Mainstream or Diversity in European Water Management
Environmental Governance in the water supply sector under the perspective of socio-ecologic research
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ABSTRACT

Reaching the limits of the availability of natural resources during the last decades, the debate about the paradigm of sustainability opened a highly complex and discursive field of multi-level governance. This situation confronts with the demand of an interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary examination of questions about equitable societal relationships and balanced chances to live a good life. It comprises demands on an equitable distribution of power, resources and rights among all human beings as well as a reflection about modes for participation on the collaborative use of the limited pool of natural resources.

As regards to the use of water resources, research within the European Research Framework Programme on private and public strategies for the management of water revealed a broad variety of regulation strategies between exclusively public sector ownership and management as well as complete privatisation of the water sector in countries across Europe. Actually, debates on the organisation of supply networks address the changing role of the state; the question on how to compare competing offers across different platforms; how to implement risk management; how to offer protection and allocation of resources. European environmental regulation explicitly addresses this diversity of the national modes of regulation, acknowledges the plurality of existing national regulation strategies and supports the maintenance of the scope for national arrangements within European demands. These context-orientated patterns shall facilitate an increasing flexibility in adaptation to future developments and national varying ecologic, economic, political and social constrains. Against this background the success of the internal implementation and external cooperation within of European environmental policy is not per se and solely influenced by the choice of regulatory instruments but by the *quality* of the negotiation about the use of commonly shared natural good.

This paper will follow the question on what can be new spaces of comprehension, negotiation and responsibility of civil society actors in the creation of societal *an*d ecologic realities in the field of water management. This is done with the thesis that not the fact of "knowing that" but the process of "knowing how" to mediate environmental governance offers the basis of mutual acknowledgement and appreciation. Crucial points of the exploration will be to (a) explore how mutual responsibility can strengthen the positions of all actors in democratic negotiation and (b) what can be a space where individuals in and with their societies can and must politically learn to think and behave as a body in order to organise environmental governance *of* and *by* instead of *for* and *with* the people.

Key words: Integrated Water Resource Management, European Water Framework Directive, Multi-Level-Governance, Socio-ecologic Research, European Identity, Societal Relationships to nature, Intersectionality, Precaution

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Content

Introduction

Nature always had a precarious double role for the assurance of human sustentation and life conditions: In the transfer, treatment and processing of natural resources for anthropogenic use, nature was and still is a source for raw material as well as a sink for the disposal of waste products.

Reaching the limits of the availability of natural resources during the last decades, the debate about the paradigm of sustainability opened a highly complex and discursive field of multi-level governance. This includes the description of political, economical and social differences globally between North and South as well as the interlinkage between the discourses about ecology and social justice on national and local level. This situation confronts with the demand of an interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary examination of questions about equitable societal relationships and balanced chances to live a good life. This comprises demands on an equitable distribution of power, resources and rights among all human beings as well as a reflection about modes for participation on the collaborative use of the limited pool of natural resources.

As regards to the use of water resources, research within the European Research Framework Programme on private and public strategies for the management of water revealed a broad variety of regulation strategies between exclusively public sector ownership and management as well as complete privatisation of the water sector in countries across Europe. This situation is accompanied by a wide range of actors in and debates about the management in the water sector and depends on the degree of private and/or public responsibility and involvement. Early water sector debates in most of the European countries were connected to ideas of the role of the state in supporting the public good. With the increasing presence of neo-liberal arguments calling for a shrinking role for the state, in the late 1980s and 1990s the involvement of the private sector in the water management increasingly was reflected against their supposed economic and technical merits. While each of the countries of the EU has its own particular history and system of water management, some themes are common for all in public debates: These are the changing role of the state; the question on how to compare competing offers across different platforms; how to implement risk management; how to offer protection and allocation of resources (Mohajeri/Knothe/Lamothe/Faby 2003).

As regards to create integrated policy measurements for the management of water resources, the EU Framework Directive[1] has brought water policies further into the public eye in many countries. Since the year 2000 member states are obliged to adapt their national water management to certain rules and specific management plans. The aim of an implementation of integrated water resources management strategies is closely linked with the strong demand on political regulation to stipulate the need for qualitative and quantitative regeneration of the environmental good water with the socio-economic constraints of the pressure on its use.

Research and surveys on the state-of-the-art of participation and governance in water management, recently presented by an assessment commissioned by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and WWF of the draft plans and their consultation process for river basin management in May 2009 revealed that although a mobilisation for reform has taken place in most river basins, at the same time "significant parts of Europe are seriously lagging behind at government and civil society levels. The governments, which are on track with the consultation, have serious problems in managing the open, integrated and politically demanding approach set out by the WFD." (WWF/EEB 2009:40) Looking for a transparent and publicity owned water management it still is obvious that although citizens of the EU member states are aware of serious water problems and willing to be proactive in this field, water authorities tend to avoid measures to get citizens involved (Knothe 2003 Forschungsverbund Blockierter Wandel 2007, WWF/EEB 2009).

Actually and in contrary to top-down interventional planning, European environmental regulation explicitly addresses the diversity of the national modes of regulation, acknowledges the plurality of existing national regulation strategies and supports the maintenance of the scope for national arrangements within European demands. These context orientated patterns define certain rules for procedures, but they do not define any substantial aims with respect to expected outcomes. They shall facilitate an increasing flexibility in adaptation to future developments and national varying ecologic, economic, political and social constrains. But, national public spheres are not open for all kinds and implementations of socio-cultural expression. Instead, they consist of cultural specific and historically grown

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[1] Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water, Official Journal L 327 , 22/12/2000 P. 0001 – 0073

institutions as well as of a certain social geography of space (Fraser 1997). Besides being arenas of a discursive development of opinions those public spheres are also arenas of the development and production of social identities and constitutions (ibid.). With reference to environmental regulation, implementation problems appear in the application of new instruments, e.g. European directives. The release of substantial regulation in favour for exclusively procedural methods to certain extend only seem to little contribute to broaden national radii for action. The intention to influence national context conditions still demands for detailed instructions which significantly minimize national scopes for interpretation and demand for adaptations within existing national regulations (Knill 2003). Under this perspective the success of the internal implementation and external cooperation within of European environmental policy is not per se and solely influenced by the choice of regulatory instruments but by the *quality* of the negotiation about the use of commonly shared natural good.

In this paper I will follow the question on what can be new spaces of comprehension, negotiation and responsibility of all actors in the creation socio-ecologic realities in the field of water management. Under the condition that not the fact of "knowing that" but the process of "knowing how" (Reckwitz 2002) to mediate environmental governance offers the basis of mutual acknowledgement and appreciation, a crucial point of the exploration will be how mutual responsibility can strengthen the positions of all actors in democratic negotiation. With respect to the European dimension the question will be, if there can be a space where individuals in and with their societies can and must politically learn to think and behave as a body – here as regards to their common need for existential food (water supply) security – in order to organise environmental governance *of* and *by* instead of *for* and *with* the people.

Socio-ecologic dimensions in sustainable Water Resources Management

What does a human being need most to save its existence? It needs water, food, security, warmth and compassion to and with other beings. These are the most essential and existential demands on the environment and society for human beings to survive. Around these demands humans organise their societies more or less effective, more or less sustainable and with more or less affection. The organisation of these demands follows traditional, historical, spiritual, cultural socio-economic as well as very private rules. In their performance they vary between

the different regions of the world. On the material side they depend on the availability for and power over land, natural resources and labour force. On the immaterial side they depend on the deep sources of embedded collective psycho-social experiences of past and present generations.

The paradigm of sustainable development

The moderation of power, availability and value of material and immaterial goods horizontally move between all societal groups and vertically between the different generations in societies. The paradigm of sustainability acknowledges this horizontal and vertical perspectives on the fulfilment of the existential needs of all beings in demanding not to use more resources (material and immaterial) than are able to be regenerated for all members of certain societies throughout the living and future generations.

The debates about the implementation of sustainable development in the past 20 years showed that sustainability is a matter of intense negotiation. Besides its profit for a lot of beings in the world many also have much to lose in the fields of power and monetary wellness. Sustainable development, sustainable economic activities, sustainable life all need to be negotiated throughout the global society, otherwise it will not function. However, the discussions and previews on climate change or environmental catastrophes, like e.g. floods, droughts and the deterioration of soils show the limited and in some parts even failed success in negotiating sustainability. There within a general topic is obvious: Environmental negotiation needs a lot of time, a long breath and high frustration tolerance especially of those, who are engaged in environmental protection and social justice.

Environmental negotiation and action needs so much time, because it moves in actual economic, political and scientific contexts. It is the expression of a specific contemporary and traditionally mediated relationship between humans and nature. This relationship is affected by specific crisis orientated environmental perceptions, which constantly create themselves new (comp. Radkau 2000, Hutter 1999). An actual perception of crisis is climate change. Crisis in the 19th century was related to the break outs of diseases like cholera and diphtheria through the contamination of rivers with domestic and industrial sewages. From there, the phenomenon of changing conditions in getting oneself into relation with the surrounding,

nature today is documented in the controversial debates and interpretations about what precautionary and sustaining forms of the use of resource can be as regards to climate change, deforestation, genetic manipulation of seed in agriculture etc.

With reference to the societal dimension in environmental governance questions are: Can we speak about environment without duly appropriated to the contract whose environment is meant? Do we refer to the environment of single persons or those of several parts of society or those of society as a whole? Do not lead these different perspectives to a needful plurality of subjective and objective concepts of environment?

The concept of a so called *strong sustainability* understands sustainable development as a process *into direction* to sustainability. This perspective supplements the normative articulation of sustainability as reservoir for the general conceivableness of alternatives by certain logic of articulation and a reservoir of various options (sustainable development). Conceptually and politically this is defined through

- an egalitarian human standard,
- a comparative standard for the responsibility for the future,
- the acknowledgement of the regenerative, reproductive demands of environmental (and human) resources (for example through investment in still existing nature capital – constant capital rule, CNCR –, e.g. in the development and support of fishing resources, advancement of soil fertility, renaturation of water bodies),
- the guidelines of efficiency, sufficiency (adjusted self-limitation) and resilience (resistance and tolerance of disturbances),
- the acknowledgement of a moral status for all sentient beings in consideration of their natural habitats.

This definition of strong sustainability leads to a multilevel model of sustainability, which connects to the original idea of inter- and intragenerational justice of the report of the Brundtland Commission as well as the ethical and normative demands of the Agenda 21.

Multilevel Governance dimensions in European Water management

The rules of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) relate to the dimensions of sustainability and precaution: A sustainable management of river basins which is compulsory in the WFD demands for a problem-orientated examination of the organisation of water supply services. This is increasingly determined by negotiation and paradigmatic governance. National and international policy strategies therefore, are confronted with the obligation to find an adequate spatial reference for the construction of plants and the provision of water services. In the frame of this argumentation two new demands on coordination and reconcilement between water services suppliers and other relevant institutions are of special interest:

Article 14: "The success of this Directive relies on close cooperation and coherent action at Community, Member State and local level as well as on information, consultation and involvement of the public, including users."

Article 46: "To ensure the participation of the general public including users of water in the establishment and updating of river basin management plans, it is necessary to provide proper information of planned measures and to report on progress with their implementation with a view to the involvement of the general public before final decisions on the necessary measures are adopted." [2] These demands have strong multi-level characteristics related to national and supranational levels.

Multi-level governance (MLG) concept understood by Marks and Hooghe and described in Homeyer and Knobloch (2008) originated in European integration research and was meant as "a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional, and local – as the result of a broad process of institutional creation and decisional reallocation" (Marks 1993: 392, cited in: Homeyer/Knobloch 2008:3). Discussions on this definition refined MLG constantly and also proposed to include non-state actors and private actors into the concept (e.g. Kohler-Koch/Rittberger 2006, Brunnengräber/Walk 2007).

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[2]   Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water, Official Journal L 327 , 22/12/2000 P. 0001 – 0073

In this sense, besides the distribution of authority among national governments and other decision making authorities on different levels, MLG refers to the *interdependence* of these different levels with *flexibility* as main attribute. According to Watson et al., Homeyer and Knoblauch name three main characteristics of MLG: "First, decision-making competencies are increasingly shared between actors and institutions which operate at different levels of government. Second, new forms of networks and partnerships arise which are concerned with governance within, between, and across the different levels of governance. Third, the increasing complexity of different levels and actors involved in governance issues lead to a blur in the division between the different levels of government (cf. Watson/Bulkeley/Hudson 2004: 4, cited in Homeyer/Knobloch 2008:3-4).

As regards to water policies in Europe, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the most influential for national implementation of integrated water resources management. But, the implementation of network-based governance solutions such as those contained in the WFD prove particularly difficult for those Member States which have relied on hierarchical, sectorial structures and regulatory instruments (Knill/Lenschow 2000, Rauschmayer et al. 2007). With regard to the integration of multi-level-governance dimensions into environmental policy integration so far, several observations have been made on European level (comp. Rauschmayer et al. 2007:4):

- Especially due to global change processes, the governance of natural resources is confronted by increased challenges. Mainly, rhetoric of integrating the public, stakeholders, and of a science based environmental policy proliferate, but are not taken up by the practice.
- Meta-studies on participation and inclusion of scientific knowledge in the governance of natural resources show a lack of systematic and comparative studies. This especially is obvious in specific fields of application, and particularly studies addressing different fields.
- Research on biodiversity and river basin management is increasingly expected to integrate science/policy interfaces in research design but this mostly happens without a systematic reflection on the aims and structures of such interfaces.

A central question is, which implications the regulation of the WFD imposes (a) on participation and competency of organization for professional and private interest groups and (b) transparency of information on regional level?

The socio-ecological approach

The approach of social ecology considers humans in their biformity as beings of nature *and* culture. In this shape humans are not only isolated individuals in their respective environments, but also socialized individuals within specific environmental conditions and structural constraints. Therefore, not only humans have various relations to their respective environments but also societal institutions such as production plants and markets. Society taken as a whole, whether in Marxist tradition as reproductive entity or in modern form as self regulated system we may also speak about relations of a differentiated structured society towards its environment. Within those, different human and/or societal entities (individuals, groups, organisations etc.) may have their special relation to their respective environment. This means, environment always is relational towards the respective understanding of society and its respective comprehension of classification. (Becker 2003).

From the perspective of socio-ecologic research coping with crisis means assuring the existence through sustainability. This implies to design the assurance existence in that way, that human and natural productivity will be sustained. This comprehension refers to discourses which put the sustainment of social and ecological life-cycle processes into the centre of engagement (comp. e.g. Busch-Lüty 1994; Immler/Hofmeister 1998). In this understanding sustainability is an integrated principle of life, through which humans assure their living conditions in a long-term perspectives. In this process people are bargaining for criteria of what are good living conditions. In an economic and socio-political sense, this understanding of sustainability means a conscious and proactive organisation of the (re)productivity process as a whole. This considers the unit of production *and* reproductivity on the basis of cooperation of all concerned persons. This normative concept implicates a theoretical challenge: It means to understand (re)productivity as a core content of sustainable economy (comp. Biesecker/Hofmeister 2006). Sustainability, within this is both: a substantial *and* procedural concept. Precaution, cooperation and the orientation on what is necessary for

a good life are guiding principles for that path of sustainable development (comp. Biesecker et al. 2000).

Dichotomies and blockades in the management of water resources

Under socio-ecologic consideration, efforts towards sustainable development today still remain in dichotomized patterns of action, which hinder the implementation of an equitable, environmentally adjusted and socially sound economy. Blockading dichotomies in the management of natural resources are assumed to decisively build upon hegemonic personal and societal relations to nature. Critical feminist and gender theories have pointed out that »nature« and »culture« are not two independent entities in a more or less sustainable relationship. On the contrary, both are constructions of dichotomised patterns of recognition, awareness and appreciation from people in their environments as a whole (Haraway 1991). They represent

- specific societal relationships to nature created by hierarchy and power (Becker/Jahn 2005),
- results of our social practices (Reckwitz 2002),
- societal and individual patterns of interpretation and activity.

Blockades in the realisation of sustainable development are seen in dichotomised patterns of e.g. nature – culture, exploitation – protection, public – private, centralised – decentralised and so on. 'Hidden' potentials for sustainability are supposed to exist but remain invisible and excluded because of hierarchic structures.

Tightly linked to regional characteristics and soil, water has always determined the social structures of rural communities and has represented a source for material and immaterial power. There within, water infrastructure management represents a form of societal organisation involving planning, provision and use of utility services with high social demand on and for them. Historically, the meaning of water in daily-life reflects the deep spiritual and cultural embeddedness of water in a society. Since the 19th century, the introduction of new forms of technology in daily and domestic life and the industrial use of natural resources led to a fragmentation of the domestic, supply-bound sphere.

In northern industrialized societies, water management nowadays lies hidden—under the Earth, under streets, under houses, under the places. Its networks are hardly visible to citizens. Inhabitants of the industrial countries are accustomed to a constant availability of water delivered by large-scale industrial systems. Deeper examinations of blockades on regional level hindering the implementation of participation reveal uncertainties in reconciling the demands of professional water organisation and those of regional civil society. On regional level this is especially the situation in terms of

- intransparent pricing policies and the lack of reconcilability of infrastructure and environmental conditions of landscapes (comp. Knothe 2003),
- problems of comprehension between professionals from the water sector and those of planning administration; this is especially the situation under conditions of role changes in administrative bodies and their relations to local stakeholders (comp. Libbe/Trapp/Tomerius 2004, Knothe2008),
- difficulties of a social and environmental adjusted management of water resources under the pressure of privatization for local authorities (comp. Kluge/Scheele 2003, Kluge 2005),
- lack of fit (,misfits') between regulation and utilisation in the tension field of professional organisation and civil society engagement (comp. Fichter 2003, Moss 2003).

Here a set of general and increasing problems become obvious for water management in industrialized countries. Most of all these are

- different characters of speed in planning and organisation on national, regional and local level,
- different rhythms of communication and negotiation between a variety of actors and their demands,
- different forms of commitment, reliability, agreement and transparency for demand and action on regional level.

Instead of this, in transnational developmental cooperation another other problems came to the fore during the last years, which are tightly linked to a certain self-evidence of technological infrastructure in the mind of engineers using and/or constructing and planning them under conditions of their own societal surroundings. Social incompatibilities and

disharmonies in many regions of the world came up when a northern style of technical and organisational solutions was implemented in another culture without really having acknowledged the respective cultural and traditional conditions and without having involved all relevant societal actors into the planning process. Often these – on western societal and environmental conditions adjusted – solutions created new dependencies on accompanying foreign consultancy measures than help for autonomy. As it was examined especially for the field of water, research on the quality and success of implementation of and participation in water management systems in Africa, Latin America and India clearly pointed out that these processes have deeply affected gendered daily-life structures as regards to specific conditions of changes in rural economies, labour migration and unequal distribution of rights to land and water. Under these conditions in negotiation processes especially women often were not acknowledged in their role as main cultivators for the land and main responsible persons for water supply and for providing a hygienic environment for their families. Procuring the family's water supply is a central activity in the daily life of women in the rural regions of poor countries. They are the experts in matters of hygiene as it relates to the common water supply and sewage disposal structures. Moreover, the household work and family care performed by women is not only pragmatic but part of an individual spiritual path. Therefore, the type of water technology and the forms of its implementation especially affect women as regards to their economical household activities as well as their individual subjectivity and individuality.

Briefly summarized, the distribution of caring activities and the responsible role of women in daily-life for the assurance and nutrition and water supply reveal the extremely gendered nature of community work, especially under conditions of poverty and the lack of basic resources (Little 2002). These context specific constrains have to be taken into account in 'modernization processes' (Murcott 1998) and under conditions of technical developmental help.

European political identity and legitimacy and the management of natural resources
Europe represents a high complexity of political processes and manners as well as designs of environmental political instruments. Out of the perspective of potential non-European cooperation partners Compagnon discusses the underperformance of environmental

regulation through "the incompatibility between domestic political dynamics and the grammar of international regimes." (Compagnon 2008, p. 2) He considers the nation state structure and the political elite's behaviour as crucial areas of analysis when trying to understand the interplay between global and local environmental regimes (ibid.). 'Hybrid governances' (ibid.), which means new forms of international governance beyond the state, emerged from various processes of private and public participation in multiple stakeholder dialogues. In this diversity of formal and informal political processes the question is how social-cultural and ethnic specialities find their place and acknowledgement in environmental regulation, how inequalities e.g. between north and south, within the global division of labour, the limited access to trade, development and resources can be addressed and 're-contextualised' in the de-contextualised debates on new forms of governances, public-private partnerships, privatization etc. (ibid.).

Antagonisms between nation states and supra-national formations

Due to globalisation processes, nation states as well as their civil society environment consisting of organisation, enterprises, media, non-profit organisations, citizens etc. are globalised in their professional and daily-life practices. This is also valid for the principles of symbolic and semiotic reading of political regulation, like norms of producing and consuming, life styles, patters of awareness, culture etc. (comp. Brand et al. 2007). In the space between the actual consisting and potential possibilities the political field is a reservoir of unlimited varieties of negotiations and actions mediated through decision making (comp. Dryberg 1998). In this relation, international political institutions and constructions are results of certain patterns of behavior and routines from strategies and projects as well as of condensation of changing societal power relations. Therein national governments, generally, express national interests as results of political compromises on national level in order to be able to act autonomously in bi- and multilateral negotiations. On the other hand, international institutions as well as international compromises and hegemonic projects influence national power relations and the re-formulation of national interests. In this interplay the condensed national power relations remain decisive for the characteristic of international institutions. At the same time, restrictions and incentives driven by international structures are effective on national level and materialise in nation state institutions (comp. Brand et al. 2007).

This antagonism between nation state and supranational formation operates at the borderline in and of times and spaces. Without reference to the political identity of the respective 'other' this antagonism would not work. Similar to the subjective level of individuals, antagonism on political level is connected to an activation to systemize limits through exclusion or even elimination of the unknown. In this sense antagonism is constituted by the formation of limits (ideological, political etc.), the setup of blockades (e.g. in communication, in mutual understanding, in the variety of potentials for integration and acknowledgement) and through constant adjustment of hegemonic power relations. Through an explicit construction and naming of the 'other' hegemonic relations constitute themselves along the edge of inclusion and exclusion (comp. Dryberg 1998).

Processes of regulation and hegemony and their respective structures and power relations occur in all parts of society: in daily-life relations and orientations, in the way business and competition is built up and the modality, how the outside, the exterior of a society effects and is perceived economically, political and cultural. Therein the nation state still is an important node in processes of regulation. It represents the specific materialized aggregation of societal power relations and has the central role to assure and to sustain national antagonistic societal relations on the international field (comp. Poulantzas 1978/2002, Bretthauer et al. 2006).

Dominant societal interests are important factors in this process of aggregation. They materialize through various social forces around the generalization of interests, norms, acknowledgement of social identities (e.g. different ethnic or gender groups) and in their specific systematisation. Given that a political strategy is the vehicle of a systematic actualization of constraints, the state serves as a terrain of social contention in order to build and sustain hegemonic positions. This kind of systematic actualization of societal constraints we find in the condensation of laws, the way resources are mobilized through discourses or in way cultural acceptance is given (comp. Brand et al. 2007, Dryberg 1998). This means, while policy is the practice of actualisation as such, the political process is the act of societal inscription. Under this condition policy structures the political function, which duty is to provide hegemonic conflicts with certain directions (ibid.).

European identity – a matter for natural resources management?

As to the political structure of the EU, the distinction of political, social and cultural identities as well as the acknowledgement of the reflexive and discursive tension field of decision-making moves between a continuous negotiated common political identity and the diversity of cultures which are struggling with breaking up ir-/reversibly from what uses to keep them together. The interpretation of "making and implementing common decisions in high political questions and bearing the consequences that derive from them" (Cerutti 2005) has a process-orientated notion of identity-formation and connects to the search for fostering communication about certain policy fields and reflexivity within intercultural relations.

The distribution of natural resources as well as the formation of existential supply services are the connecting factors which run through all policy fields and intercultural relationships Also, water services management services are essential for constituting community life. The fact, that water qualitatively and quantitatively is (re)generated on the basis of local and regional specific geographical conditions on the one hand but regulated and economised globally partly by transnational operators on the other, makes a communication about social and ecological sound water regulation difficult for political actors.

The question is how a political body like the EU can deal with these blockades which mainly evolve on the level of nation states and which have secondary effects on transnational level. Can political identity and legitimacy within the EU be supporting factors for an integrated water resource management in Europe? And if yes, are there even strategies which may be extrapolated into the European cooperation practice within non-European regions?

The 'double nature of the beast'

Following Cerutti (2008), to be legitimised is still an essential condition for institutions and policies on the level of the nation states. This national political manifestation building upon specific national cultures and traditions still makes the development of a European identity difficult. As to political identity Cerutti mainly follows a concept of it, which is of reflexive character including the following aspects

- a feature, which is "clearly or confusedly perceived and talked about by Europeans (common citizens and elites) as a communal issue". (Cerutti 2008:5) In this context

"Policies and institutions are not 'identity' in themselves, but only as far as they are perceived by the individual actors as something which is meaningful to their self-description" (ibid.);

- the re-elaboration Europeans make of their concept of identity in their projects for the future;

- being based on a form of inclusion, which reconciles the universalistic values on which the Union build upon the particularistic features of the European polity by keeping the configuration open to these values;

- Identity playing a role for legitimacy is political in spite of social or cultural. Polity in this perspective has a specific feature: "the ability to make ultimate decisions acting as one sovereign actor […] and the normative framework […] in which the preferences and projects of social groups are put in hierarchical order and reconciled with each other." (Ibid.:6)

On this basis political identity is created by a set of political and social values and principles in which members of a polity recognise themselves a 'we'. But even more important than this set (identity) is the process (self identification through self-recognition) "by which the people recognize themselves as belonging together because they come to share, but also modify and reinterpret those values and principles which are the framework within which they pursue their interests and goals". (Cerutti 2008:7) For this a certain degree of homogeneity in the political culture, like for example an orientation which is in favour for liberal democracy, is much more needed as a pre-condition than a convergence of the entire cultural world of the society represented by the sum of languages, religions, moralities, images of the world and forms of everyday life (comp. idid.).

Under these conditions two antagonisms exist: On the one side there is a type of Union which functions predominantly as intergovernmental entity. Its aim is at the best regulating the single market and which under this condition does not need much political attention on the part of its citizens. On the other hand it is exactly the predominantly intergovernmental nature of the Union which causes failures to act jointly on major issues and which is the reason why identity among the citizens is very slow in developing (comp. ibid.).

But what means identity and whose identity is addressed?

From a "post-national, compound quasi-polity such as the EU" (Cerutti 2008:9), generally, the citizens are only partly direct members of the polity. Rather they obtain indirect membership through their national governments. This situation makes it difficult to expect identification processes from the citizens as it would be relevant in a nation state situation. Moreover, the experience of the EU as political creation does not give much substance for self-identification. As to the identity of an entity like the EU, we may assume an antagonism which Cerutti describes as the *double nature of the beast*: "Legitimacy in and out of the EU is neither the nation-state legitimacy model written large nor the legitimacy of an entity that can choose to act one day as a market regulator and the next as a fledgling polity. As it has developed in the last 20 years, this *double nature of the beast* is at work all the times" (ibid.:11) and which will not be improved simply by a better economic performance.

Following this line of argumentation, the growth of a political identity among European citizens is made difficult or is even hindered by several structural factors which also have importance for the realisation of successful environmental governance: Firstly, this is the already mentioned double nature of the beast of the EU, which means the constraints that each of the two natures, market regulator and quasi-polity, put constraints on each other. This is accompanied by two structural circumstances: an EU legislation which is not directly executed by the Union institutions, but by the national ones and their ambivalent role in executing on the one hand and nevertheless receiving the blame in terms of failure. Moreover, the scarce visibility of the legitimacy of the Union and the difficulty for the public to become familiar with the non-defined objective of the EU is intensified through the ambivalent communication structures through which the EU is perceived or framed. Those are "still overwhelmingly national, with the EU being a preoccupation or a scapegoat for politicians and journalists […] rather than a free-standing entity." (Cerutti 2008:15)

Oscillating between the 'own' and the 'otherness'
Looking more closely on the role of individuals in political decision making, people are influenced by an antagonistic tension of cognitive and normative frameworks of reference. On the one hand, identity building and cognition produce the concepts through which people

conceive themselves, the world and the others. On the other hand, "identities are associated to socially binding norms according to which individuals evaluate the 'appropriateness' of an action […]." (Lucarelli 2008:27) Lucarelli (2008) regards political identity "as a construction that is not and cannot be derived *directly* from a common culture, as 'the set of social and political values and principles that we recognize as ours, or in the sharing of which we feel like 'us', like a political group or identity." (Ibid.:28) In contrary, such values and principles need to be interpreted and identity in consequence, is the "shared interpretation of a set of core values." (Ibid.:28) Therein, policy is both: a context in which interpreted values can be observed at work, and an intervening variable in the process of identity formation. Vice versa, identity is an essential moment for the political process: Exactly, political entities receive legitimacy and acceptance because citizens are aware of certain values and principles and are willing to share them. (comp. Cerutti 2001)

Being engaged in both, private exchange *and* public debate about how to determine, modify and adjust those values identity can be described metaphorically in main moments: as *mirror-identity* and *wall-identity*. The first means to look into an internal mirror where we find common ideas, values and principles, which give meaning to our social as well as to our individual life. Wall identity has two faces of a wall: as a bearing and supporting one as well as a boundary. The first gives a group (nation, local community, party) consistency and individuality. It maintains essential conditions for a group to become capable of interacting. It designates difference and enhances self-reflection as factors which enable interaction with others, whether the interaction is friendly or hostile. Secondly, identity always also constitutes a boundary wall as well. Strengthening more the complementary view on relations than a truly intersubjective one (see below 'Intersubjective spaces for natural resources management) boundary may oscillate between representing difference and maintaining irreversible separation, hostility and the aim to dominate other (comp. ibid.) rather in hegemonic than in equal relationships.

Intersubjective spaces for natural resources management

Water is one of the main issues of European Environmental policy and the openness for the European Water Framework Directive towards public participation and transparency underlines the wish to integrate civil society involvement in European water regulation. Over

the last years a lot of studies discovered several blockades which hinder or even exclude public participation and engagement in water issues (see above under 'Introduction' and 'Dichotomies and blockades in the management of water resources'). Reasons refer to a lack of differentiated knowledge about the demands on water of the users, intransparent pricing policies and missing maintenance activities for existing networks, a lack of support for citizens who plan to implement ecological small-scale solutions for waste water treatment, a lack of cooperation between operators and favorisation of big-scale competition instead. All these conditions cause irritation and minimisation of public engagement and show more or less obvious patterns of exclusion.

20 years after the Brundtland Report and - exemplarily for water as natural resource – nearly 10 years after enacting the European Water Framework Directive, the political struggle for putting sustainable development into action shows that the perception and appreciation of societal and ecological environment is a strong matter of negotiation moving between terms of individual and societal identities and depending on

- cultural and traditional constraints of societies,
- geographical and ecological conditions of landscapes and regions,
- policy systems and
- access to knowledge and power.

Two post-structuralist options shall be selected in the following text to more explore terms of identity building in the tension of nature – culture relationships. These are (a) the concept of *societal relationships of humankind to nature* and (b) the concept *intersectionality*. Both concepts will serve as resources as well as projection fields for a topic which is also actually discussed in Neurobiology and Neuropsychology as regards to our common psychological and social well-being in the world: Not that we simply and for any price to pay do survive is the secret of life, but that we find others who bond, share and relate to our feelings and passions in a common "shared meaningful intersubjective space". (Gallese 2003; see also Siegel 2007, Bauer 2006) The discussion on 'what can be intersubjective spaces for natural resources management follows the specific aspect of re-contextualisation of the use of environmental goods with special regard to the *quality* of negotiation processes in the management of demands on and the availability of them.

The concept of societal relationships to nature

Out of socio-ecologic perspective, environmental crisis is seen in close interdependency with social crisis and is interpreted as 'crisis of the societal relationship of humankind to nature' (comp. Becker/Jahn 1989; Jahn/Wehling 1998; Becker/Jahn 2003). Therein nature and society are considered to be in dialectic relationship to each other in which the assurance and performance of the social and economic existence is always linked with the assurance and performance of natural processes of life. Sustainability under socio-ecologic consideration therefore means to sustain the future capability for reproduction of a society and its basic fundament of existence. (comp. Jahn/Wehling 1998).

The term ‚societal relationship of humankind to nature' indicates the network of interfering relations and habits between individuals, society and nature as well as the developing patterns and constraints between them. These have to be regulated permanently in society in order to pursue a humanly life today and to continue societal processes for future generations. Societal relationships in any case are historic variables. They are built up in various kinds of actions of the 'outer' and 'inner' nature of individuals. Societies have special strategies to regulate their relationships to nature materially and to symbolise it culturally. In this, basic relationships to nature exist and are anthropological determined and culturally formed profoundly. They relate more or less to basic demands for human life: nutrition and water, protection against heat, coldness and enemies, possibilities for being mobile and for sexual reproduction.

Humans distinguish themselves from other creations through work and production as well as through possibilities of cultural symbolization. Therefore the spectrum of basic societal relationships to nature is broader than the set of biological functions of life directly based on instincts. To regulate the relation to nature is essential for the individual to survive as well as for social embeddedness and reproductivity. In this frame, work and production on the one side and sexuality and reproduction on the other play important roles: Their patterns of regulation influence those of other kinds of societal relationships to nature (e.g. for free time, recreation, sports, long distance mobility) and consequently especially gender and production ratios are effective for the development of a society (comp. Becker 2003).

Intersectional extensions

The 'equipment' with economical, cultural and social capital is the prerequisite for an individual to actively and organise her- or himself in a complex public space. This assumption implicitly already indicates inequalities, mainly caused of those dimensions which recently are considered as central categories for oppression, such as gender, class and race. Since the 1990 the exploration of the interdependencies of these categories increasingly moved into the centre of interest in gender, inequality and migration research. The general assumption is that categories like sex, gender, ethnic origin, class, age, physical condition determine identity and subjectivation. They interweave or 'intersect' with each other. On the other hand, identity develops in structures and conditions, which on a societal level are intersectional as well. So, in contrast to simply add the impacts of several patters of oppression the term 'intersectionality' means to acknowledge that the dimensions of inequality are interweaved and influence themselves alternately (comp. Degele/Winkler 2007).

Dimensions of intersectionality

The term intersectionality derives from American feminist discussion. They were initiated 30 years ago mainly through Kimberley Cranshaw, afroamerican woman of colour, feminist and lawyer who intensely worked together with women's' houses. Discussions about intersectionality actually are at their peak level. Intersectionality is taken as instrument for the analysis of social processes under explicit consideration of differences between social classes, racist violence, postcolonial hegemonic relations as well as precarious working conditions. Here within gender, age and physical condition play central roles. This already indicates that intersectional analysis works on the basis of dominance (*Herrschaft*) approaches. Following Harding (1991) and Degele/Winker (2007) intersectionality as multilevel analysis frame for hegemonic power relations comprises in an non-additive way three levels for a categorisation of difference: societal structures, constructions of identities and symbolic representations referring to ethnicity/race, class, gender and body (e.g. as to age, health, dis-/ability).

Intersectional reflection is based on a longer tradition within the feminist movement of the critical observation of the so-called global sisterhood between white and black women. It results out of the experience that within certain theories of sociology, analysis about

categories like race, class, sex and gender reached the limits of reductionist approaches. Especially gender and queer studies challenge and question these problems radically. The aim of the concept of intersectionality leads to a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis about the importance the different categories have for inequality and oppression. Although it mainly refers to the interdependencies between the categories gender, class and race, the categories sex, age, (dis)ability, religion and nationality are generally compatible to be integrated (comp. Degele/Winkler 2007). An intersectional view makes again class visible, e.g. in the discussions about education: Recently discourses about education mainly refer to the categories of gender and ethnicity. In fact, in observing social injustice gender and ethnic belonging both are strongly linked with class affiliation.

In summary, intersectional view and work offers several standards for analysis: Social axes alongside of gender, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and other categories are understood as results of socially constructed processes. Within intersectional work any kind of naturalizing, essentialist and stereotypic attribution is disclaimed. Moreover, intersectional work disclaims any forms of culturalising and stereotyping attributions. It therefore directed towards the minimization and cancellation of dominant structures.

A multilevel analysis frame for intersectionality
Intersectional research on inequality among others treats the question how different social categories like gender, social class, ethnicity, sex, nationality, (dis-)ability effect societal discrimination and privilege are. By doing so, the different categories are not analysed in parallel but as interwoven, intersecting with each other, which – according to the concrete context – influence each other.

Under this perspective the multilevel analysis approach of Degele and Winkler (2007) follows the attempt to make three levels of categories fruitful for substantiating the concept of intersectionality: (1) identity structures, (2) societal structures and (3) symbolic representations. Intersectional analysis in this context means to examine into which structures, including institutional structures and symbolic contexts social practices are embedded, how they create, modify and differentiate identities. Therefore the approach of intersectionality as multi-level analysis frame starts from the daily life activities of different

actors and relates concepts of identity with symbolic patters of interpretation as well as structural constraints. At the same time, on the level of identity this enables to ask for alternative possibilities and arrangements for engagement. This is with respect to the aims first, to better understand societal change and second to extract theoretical sustained connecting factors for political action.

Level of identity

Degele and Winkler define this level in an inductive way under the condition that constructions of identity aim at (a) the alleviation of insecurity in the personal position through exclusion of others and (b) the advance of security through coalitions and increasing care of oneself.

Level of societal structures

On the structural level Degele and Winkler decide on four categories – class, gender, race, body – with the assumption that those determine the basic structural ratios of dominace in capitalist societies. Along these categories inclusion and exclusion maintain the unequal distribution of resources.

Level of symbolic representations

The maintenance of an unequal distribution of resources through practices of inclusion and exclusion can be examined by an analysis of the symbolic representations behind. This gives the opportunity to extract hegemonic norms and stereotypes, which are daily reproduced by individuals in order to contribute to the own subjectivation as well as to support the existing conditions for power (*Macht*) and dominance (*Herrschaft*). Central in this case is the efficacy (*Wirkmaechtigkeit*) of discourses and constantly repeated and reproduced practices of language and communication.

Intervals and interspaces for participation, performance, learning and emancipation

The attempt to find new forms of alliances which support the breakup of categorical and stereotypical dualities needs the constructive acknowledgement of (a) the deep relation of the existence of human life with its ecological environment as existential resource and (b) of the intersecting factors which are responsible for identity building and society formation. New forms are urgently needed in order to solve societal conflicts such as wars, environmental catastrophes, increasing poverty and inequality. But they are difficult to find. In the core, new

alliances need the identification of new references (Bezogenheiten) in the sense of Hannah Arendts' *Zwischen*, which means in intervals and interspaces as public spaces for participation, personal and social performance, learning and emancipation. Only in these spaces *processes* of communication, understanding and negotiation become visible which form the basis for civil society's expression and engagement. All intervals and interspaces, in this sense, are spaces for negotiation between – semiotically spoken – protagonist (*Akteur*) and complement/taker (*Aktant*) (comp. Latour 1995, 2001). In the given context these are spaces between nature and culture, between institutions of the state and those of civil society, between people of different social origin and societal positions, between women and men, between experts and the so-called laypersons. In these spaces becomes obvious which normally is in the hidden: Societal relationships of humans to nature become routine, are produced and reproduced in daily-life practices and become relevant in time and space. They are confirmed and/or cancelled by communication.

In general, in daily life these processes mostly happen without much reflection and under pressure of time and coordination. Exactly because of this, it is often not visible and also overlaid by of structural constrains as well as time and decision conditions, that basically *all* and *every day* participate on the production and reproduction of societal relationships to nature. According to this, only limited responsibility can be assumed for this invisible kind of participation; decisions do not seem to be the own but determined through societal conditions. This is valid of public and well as private life (comp. Forschungsverbund Blockierter Wandel 2007).

Situated meanings of societal symbolisations

So, when in cases of catastrophes we talk about 'human failure', then because of the fact that routines, which are experienced in daily life as decision processes suddenly become visible while reflecting the course of event, but turn out not to be appropriate any longer.

Instead of this, in intervals and interspaces processes of negotiation may be identified, which exactly have the quality of situated adequacy: Here a research happens into direction of new solutions instead of familiar habits in the sense of having-done-this-since-ever. This process

is of strong importance for underlining the thesis that sustainable socio-ecologic development demands for a change in thinking and action of a lot of people.

The reunion and collaboration of actors in interspaces is problem-orientated. But in comparison to conventional strategies of problem solving this seem to be fractional, interwoven and particularly interlinked. This becomes obvious in the dynamic of communication and negotiation in those interspaces and determines their often astonishing creativity. Potential come into light which often are invisible: connection and solidarity, self-positioning, responsibility and interests, motivation, oppositions and idiosyncratic attitudes. In their relatively uncontrolled interconnectedness, therefore interspaces allow an integration of different assets of knowledge and social practices. Of course, these processes and neither free of discrepancies nor free of conflicts. But just because of this both hegemonic and non-hegemonic norms can be effective in those spaces and give the potential for

- the formation of new relations,
- a constructive argumentation of situated meanings of daily-life and societal relevant decisions,
- the discovery of a new understanding of participation and governance.

Coming back to the issue of water, under this perspective several aspects for analyzing the above mentioned blockades in water management become obvious: Firstly, the comprehension of private citizens solely as clients within the organisation of water services hinders the development of options for participation. Secondly, the daily use of the valuable common good water and the experience and knowledge gained out of it are treated in competition to professional knowledge and remains invisible in planning processes. As a consequence and thirdly, the perspective on the diversity of technical, organizational and personal planning option remains obstructed. On the other side, a water policy which is not solely orientated on a fictitious common property and on persuasion may come to innovative solutions through strategies of agreements and mutual compromises. A precondition for this is the connection to the situated knowledge and demands of experienced and engaged citizens (comp. Forschungsverbund Blockierter Wandel 2007).

Reading principles for intervals in hegemonic arrangements

Regions of the world are entities of different spaces (nature, society, economy). This demands far more than the bare addition of social, ecological, economic, cultural and political goals from one culture to another and vice versa. A truly integrative and interconnected perspective would entail, first of all, re-thinking the goals of environmental and social policies in a new way and to question which conceptions of a »good life« are promoted by the inhabitants of a specific region. Combining the ecological demands of strong sustainability (see above under 'The paradigm of sustainability') with an intersectional perspective in the performance of political decision making processes, we may, at the very beginning assume that the performance of water infrastructure, the specific demands of rural and urban households have to be the starting point to negotiate differentiated infrastructure models. Citizens regenerate and differentiate knowledge and competency for societal issues out of their activities in the reproductive interdependencies of their daily life experiences. This knowledge is highly relevant and useful for participation in supply infrastructure because it contributes embedded, culturally »situated« knowledge and expertise in societal services (Behrendt/Knothe 2005). This aspect is closely linked with the difficult aspect of how to handle the unknown and unpredictable in a constructive goal-orientated negotiation process (Jiggins 2002).

Strong sustainability under socio-ecologic perspective on the one hand would allow for uncertainty of future preferences of the user system. On the other hand flexibility for differentiated technologies to withdraw and produce freshwater as well as for the collection and treatment of waste water would acknowledge the multifunctional character and demands on regeneration of ecological systems. To establish regulatory terms in order to deal with the unpredictable means to consider precaution as well as and options for choice for future generations. Because of the consequent orientation on nature capital as basis for human existence strong sustainability explicitly puts factors into the foreground, which favour those norms and values, which connect humans with the direct experience and awareness of nature, landscape and natural goods. Reading strong sustainability under intersectional perspectives, environmental regulation under conditions of multi-level governance structures needs to acknowledge hegemonic relations between the professional administrative and economic institutions and engaged actors and groups within civil society.

This means to

a) open spaces for developing sensitivity towards societal processes which create identity and towards a comprehension of the relation between the 'inner' and the 'outer' environment,

b) to discuss and transform conditions which influence the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of societal groups within decision making processes,

c) to examine the often unequal relationship between different categories of knowledge (professional – daily-life, theory – practice) and

d) to create certain spaces in order to sensitise for immanent processes of 'othering' and to make categorizations of 'the other' visible and therefore accessible for discussion and transformation.

Outlook: Contextual relations in natural resources management

Probably a lot of people are familiar with changing cultural systems, surroundings and rationalities for certain occasions, e.g. in the case of being a tourist, having a collegial exchange on conferences or workshops or going to formation or further training activities. These occasions all have in common that the stay in the new systems is carried and safeguarded by the ordered, constant and supportive infrastructure at home. There is the family, the friends, are the opportunities (hopefully) to guarantee the monetary basis of living. As a visitor a person can decide in a way how deep he or she would like to give him- or herself into the new scene. The decision remains open to leave insecurity and return into a certain familiar terrain of safety or at least into a known situation of unsureness and insecurity.

In the moment the person decides or is forced to leave the own system, e.g. by migration due to poverty or oppression in order to life in a new surrounding, region, country, continent and culture, this situation changes completely. Now the entire personal existence has to be sustained in a surrounding of relationship, culture habits, spiritual rites, forms of communication and attitudes towards life, which are new in that kind that those are unknown in mind and not embedded in the personal psycho-physical constitution. Activities in public and private spheres regards the search for contact and relation, the establishment of work cooperation, the level of taking over social responsibility as well as the capability to save the

own basic demands of living suddenly become extremely sensitive fields where everybody reacts to in her or his very personal way of asking her-and himself critical questions and drawing conclusions of concrete experiences. New experiences are more or less unconscious valued against the biographically embedded and learned comprehension of e.g. respect and honesty as well as the sensation of and strategies to deal with reliability, friendship and devotion to a passion. In this wide range feelings may occur on what is personally considered as constructive or offensive, as respect or disregard, powerfulness or abuse etc. They are closely connected with the capability to cope with feeling oneself to be in contact with others, lonely and/or disconnected within the new surroundings. Actual neuropsychological research underpins the sensitivity of living under uncertainty especially in being foreign in a society. Researchers found a strong correlation between migration and stress especially under social isolated and unsecured constraints which result in to some extend severe mental disorders and psychological illness (comp. Cantor-Graae, E., Selten, J.-P. 2005; González, H. M., Haan, M. N., Hinton, L. 2001; Karlsen, S., Nazroo, J. Y. 2002; Saraiva Leão, T. et al.2006; Van Os, J. 2003). In summary, in contact with a new societal organization of life personal *and* societal potentials and limits become obvious in order to be able to react to uncertainty with mutual curiosity and passion to explore or with blockades and fear to act.

Care, responsibility and precaution

'Care', 'responsibility' and 'precaution' are considered to be elements to connect productive and reproductive spheres, conservation *and* formation in the production of goods and services in the formation of social systems (Knothe 2007, Behrendt/Knothe 2005). They are intersectional under socio-cultural, ethnical and historical perspectives and related to space. Spatial identities, evolved during various biographical and societal histories accompanied by specific practices of their constitutions, are both: material and discursive (Massey 2004). Assuming that personal and cultural identity is bound with place, it not only matters, how both 'place' and 'identity' are conceptualized internally but also how this conceptualization is legitimized externally and how these identities and the social geography of their relations can be connected up with the performance of political responsibility and legitimacy.

Society has to maintain spaces in order to deal with differences, existential fear, which may be one reason for blaming the 'others' as well as hidden categorizations of class, ethnicity,

gender etc. as reasons for social discrimination. This may demand for a kind of political legitimacy which is not an empirical quantity that can be measured by quantitative tools. In contrary, legitimacy needs to reside "in the reservoir of meanings, arguments and symbols to which political power can reasonably resort in order to justify its existence and behaviour." (Cerutti 2008:13) This special kind of 'substantial legitimacy' reconciles both: people staying united as basis for a shared well-being as well as finding a valid common image of collective life. On the basis of both a new polity can reach the critical point of acceptance (comp. ibid.). This implicates the need for options to form *and* to try out certain – and during life time also changing – political identities or self-identification of the people involved under conditions of insecurity and unpredictability.

Acknowledgement of situated knowledge from daily-life practice

Negotiation processes are successful under the condition of the acknowledgement that new results of participation and governance emerge out of insecure and performative action with relational intermediary results in fluent processes. This needs space for various knowledge practices, repetitions and step-by-step approach towards decisions, creativity, combination and inventive solutions. Daily-life social practices of the know-how, the space and the comprehension of those realities which are created by situated action. In this sense, daily-life practices offer all potentials for placement and embodiment of knowledge and experience instead of demand for insights, which are not possible to be located and therefore without responsibility (comp. Haraway 1995). These kinds of negotiations enable the upgrading of knowledge assets, which are attained and stored in life practice through practical, intuitive, incorporated biographical knowledge.

Enabling and acknowledging experimental spaces

Therefore, political practice should allow for spaces for action for participants, actors, partners and projects in order to leave their safe positions and to enter an open discussion of conflict. They need a situation, in which participants are able to reflect on their own situated character and contextualized status of an observer against one-sided models of explanation. In that, chances may occur for a new quality of situated adequateness in which for example chances for new unexpected coalitions can be identified, picked up and put into practice.

Institutional acknowledgement and stabilization of already existing experimental spaces for negotiation through a policy, which stabilized continuous exchange, is needed.

Alliances of patient partners

These kinds of interspaces for sustainable development need new context conditions. These may be kinds of problem-orientated alliances which collect diverse information and accompanies experimental phases. It builds upon an empathic basis of patient and mutual comprehension of different interests and possibilities for problem solving, (un)realistic alternatives and various possibilities of interpretation of potential side effects and interplays. Patience and prudence become essential competencies of continuous accompaniment. This creates actors constellations, in which results are assured and gained experienced knowledge is effectively stabilized.

Negotiation needs time

Plurality in negotiations need time and therefore a relief of pressure for action. Time is an elementary precondition in order to receive insight in complex processes, to develop unprejudiced and well-founded problem solutions far from urgencies, time pressure and withdrawal to the pretended common welfare. Instancy and pressure in this context often are instruments of hegemonic practices of power. They hinder the reflection of routines and the discussion about inherent necessities and assumed matters of courses.

Institutions which support reflection and bear insecurity

Prudence in dealing with negotiating processes means for official administration to develop sensitivity for differentiated demands as well as for the proactive engagement of citizens. The diversity of activities in interspaces leads to the fact that political institutions have to search and acknowledge the invisible, to wait for the unexpected and to value the devalued. A task of administrative institutions has to be to create possibilities for actors to reflect their experiences and knowledge and connect with each other. Institutions need to bear the unexpected which develops out of the situation that decisions may augment the number of possible futures and future options (comp. Kropp 2002)

Participation is day-to-day and open-ended

Being able to cope with the unexpected on institutional and civil society level the precondition to demystify participation. It empowers and enables to (fore)see actions and competencies beyond not yet agreed standards. This means the principal acknowledgement of the inevitability of not-knowing and insecurity with two consequences: By doing so, the institutional hegemony of experts and strict administrative and technocratic standpoints are limited. This may leads to democratization and a processing of knowledge inputs in necessary learning processes, which sensitise for a plurality of perspectives and alternatives.

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