. The strategy of including newly attracted change proponents was a helpful approach to fill this gap.

Furthermore, policy learning effects resulted to be an important moderating variable: Status quo proponents do not stop with maintaining a supportive policy image, when an issue is located in a policy subsystem. They are also active when an issue is debated in the higher arena of macro-politics. By adjusting their belief systems, they try to reach negotiated agreements, hence decreasing the magnitude of political change.

Ideas for Further Research: Methodology

Furthermore, some indications are given on how future research might improve the methodology on how to measure the argumentative behavior of political actors.

Firstly, for measuring reframing processes, DNA proved to be a very useful tool. Changes in affiliation networks over time are a good manner to qualitatively and comprehensively assess reframing tactics within a discourse. Measuring reframing processes by centrality degree changes of concepts is a promising idea to assess these processes also quantitatively. However, the methodological approach deserves and needs more elaboration and standardization. Future research might be able to produce valid tools that are able to precisely measure how an issue was reframed over time. Moreover, attempts could be made to decrease the necessary workload for the proposed method.

Secondly, qualitative methods resulted to be useful in measuring venue shifting strategies. However, detailed institutional knowledge is needed to assess future possibilities for venue shifts. More detailed institutional analyses could make the assessment more valid and reliable.

Thirdly, regarding the measurement of the inclusion of new change proponents: Congruence networks are a good way to visualize coalitions in complex discourses. However, they only display argumentative behavior. A more valid and helpful measurement could be achieved by adding further network analyses with other data bases, indicating knowledge sharing or resource transfers.

Fourthly, Affiliation networks and the measurement over time were very useful to track adjustments in the belief systems of discourse coalitions. The assessment could be improved by further qualitative studies based on stakeholder interviews.

Generally, DNA proved to be a useful tool to analyze discourses transparently and objectively in their full complexity, because they are better replicable than ordinary, qualitative discourse analyses. However, in-depth knowledge of the institutional background is needed to meaningfully interpret the created discourse networks. It is therefore advised to work in expert teams with of different (country-specific) institutional backgrounds for comparative studies. DNA opens possibilities to enrich discourse analyses with quantitative elements (like the degree centrality of concepts). This approach needs and deserves further development in future research.

References

- Abbasi, A. & Altmann, J. (2011). On the Correlation between Research Performance and Social Network Analysis Measures Applied to Research Collaboration Networks. *Technology Management, Economics and Policy Papers*. In: *Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, Proceedings of the 41st Annual*. Waikoloa.
- Aden, H. (2012). *Umweltpolitik*. Springer VS, Wiesbaden.
- Appel, I. (2014). Europäisches und nationales Umweltverfassungsrecht. In: Koch, H.J. (2014): *Umweltrecht*. 4th edition. Franz Vahlen, München.
- ATgzc (2016). Aktionsbündnis Tiere gehören zum Circus: Argumente für die Erhaltung und Förderung des klassischen Circus mit Tieren. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://www.tiere-gehoren-zum-circus.de/argumente.htm>.
- Baumgartner, F.R. & Jones, B.D. (1991). Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 53 (4), pp. pp. 1044-1074.
- Baumgartner, F.R.; Breunig, C.; Green-Pedersen, C.; Jones, B.D.; Mortensen, P.B.; Nuytemans, M.; Walgrave, S. (2009). Punctuated Equilibrium in Comparative Perspective. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 53 (3), pp. 603-620.
- Baumgartner, F.R.; Jones, B.D.; Wilkerson, J. (2011). Comparative Studies of Policy Dynamics. *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 44 (8), pp. 947-972.
- Baumgartner, F.R.; Jones, B.D.; Mortensen, P.B. (2014). Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking. In: Sabatier, P.A. & Weible, C.M. (eds.): *Theories of the Policy Process*, 3rd edition. Westview Press, Boulder.
- BPB (2013). Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung: Föderalismus und Bundesländer, Infografiken 24x Deutschland, 28/08/2013. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/24-deutschland/40429/foederalismus>.
- Bell, J. (2015). 'There Is No Wild': Conservation and Circus Discourse. *Society & Animals*, Vol. 23 (5), pp. 462-483.
- BGBl. (2013). Bundesgesetzblatt: Drittes Gesetz zur Änderung des Tierschutzgesetzes vom 4. Juli 2013. Jahrgang 2013, Teil I Nr. 36, Bonn, 12/07/2013. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl113s2182.pdf.
- Birkett, G. (2014). Penal reform discourse for women offenders: Campaigners, policy strategies and 'issue reframing'. *Crime Media Culture*, Vol. 10 (2), pp. 115-132.
- Böcher, M. & Töller, A.E. (2012). *Umweltpolitik in Deutschland. Eine politikfeldanalytische Einführung*. Springer VS, Wiesbaden.

- BR 595/03 (2003). Deutscher Bundesrat: Beschluss des Bundesrates. Entschließung des Bundesrates zum Verbot der Haltung bestimmter wildlebender Tierarten im Zirkus und zur Einrichtung eines Zirkuszentralregisters. Drs. 595/03, Berlin, 17/10/2003. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: [https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2003/0501-0600/595-03\(B\).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1](https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2003/0501-0600/595-03(B).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1).
- BR 565/11 (2011). Deutscher Bundesrat: Beschluss des Bundesrates. Entschließung des Bundesrates zum Verbot der Haltung bestimmter wild lebender Tierarten im Zirkus. Drs. 565/11, Berlin, 25/11/2011. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: [https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2011/0501-0600/565-11\(B\).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1](https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2011/0501-0600/565-11(B).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1).
- BR 78/16 (2016). Deutscher Bundesrat: Beschluss des Bundesrates. Entschließung des Bundesrates zum Verbot der Haltung bestimmter wild lebender Tierarten im Zirkus. Drs. 78/16, Berlin, 18/03/2016. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: [https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2016/0001-0100/78-16\(B\).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1](https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2016/0001-0100/78-16(B).pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1).
- Breunig, C. & Koski, C. (2012). The Tortoise or the Hare? Incrementalism, Punctuations, and Their Consequences. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 40 (1), pp. pp. 45-68.
- BT 18/2690 (2014). Deutscher Bundestag. Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Nicole Maisch, Harald Ebner, Matthias Gastel, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN – Drucksache 18/2526 – Haltung von Wildtieren im Zirkus. Drs. 18/2690, Berlin, 29/09/2014. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/026/1802690.pdf>.
- Bundesrat (2013). Deutscher Bundesrat: Handbuch 2012/2013. Jaron Verlag, Berlin.
- Cashore, B. & Howlett, M. (2007). Punctuating Which Equilibrium? Understanding Thermostatic Policy Dynamics in Pacific Northwest Forestry. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51 (3), pp. 532-551.
- de Vries, B.J.M. (2013). Sustainability Science. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Deftz (2016). Deftz: Aktuelle Koalitionen in den deutschen Bundesländern. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://www.deftz.de/Geo/Landtagskoalition.aspx>.
- Dierenbescherming (2015). Dierenbescherming Nederland: Verbod op wilde dieren in circussen. 15/09/2015. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <https://www.dierenbescherming.nl/wat-wij-doen/actueel/nieuws/nieuws-overzicht/verbod-op-wilde-dieren-in-circussen>.
- Dziengel, L. (2010). Advocacy Coalitions and Punctuated Equilibrium in the Same-Sex Marriage Debate: Learning from Pro-LGBT Policy Changes in Minneapolis and Minnesota. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, Vol. 22 (1-2), pp. 165-182.
- ECA (2016). European Circus Association: Animal Welfare. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: http://www.europeancircus.eu/?page_id=327.
- ENDCAP (2016). ENDCAP – Working together for wild animals in captivity: Animals in circuses. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://endcap.eu/animal-circuses/>.

- Fisher, D.R.; Waggle, J.; Leifeld, P. (2013). Where Does Political Polarization Come From? Locating Polarization Within the U.S. Climate Change Debate. *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 57 (1), pp. 70-92.
- Freeman, H.D. & Ross, S.R. (2014). The impact of atypical early histories on pet or performer chimpanzees. *PeerJ* 2014 (1), e579.
- Frevel, B. (2009). Demokratie. Entwicklung – Gestaltung – Problematisierung. 2nd edition. Springer VS, Wiesbaden.
- Friend, T.H. & Parker, M.L. (1999). The effect of penning versus picketing on stereotypic behavior of circus elephants. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, Vol. 64 (3), pp. 213-225.
- Green-Pedersen, C. & Mortensen, P.B. (2010). Who sets the agenda and who responds to it in the Danish parliament? A new model of issue competition and agenda-setting. *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 49 (2), pp. 257-281.
- Green-Pedersen, C. & Mortensen, P.B. (2015). Avoidance and Engagement: Issue Competition in Multiparty Systems. *Political Studies*, Vol. 63 (4), pp. 747-764.
- Gruber, T.M.; Friend, T.H.; Gardner, J.M.; Packard, J.M.; Beaver, B.; Bushong, D. (2000). Variation in Stereotypic Behavior Related to Restraint in Circus Elephants. *Zoo Biology*, Vol. 19 (3), pp. 209-221.
- Hajer, M.A. (2005). Coalitions, practices and meanings in environmental politics: from acid rain to BSE, in: Howard, D.R. & Torfing, J. (eds.): *Discourse theory in European politics*, Palgrave, London, pp. 297-315.
- Hajer, M.A. & Versteeg, W. (2005). A Decade of Discourse Analysis of Environmental Politics: Achievements, Challenges, Perspectives. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, Vol. 7 (3), pp. 175-184.
- Hammersley, M. (2003). Conversation analysis and discourse analysis: methods or paradigms? *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 14 (6), pp. 751-781.
- Hurka, S. & Nebel, K. (2013). Framing and policy change after shooting rampages: a comparative analysis of discourse networks. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 20 (3), pp. 390-406.
- Iossa, G.; Soulsbury, C.D.; Harris, S. (2009). Are wild animals suited to a travelling circus life? *Animal Welfare*, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 129-140.
- Jänicke, M.; Kunig, P.; Stitzel, M. (2003). Umweltpolitik. Politik, Recht und Management des Umweltschutzes in Staat und Unternehmen. 2nd edition. Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, Bonn.
- John, P. (2003). Is There Life After Policy Streams, Advocacy Coalitions, and Punctuations: Using Evolutionary Theory to Explain Policy Change? *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 31 (4), pp. 481-498.
- John, P. (2006a). The Policy Agendas Project: a review. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13 (7), pp. 975-986.

- John, P. (2006b). Explaining policy change: the impact of the media, public opinion and political violence on urban budgets in England. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13 (7), pp. 1053-1068.
- John, P. & Margetts, H. (2003). Policy Punctuations in the UK: Fluctuations and Equilibria in Central Government Expenditure Since 1951. *Public Administration*, Vol. 81 (3), pp. 411-432.
- Jones, B.D.; True, J.L.; Baumgartner, F.R. (1997). Does Incrementalism Stem From Political Consensus or From Institutional Gridlock? *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41 (4), pp. 1319-1339.
- Jones, B.D.; Sulkin, T.; Larsen, H.A. (2003). Policy Punctuations in American Political Institutions. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97 (1), pp. 151-169.
- Jones, B.D. & Baumgartner, F.R. (2012). From There to Here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 40 (1), pp. 1-20.
- Jones, D.R. (2001). Party Polarization and Legislative Gridlock. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54 (1), pp. 125-141.
- Jordan, M.M. (2003). Punctuations and Agendas: A New Look at Local Government Budget Expenditures. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 22 (3), pp. 345-360.
- Laver, M. & Garry, J. (2000). Estimating Policy Positions from Political Texts. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44 (3), pp. 619-634.
- Leifeld, P. (2013). Reconceptualizing Major Policy Change in the Advocacy Coalition Framework: A Discourse Network Analysis of German Pension Politics. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 41 (1), pp. 169-198.
- Leifeld, P. & Haunss, S. (2012). Political discourse networks and the conflict over software patents in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 51 (3), pp. 382-409.
- Leifeld, P. & Schneider, V. (2012). Information Exchange in Policy Networks. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56 (3), pp. 731-744.
- Levy, J.S. (2008). Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logistics of Inference. Presidential Address. *Conflict Management and Peace Studies*, Vol. 25 (1), pp. 1-18.
- Linn, S. & Sobolewski, F. (2011). So arbeitet der Deutsche Bundestag. Organisation und Arbeitsweise, Die Gesetzgebung des Bundes. 24th edition. Neue Darmstädter Verlagsanstalt (NDV), Rheinbreitbach.
- Llorente, M.; Riba, D.; Ballesta, S.; Feliu, O.; Rostán, C. (2015). Rehabilitation and Socialization of Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) Used for Entertainment and as Pets: An 8-Year Study at Fundació Mona. *International Journal of Primatology*, Vol. 36 (3), pp. 605-624.
- McCool, D. (1998). The Subsystem Family of Concepts: A Critique and a Proposal. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 51 (2), pp. 551-570.

- Meijerink, S. (2008). Explaining continuity and change in international policies: issue linkage, venue change, and learning on policies for the river Scheldt estuary 1967 – 2005. *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 40 (4), pp. 848-866.
- Mintrom, M. & Norman, P. (2009). Policy entrepreneurship and policy change. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 37 (4), pp. 649-667.
- Mortensen, P.B. (2007). Stability and change in Public Policy: A Longitudinal Study of Comparative Subsystem Dynamics. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 35 (3), pp. 373-394.
- Nevill, C.H. & Friend, T.H. (2003). The behavior of circus tigers during transport. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, Vol. 82 (4), pp. 329-337.
- Newman, M.E.J. (2004). Analysis of weighted networks. *Physical Review E*, Vol. 70 (5), pp. 056131, 1-9.
- Opsahl, T.; Agneessens, F.; Skvoretz, J. (2010). Node centrality in weighted networks: Generalizing degree and shortest paths. *Social Networks*, Vol. 32 (3), pp. 245-251.
- Otte, E. & Rousseau, R. (2002). Social network analysis: a powerful strategy, also for the information sciences. *Journal of Information Science*, Vol. 26 (6), pp. 441-453.
- Peta (2016). Peta Germany: Verbote der Haltung von Wildtieren in Zirkussen. Regelungen zum Verbot von Wildtieren auf städtischen Flächen. February 2016. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://www.peta.de/verbotwildtiereimzirkus>.
- Pralle, S.B. (2003). Venue Shopping, Political Strategy, and Policy Change: The Internationalization of Canadian Forest Advocacy. *Journal of Public Policy*, Vol. 23 (3), pp. 233-260.
- Princen, S. & Rhinard, M. (2006). Crashing and creeping: agenda-setting dynamics in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13 (7), pp. 1119-1132.
- Prindle, D.F. (2012). Importing Concepts from Biology into Political Science: The Case of Punctuated Equilibrium. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 40 (1), pp. 21-44.
- Robinson, S.E.; Caver, F.; Meier, K.J.; O'Toole, L.J. Jr. (2007). Explaining Policy Punctuations: Bureaucratization and Budget Change. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51 (1), pp. 140-150.
- RP-online (2016). RP Online: Das sind die Ministerpräsidenten der Bundesländer, 20/06/2016. Accessed online on 27/07/16 at: <http://www.rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/deutschlands-ministerpraesidenten-im-ueberblick-bid-1.4547320>.
- Sabatier, P.A. (ed.) (2007). *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd edition. Westview Press, Boulder.
- Schubert, K. & Klein, M. (2011). *Das Politiklexikon. Begriffe, Fakten, Zusammenhänge*. 5th edition. Dietz, Bonn.
- Silvia, S.J. (1999). Reform Gridlock and the Role of the Bundesrat in German Politics. *West European Politics*, Vol. 22 (2), pp. 179-181.
- Starks, H. & Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 17 (10), pp. 1372-1380.

- Stoddart, M.C.J. & Tindall, D.B. (2015). Canadian news media and the cultural dynamics of multilevel climate governance. *Environmental Politics*, Vol. 24 (3), pp. 401-422.
- Stokes, J. (2004). 'Lion Grievs': the Wild Animal Act as Theatre. *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 20 (2), pp. 138-154.
- Stone Sweet, A. (2002). Constitutional Courts and Parliamentary Democracy. *West European Politics*, Vol. 25 (1), pp. 77-100.
- Thorlakson, L. (2003). Comparing Federal Institutions: Power and Representation in Six Federations. *West European Politics*, Vol. 26 (2), pp. 1-22.
- True, J.L.; Jones, B.D.; Baumgartner, F.R. (2007). Punctuated-Equilibrium-Theory. Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking. In: Sabatier, P.A. (ed.): *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd edition. Westview Press, Boulder.
- Valente, T.W.; Coronges, K.; Lakon, C.; Costenbader, E. (2008). How Correlated Are Network Centrality Measures? *Connections (Toronto, Ont.)*, Vol. 28 (1), pp. 16–26.
- van Dijk, T.A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 11 (2), pp. 115-140.
- van Herten, M.L. & Runhaar, H.A.C. (2013). Dialogues of the deaf in Dutch eel management policy. Explaining controversy and deadlock with argumentative discourse analysis. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, Vol. 56 (7), pp. 1002-1020.
- Verschuren, P. & Doorewaard, H. (2010). *Designing a Research Project*, 2nd edition. Eleven International Publishing, The Hague ('s-Gravenhage).
- Walgrave, S.; Lefevere, J.; Nuytemans, M. (2009). Issue Ownership Stability and Change: How Political Parties Claim and Maintain Issues Through Media Appearances. *Political Communication*, Vol. 26 (2), pp. 153-172.
- Wolfe, M. (2012). Putting on the Brakes or Pressing on the Gas? Media Attention and the Speed of Policymaking, *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 40 (1), pp. 109-126.
- Wood, R.S. (2006). The Dynamics of Incrementalism: Subsystems, Politics, and Public Lands. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 34 (1), pp. 1-16.
- Worsham, J. & Stores, C. (2012). Pet Sounds: Subsystems, Regimes, Policy Punctuations, and the Neglect of African American Farmers, 1935-2006. *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 40 (1), pp. 169-190.
- Wu, J. & Zhou, L. (2015). DOBNet: exploiting the discourse of deception behaviour to uncover online deception strategies. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, Vol. 34 (9), pp. 936-948.

Annex 1: Coding Scheme

The following, previous coding scheme was developed inductively and iteratively during the first round of coding after completion of the data base. Some concepts were established already at the beginning of the coding process, some were added during the process of coding.

| Concept | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Wild Animals | Wild animals are generally suitable for circus life. |
| Domesticated Animals | Domesticated animals are generally suitable for circus life. |
| Husbandry Conditions | Circus animals live in good husbandry conditions (housing, penning). |
| Conservation | A life in a circus is better for exotic animals than a life in wilderness. |
| Born in Captivity | Animals that are born in captivity are generally less problematic to live in circuses. |
| Dignity | Performances are in line with animal dignity. |
| Exploitation | Circus animals are not exploited. |
| Rehabilitation | A rehabilitation of circus animals is either not necessary or unproblematic for society. |
| Retirement | Circuses have suitable solutions to deal with old animals. |
| Activity | Circuses provide a stimulating and engaging environment, what is important for animals. |
| Use of Force | It is not necessary to use physical force to train circus animals. |
| Animal Safety | Circus life is generally safe for circus animals. |
| Human Safety | Circus animals are not dangerous for humans. |
| Admin. Controls | Administrative controls are sufficient. |
| Finances | Circuses can generally afford the financial means to guarantee a sufficient nutrition of circus animals. |
| Bureaucracy | The ban of wild circus animals further increases the bureaucratic burden for circus enterprises. |
| Jobs | The ban of wild circus animals puts a lot of jobs in danger. |
| Transparency | Circuses are transparent about their husbandry conditions. |
| Family Enterprises | Circuses are mostly small and medium family enterprises that deserve special protection. |
| Tradition | Circus animals are an intrinsic part of traditional circuses. |
| Education | Circus animals provide educational value for children. |
| Professional Freedom | Circus tamers enjoy constitutionally guaranteed professional freedom. A ban of wild circus animals would limit this constitutional right. |
| Reliability | Tamers in circuses fulfill the requirement of reliability (§ 11 TierSchG). |
| Distraction | The topic of wild circus animals is a topic of low saliency and only used to distract the public from more important topics. |

Table A.1 – First Coding Scheme.

After a first round of coding, I reviewed the coding scheme. Since congruence networks are only interpretable when the data base does not contain too many concepts (otherwise there

would be a higher chance that actors agree on at least one concept, this would indicate non-existent belief similarity), I reduced the scheme to 15 concepts. Furthermore, I categorized concepts into animal-related, human-related, legal, economic, and strategic concepts. This makes the scheme comparable to other possibilities, checked by the cross-validation. The final coding scheme (below) was applied to all articles in a second round of coding.

| Type | Concept | Description |
|----------------|----------------------|---|
| animal-related | Wild Animals | Wild animals are generally suitable for circus life. |
| animal-related | Domesticated Animals | Domesticated animals are suitable for circus life, wild animals are not. |
| animal-related | Husbandry Conditions | Circuses provide a stimulating environment and good husbandry conditions (suitable housing and enough and good quality feeding). |
| animal-related | Conservation | Wild circus animals are a means to conserve endangered wild animals. A life in wilderness is more stressful and dangerous. |
| animal-related | No Exploitation | Circus animals are not exploited and performances are in line with the dignity of animals. For training, the use of violence is not necessary. Instead, the image of violent tamers is an overcome perception of past days. |
| human-related | Safety | It is safe for humans and/or other animals to keep wild animals in circuses. |
| animal-related | Retirement | Circuses have possibilities to enable old circus animals a retirement in dignity. Rehabilitation is either not necessary or unproblematic for society. |
| strategic | Victimization | Circus employees are victims of militant and/or racist animal rights activists. |
| human-related | Bureaucracy | Circuses are already controlled enough. A ban of wild animals would further increase the bureaucratic burden for circus enterprises. |
| human-related | Transparency | Circuses are transparent about husbandry conditions. They have nothing to hide. |
| economic | Economy | The ban of wild animals endangers jobs for tamers and further increases the financial stress of circuses. This puts an economic sector at risk that mainly consists of small and medium family enterprises. |
| legal | Fundamental Right | Professional Freedom is a constitutional right. A ban of wild animals disproportionately limits this constitutionally guaranteed freedom of tamers. |
| human-related | Tradition | Wild circus animals are an intrinsic part of traditional circus life. The ban of wild circus animals would make variété out of circus shows. |
| human-related | Education | Circus animals are important for the education of children. By visiting circus shows, children learn how to handle animals and gain a good image of relationships between humans and animals. |
| strategic | Distraction | The discussion of banning wild circus animals is an unimportant topic and used to distract the public from far more important issues. |

Table A.2 – Final Coding Scheme.

Annex 2: Exemplary Press Release

In order to make the policy recommendations more specific, key insights were translated into a proposal of a press release for Christina Jantz-Herrmann, SPD spokeswoman for animal protection. This would be a suitable way to frame the issue in a way proposed in the section on policy recommendations.



Christina Jantz-Herrmann
Member of the German Parliament
SPD Spokesperson for
Animal Protection

Berlin, October 17, 2016

Press Release

Christina Jantz-Herrmann, MdB
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 227-79494
Fax: +49 30 227-76494

No Applause for Wild Animals

Christina Jantz-Herrmann: Circuses are not a suitable place for wild animals

Local Office Osterholz
Christina Jantz-Herrmann, MdB
Bahnhofstraße 60
27711 Osterholz-Scharmbeck
Telefon: +49 4791 9315787

Precisely 13 years ago, a ban of wild animals was first debated in the Bundesrat. Although a great majority is in favor of such a ban, not much has changed yet. Meanwhile, wild animals like giraffes, tigers, lions, apes, hippos, rhinos or elephants are still suffering under terrible husbandry conditions in traveling circuses.

Local Office Verden
Christina Jantz-Herrmann, MdB
Anita-Augspurg-Platz 1
27283 Verden
Telefon: +49 4231 9826720

“Circuses can never provide suitable husbandry conditions for wild animals: Already the traveling character of these enterprises makes a circus life more stressing than like for example in zoos”, explains Christina Jantz-Herrmann, SPD spokeswoman for animal protection.

Internet:

www.christina-jantz.de
christina.jantz@bundestag.de

“A ban of wild animals would mostly affect the largest circuses. Small and medium family enterprises generally do not work with wild animals, because it is very expensive to keep them. Large circuses like Krone or

Charles Knie also have the loudest voice to oppose such a ban”, continues the parliamentarian. “Wild animals are not necessary to make great circus shows. Many small circuses, but also Roncalli or Cirque du Soleil entertain families since ages, without any animals. Shows with wild animals do not encourage animals in their natural behaviour and provide no educational value for children”. “Although the times of lions jumping through rings of fire or apes riding a motor bike are definitely over”, admits the SPD representative for Osterholz and Verden, “circuses are also not a suitable place to keep demanding species. Zoos or safari parks do a far better job by showing a setting that is inspired by natural habitats. This communicates at least how wild animals would behave in natural settings and the importance of species conservation. The best place for wild animals is the wilderness, though”.