Regulating Environmental Action of Non-Governmental Actors: The Impact of Communication Support Programmes in Germany

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Since the end of the 80s, there has been a growing debate on the limits of regulating environmental behaviour in the Federal Republic of Germany. Although some success in developing environmental awareness by using information campaigns and education measures is well documented and widely known, these environmental attitudes have only poor influence on human behaviour.[207] All in all, the outcome of environmental information policy has been recognised as at least non satisfactory (see for example the disillusioning balance of environmental education in Lehmann 1999).

On the other end, traditional policy measures to regulate human behaviour are more and more criticised for not being adequate. Regulatory measures as laws needed for keeping expensive control instruments and the difficult environmental legislation in Germany already tend to be over-regulated. While using economic instruments, free-rider effects are unavoidable and the European free market sets strong barriers to any kind of subvention in the associated nation states. Finally, the international discussion on sustainable development and new participative forms of policies is another source of pressure on nation states interests in regulating environmental action of non-governmental actors.

To sum it up: in the last two decades "the set of techniques by which governmental authorities wield their power in attempting to affect society—in terms of values and beliefs, action and organisation—in such a way as to improve, or to prevent the deterioration of, the quality of the natural environment" (to use the definition for environmental policy instruments of Per Mickwitz 2000, 4) has been seen very critically with regard to its impact on human behaviour and its outcome for environmental protection. However, none of the organisations or groups involved in environmental policy have *principally* demanded the retreat of national authorities from environmental policy. In opposite to other policy fields in Germany, there still seems to be a broad majority ranging from ecological citizens action groups to multinational enterprises addressing environmental policy and especially the regulation of people's environmental behaviour primarily as a target for the nation state.

More fundamental criticisms of the possibilities of national governments to influence human behaviour came from globalisation theory and their supporters. In these scientific discussions, a trend of globalisation with widespread effects on the political system, the nation state, and its policy measures is supposed (e.g. Albrow 1996, Beck 1998, Zürn 1998). To summarise these discussions in a very rough way: caused by the rise of global institutions and their increasing influences, nation states lose their power in regulating its people's action by using any kind of policy instruments ("de-nationalisation"). National political decisions are more and more a result of self-regulation by (global oriented) non-state actors while the nation state and its institutions only keep the position of being some kind of mediator to balance opposite interests. Compared to the administrative institutions and bureaucracy of the nation state, these non-governmental actors are more flexible, closer to market forces and directly oriented to the needs of its target groups. Confronted with strong global competitions, they are "learning organisations" and adapt much earlier and faster to new societal developments both on the global as on the national or local level (for Beck "reflexive modernisation" is the motor of globalisation, see Beck, Giddens and Lash 1997). Within the forming "world society", individuals are no longer subjects of a nation state, but individualised participants whose needs have to be taken seriously by the non-state actors because of their power to organise in (global) protest associations or their role as consumers of non-state actors' products and services.

Three assumptions derived from globalisation theory should serve as research questions for this article: First, the role of (national) governments should change from active steering of the nation led by political ideologies to a passive reaction to general societal trends by moderating the interests of different

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[207] In the 90s, the longstanding scientific debate on the "gap" between attitudes and behavior achieved widespread public attention within the "ecological community" in Germany and several studies of this topic have been published. For an overview see Diekmann and Preissendörfer 2001, Huber 2001, Preissendörfer 1999, de Haan and Kuckartz 1996. Less scientifically but more politically relevant is Sachverständigenrat 1994.

pressure groups. Moreover, these national trends are only expressions of global trends, represented by transnational non-governmental organisations. Secondly, caused by market competition these collective actors are able to overcome the "bureaucratic sclerosis" associated with governmental administrations and develop themselves into "learning organisations" with improved management systems for a quick adaptation to various demands from their surroundings. And finally, individuals should be treated as serious participants (mostly as "customers") by these organisations. The common administrative understanding of citizens as "state subjects" who primarily have the duty to obey governmental rules and who have to be forced to do so, should be overcome.

Of course, these short formulations are a too reduced representation of globalisation theory and nobody really expects to find the described developments in this extreme form today. However, a systematic empirical test of globalisation theory is not the target of this article. Instead of this, the main idea followed here is: if such fundamental changes have already been started, some results must be made visible by analysing nation states policy and the action of central non-governmental actors. Environmental policy with its explicitly formulated global tasks and well-developed national institutionalisation serves as a good case for research studies: if there are any changes of the supposed direction, its appearance seems to be most likely in this policy field.

The empirical basis for the following statements are two huge environmental policy programmes in Germany, which include a bunch of main non-governmental actors and some of the central nation state institutions which are co-operating with them on the federal level of the political system (for description of these programmes see below). The cause for scientific investigation was an ex-post evaluation of the sustainability of programme impacts on behalf of the stakeholder organisations. The results of these evaluation studies have already been published (Meyer, Jacoby and Stockmann 2000, Meyer and Jacoby 2001, Stockmann et al. 2001, Urbahn and Gaus 2001). This article is the first attempt to use this material for other than the original analytical interests.

For analysing the effects of globalisation on national environmental policy, Germany is for several reasons a very interesting case. Firstly, caused by the unification with the former GDR at the beginning of the 90s, there had been fundamental and in global context unprecedential changes of the nation state and its institutions. The breakdown of the socialist regime in East Germany left a "political vacuum", filled by a

boom of "round tables" talking about political future. Not only the socialist socialisation with its emphasis on equality, but also these basic democratic institutions and negotiations within the short historical period of "peaceful revolution" are an important heritage for the united Germany. Furthermore, because of this historical breakpoint, political reforms had been set on the agenda and gave Germany the chance for a better adaptation of its political system to the challenges of globalisation.

Secondly, the unification of both German states was also a strong input for environmental policy. By analysing the ecological situation in East Germany, experts came to dramatic results and called for making every effort to improve environmental quality. Although this call was not only directed to the nation state, mainly governmental organisations invested an enormous amount of money for environmental protection and reconstruction.[208] Environmental policy in East Germany achieved impressive successes within a very short period of time, especially when compared with the even higher economic subsidies to support the development of market economy. However, this was a kind of Pyrrhic victory: environmental topics lost more and more public interest and, moreover, environmental regulatory measures are blamed for being responsible for the ongoing economic decline and the missing growth rates in East Germany. Because of this historical background, during the last decade high pressure lasted on national environmental policy, which has to be taken into account while analysing national policy programmes and its instruments.

Certainly, Germany is a very special case and therefore research results are not easily transferable. This is not only true because of the reported political development in the last years. Another very important point is the special structure of the political system, which again was relevant for the used way to unify both former German states. Contrary to other European political systems (e.g. France, Italy or Spain) and in many ways more comparable to the political system of the United States, Germany is a federal republic consisting of former 11 and now 16 "Bundesländer" with well-defined political rights and duties. On regional level, districts and local authorities likewise have special rights for autonomous regula-

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[208] As the Federal Environmental Ministry reported, about 20 bn. Euro had been supplied by national government organizations during the first four years after unification. Since 1995 almost 3.5 bn. Euro annually were intended for environmental tasks in East Germany. This money was supplemented by public investments from the European Union and the Bundesländer. For further information, see Hillenbrand 1996 and Hirche 1998.

tions within their territories. The possibilities of national policy are therefore strongly restricted by laws and controlled by several political institutions.

On the other hand, the formation of the European Union and the development of an integrated European political system are reducing the possibilities of governmental decisions for the member states. Although the influence of national governments on the EU is still significant, their freedom of action in their own territories is steadily more limited by the newly built and continuously improved transnational institutions. In addition to the above mentioned weakness of national government within the political system, Germany's national political leaders have, compared to most states in the world, less possibilities for realising their own political targets. Some institutionalised forms of participative regulation systems, including national government and several non-governmental organisations, can already be found in Germany, for example the "dual system" of vocational training or the autonomous wage negations ("Tarifautonomie"), which include both employer and employee associations. Furthermore, comparable institutions within environmental policy arise.[209]

To sum it up, Germany might be predestined for de-nationalisation processes and a transfer of political power to self-regulating non-governmental actors, like it has been described by globalisation theory.

The main target of this article is to show for one example of environmental policy, whether national states are still able to produce some impact by running support programmes or not. The main questions are:

- Who is the initiator of new ideas, developments or trends—nation state or non-governmental organisations? Are those ideas, developments or trends mainly imported from transnational level or own innovations?

- Are there any trends to establish autonomous networks, which already have replaced (or probably will be able to do it in future) state's regulation by some kind of self-regulation? To which extent are these networks a threat to regulative power of national government?

- And finally, how strong are the connections to transnational organisations and institutions? To which degree are non-governmental organisa-

tions integrated into transnational communication networks and use them for transferring new ideas to the national area?

Of course, these questions will not be answered perfectly. There are some limitations not only for reasons of size of and time for this publication but also for material at hand and the state of analysis already achieved. First, the collected information and the basic structure of the two evaluated programmes will be outlined. Certain respect will be given to the possibilities and limits to reach the analysis goals. Then, some results of this analysis will be presented 3 and will be interpreted with respect to the above mentioned thesis derived from globalisation theory. Finally, some conclusions about the impact of globalisation on national government will be achieved by carefully generalising the results of this first investigation on the impact of environmental.

Database

Common starting point of both evaluated programmes was the above mentioned criticism of the impact of information campaigns and education measures for changing environmental behaviour. The poor correlation between environmental attitudes and behaviour was recognised and new ways of improved measuring had been reconsidered. One well-recognised and quite successful solution was the A.U.G.E. Project to implement environmental consultancy for private households within several stakeholder organisations (for history of environmental consultancy, see Adelmann 1997 and Gaus 2001; especially on the A.U.G.E. Project, see Gege 1988). In public discussions, this has to be seen as a starting signal for the diffusion of environmental consultancy, although some forms of technical consultancy for environmental problems already existed for years.

In most cases, state organisations (not only but particular national agencies) supported this development by financing consultancy projects. The evaluated programme of the Federal Environment Ministry (BMU) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) was one of the most important sources for supporting environmental consulting projects in the 90s. Since 1989 more than 100 projects were financed by BMU, scientifically accompanied by UBA and run by almost the same number of federal associations. Approximately 0.9 Mio. Euro have been annually invested for a great variety of projects reaching from simply financing new editions of still existing brochures to the intensive care for very innovative large-scale pilot projects or national competitions with big

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[209] One example is the attempt to implement a position for coordinating environmental affairs to include the interests of some important environmental associations within the "Deutsche Institut für Normung" (German Institute for Standardization).

media attention. Similar differences can be found by looking at the project-carrying organisations: very small, recently founded and highly specialised associations were supported as well as huge and financially strong federal organisations with long tradition. Some of the most important environmental NGOs e.g. NABU or BUND were included just as powerful economic alliances like the building trade co-operation, professional organisations like the architects co-operation or huge public organisations like the German districts association or the federal co-operation of the student administrations (for a complete list of projects and project-carrying institutions, see Meyer, Jacoby and Stockmann 2000).

The concept of environmental consulting has been extensively interpreted to include such a broad variety of projects within the frame of this programme. In a way, it is preferable to speak, more generally, of environmental communication instead of environmental consulting, which is tied together with some determining aspects to justify the hope of improving environmental behaviour. Due to a lack of an appropriate definition, we suggested the following understanding: environmental consultancy is a transfer of environmental information, which is directly oriented towards concrete problems and needs of the target group. The goal of this information transfer from an advice centre to a well-defined group of persons or organisations is to enable them to improve their environmental activities. Contrary to other forms of environmental communication like information campaigns or educational measures which strive for transferring knowledge, environmental consultancy is distinguished by putting the needs of those who are seeking advice into the focus of its work (see the German version of this definition in Stockmann et al. 2001, 36). Therefore, need and action orientation are the reasons why environmental consulting should achieve better results by improving ecological-oriented behaviour patterns.

By supporting such projects, national government organisations hope to reach societal groups which they could not attain by their own information campaigns. Moreover, they want to widen and specialise the offer of environmental information with a strong orientation on transferability to action. To cooperate with federal associations was some kind of symbiosis: while the Federal Environmental Agency (UBA) is able to supply ecological know-how, nation-wide operating co-operations have knowledge of environmental problems and needs of their members. Furthermore, federal associations have frequently used direct communication channels to reach these target groups. The political decision for supporting such

projects was by no means the result of external pressure or a transfer from transnational organisations. On the other hand, it is likewise not the logical deduction from a long-lasting environmental policy programme or strategy. Instead, the idea was born in a small department of the UBA, then internally promoted and finally presented to the ministry for decision. Of course, the general framework of environmental discussion supported this process.

To sum it up, national government organisation implemented a new form of environmental policy instrument which slightly expands the three main types regulation, economic instruments and information (e.g. OECD 1994, Verdung 1998, Mickwitz 2000). In a way, the support of environmental consultancy projects as some kind of indirect regulation combines all three types: by using economic instruments, national government organisations try to spread information to target groups which help them to follow state regulations and to avoid negative sanctioning. This innovative policy is unique for Germany and by no means a transfer from transnational level. The implementation of the programme is furthermore not a result of political demands or negotiations with national-oriented NGOs. It is mainly an outcome of everyday work and experience within a national agency.

The second evaluated programme is very special and different from the described one. Realised from 1991 to 1996, this programme is a direct result of the pressure on environmental policy which comes from the German unification. With respect to the environmental reconstruction task in East Germany, the ministry of finance used the proceeds of selling a state-owned enterprise to build a public foundation for supporting environmental projects not only but especially in the East. Even before the institutional formation of this German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) was finished, it approved the still most expensive single programme the foundation launched until today (in total approximately 26 Mio. Euro). Initiators of this programme were the federal organisations of both chambers of trade and commerce (DIHT and ZDH), which wanted to expand a pilot project (financed by BMU and UBA) to East Germany. The original programme contained two different parts: an institutional support for the durable implementation of a consulting infrastructure within the chambers of commerce and a so-called "orientation consulting program" which uses this infrastructure to act as a broker for bringing together small and medium sized enterprises and commercial environmental consulting by partly financing these consultations. The targets of this programme were—

from the view of the chambers—to help East Ger-man enterprises to reduce uncertainty about envi-ronmental laws and to calculate the costs for a suc-cessful adaptation to these regulations.

By planning the programme, the foundation added comparable components for other target groups (farms, local authorities and factory committee mem-bers), including the German Institute for Urbanistic (Difu), the Chamber of Agriculture in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Schleswig-Holstein (LMS), the Ger-man Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) and five single trade unions (HBV, IG Bau, IG CPK, NGG and ÖTV), as project-carrying organisations. While LMS and the unions were only participators of an institutional support, there also had been a possibility for local authorities to get subventioned consultations from private advisers arranged by Difu. Contrary to all other project-carrying organisations, Difu was not obligated to keep the implemented institutions for environmental consulting within their own structure after the end of the project (for further information, see Stockmann et al. 2001). The reasons for enlarge-ment of the programme were mainly of political nature: the DBU wanted to avoid political discussions about preferring some societal groups and tried to reach as many groups (and achieve environmental impacts) as possible. Because the foundation did not have any guidelines or experience at this time, politi-cal judgements like this had been of great importance.

While for the first programme the nation state was the initiator, for the second programme NGOs (the chambers) played the active part. Although the DBU is not a governmental organisation, it did not have many opportunities for action this time and was highly responsible (much more than today) to the political will of national government. Because the foundation is formally independent of nation state, this influence was indirect and informal—its effect on programme formulation hardly is to judge. One common aspect of both programmes is the support of environmental consultancy (with almost the same targets of DBU and BMU/UBA) and the implemen-tation of an appropriate infrastructure within federal associations.[210] To conclude this description of both support programmes in view of globalisation assump-tion, it is first to recognise that transnational organisa-tions did not play any role. Both programmes and

their basic ideas are exclusively developed in national context. Innovative ideas came both from NGOs and national governmental agencies. Although one had been the initiator, it was mainly a joint affair with a dialog oriented co-operation. As a first result, the strong and intensively used communication channels between NGOs and national government has to be recorded here. Similar results were found by analysing the planning process of each project within both programmes. Of course, there are some differences in intensity and frequency of contact, but if there is some interest in environmental topics, national gov-ernment is the first address for federal associations to talk to—not transnational or other non-governmental organisations.[211]

But before presenting some further results, it is im-portant to give a short overview on data sources and their limitations. Principally, three different kind of data collection methods had been used within evalua-tions: analysis of project and programme documents and records, in-depth-interviews of people, who had been involved in project work and representative standardised questionnaires for samples of target and control groups (for overview on the database see Table 1; an English description of the evaluation concept can be found in Stockmann 1997).[212]

However, in a more common sense the chosen ex-amples are able to represent these aspects by showing the great variety of different kinds of projects, asso-ciations and support programmes in Germany. One of the great advantages of the material is its com-pleteness. Because of the evaluation targets, it was possible to get a much deeper insight of project and organisations performances. For example, there had been only one refusal to participate in this study—with solely scientific interests, most associations will probably not be willing to do in-depth interviews at that length and to give researchers such freedom to look at its works.

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[210] Although the DBU-Program was limited to East Germany, it was a clearly formulated target of the Foundation to support an expansion of environmental consultancy infrastructure to West Germany. With the exception of Difu and LMS, all other project-carrying organizations tried to do so in a more or less successful way. And with the exception of LMS, all organiza-tions are nation-wide oriented and not limited to East Ger-many or other territorial parts.

[211] If there had been any co-operation projects with participation of several associations, this happened almost in every case be-cause of initiatives by the stakeholders. Both BMU/UBA and DBU wanted to build up continuous networks within different associations, but they succeeded only in a few cases (mainly small environmentally oriented organizations). Co-operations between opposing associations (e.g. employers and employees in the DBU-Programme) failed besides some singular excep-tions depending on personal contact of the persons involved.

[212] While in DBU programme, evaluation included all projects and involved organisations, a selection had to be made for BMU/UBA programme. This was a systematic selection by members of the evaluation team and UBA staff, preferring bigger and more important projects. In a statistical sense, nei-ther projects nor associations in investigation are representa-tive for the programme. The use of inferential statistics or generalisations to the origin population of associations, envi-ronmental consulting projects or public support programmes are not possible because of sampling procedure.

Methods	BMU/UBA-Program	DBU-Program
Evaluation period	1999-2000	1998-2001
Sampling Procedure (projects/organisations)	purposive sampling	none
Sampling size (projects)	32	5
Involved project-carrying organisations	27	10
Analysis of records, files and documents	complete	complete
Number of in-depth interviews	60	80
Representative interviews with members of target group (featuring control group)	none	1.425
Type of standardised data collection	none	telephone interviews

Table 1: Database of Evaluation Research

Another limitation for analysis of the topic in focus here is the fact that data has been collected for a totally different purpose and therefore there is some information missing. For example, central point of interest had been the projects and not the practice of associations. In some cases there is only rare material on general environmental communication praxis of the organisations available. Therefore, one should be careful especially when doing quantitative interpretations. The following statements on findings are mostly interpretative, representing above all researchers impressions. No doubt, this article has an explorative character and further systematic research is needed.

Otherwise, these problems are very common for any kind of secondary analysis and they are no reason to omit them. Macropolitical assumptions like they have been done by globalisation theory need micropolitical foundations. Applied evaluation research is able to give deeper insights into actors interrelations and the causal effects on policy impacts. Besides the need for further development of scientific quality and for guaranteeing some minimum standards, political research should recognise these results and use them for progress of theories (for an actual balance of environmental evaluation in Austria and Germany, see Meyer and Martinuzzi 2000; for USA, see Rich 1998). It is one target of this article to show the usability of such kind of re-analysing evaluation findings.

Evaluation results

For our evaluation concept, the differentiation between internal and external sustainability of impacts is very important (Stockmann 1997, 76ff.). Internal sustainability refers to those structures and institutional regulations implemented during the life of a project and to "what is left behind" of this project infrastructure after the official project end. External sustainability focuses on the dynamic aspect of project ("what is set in motion") and questions for the on-going performances and diffusion of its services.

With respect to the research questions of this article, the existence of durable networks (and their correlation with the supported projects) is of prior interest. Are there any internal structures for environmental communication, are they a result of supported projects and are they able to survive without national governmental support? Moreover, are there any management instruments implemented which could be used for a professional learning process of the organisation? And finally, in which directions innovative information flows and who is involved in internal communication networks—these questions have to be asked with special request to transnational cooperation (are new ideas coming from transnational, national or regional level).

By laying the focus on external dynamics, again the inclusion in communication networks is of central meaning (as one important requirement for successful diffusion of information, see Meyer 2000). For whom environmental communication offers were made and are they directed to regional, national or transnational arena? Are international networks with other than the own clientele and association structure included of any importance for this offer? Are they the motor for developing new ideas or are international levels reached by diffusion processes?

Figure 1 puts together some central findings on the internal environmental communication structures within federal associations and the impact of national governmental support programmes on them. First, it is to mention that 75% of the 37 investigated NGOs have still some kind of internal environmental communication structure (e.g. specialised staff, regular meetings or reports, in-service training courses, continuous public relations work on ecological topics etc.). Especially projects with the explicit target to build up durable internal infrastructure or networks had been very successful. In 66% of organisations with an existing internal environmental communication infrastructure, this was a direct result of supported projects. Mostly, the construction of such a structure had not been possible or would have re-

quired much more time without states support. Especially for smaller environmental associations with low financial budget, the sponsored manpower was the most important factor for institutionalisation. Compared with more powerful organisations, which are able (and because of self-interest they do so) to care for this structure continuously, sustainability of internal infrastructure is only possible for them by acquiring new grants—which in almost every case come from (national) state organisations. Therefore, nearly in half of all organisations, the environmental communication infrastructure could not survive without support from the nation state. In conclusion, the existing environmental communication structure within Federal association is mainly a result of nation state activities and not an autonomous development,

build up own communication structures. Besides some smaller organisations, which are able to manage a direct personal dialog between staff and members, all associations already had communication networks before project begin. In most cases, these networks include international contacts, too.

With respect to external networks, connecting various associations or interest groups, the conclusion is different: now nation state initiative is irreplaceable. Compared to internal networks external ones are rather seldom and mostly arise because of nation states interests (sometimes connected with the possibility to get grants or any other kind of support). Of course, there are some weak ties to comparable associations working within the same policy arena, but with the exception of environmental organisations,
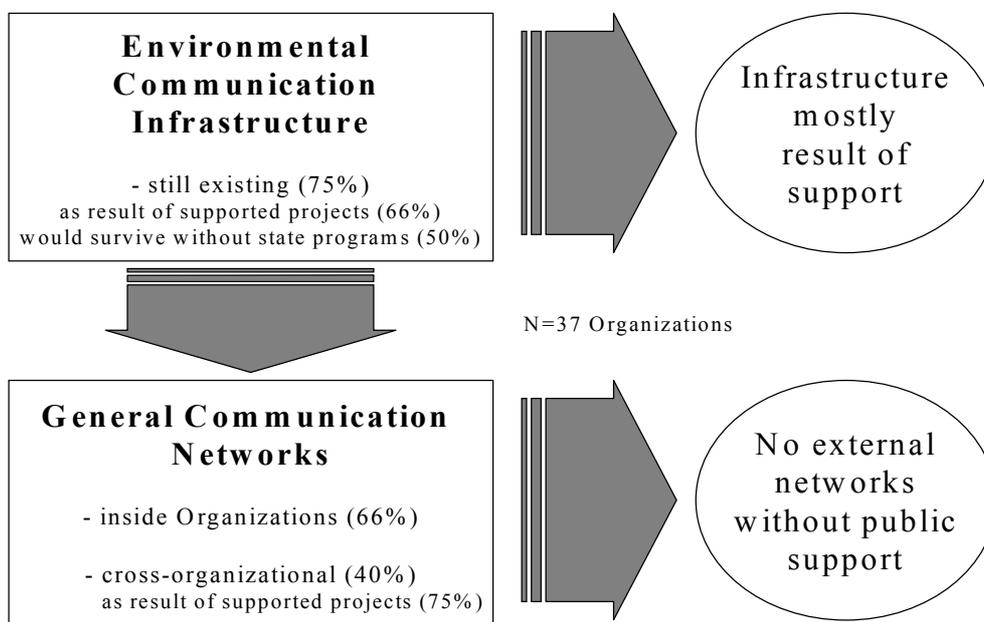

Figure 1: Internal Environmental Communication Structures

originally founded (and further maintained) because of important self-interests.

The results for internal communication networks (not limited to environmental topics), connecting different parts and levels of the investigated association with the target to transfer information on various topics (not only ecological ones), are almost the same. Again a huge majority of associations still has such a kind of networks, but on the contrary, these networks are seldom a result of supported projects. If an internal process to establish environmental communication infrastructure has been pushed, it seems to be continued by self-interest forces to include environmental topics in existing internal networks and not to

no trial to build up self-regulative networks can be found. Beyond their original targets and tasks, NGOs are conservative in the sense of avoiding innovations and in a way they act very autistic. To sum it up: without the initiative of nation state organisations and the possibility of public support, no networks between associations would exist. If such a network is established by self-interest, the reason is, in many cases, to opposite threatening nation state decisions. But this are short term co-operations instead of durable communication networks.

By mentioning this, it could not surprise that associations environmental communication offer as one part of external sustainable impacts of communication

structure is quite often exclusively directed to their own members (figure 2). Again the importance of public support programmes is obvious: only one third of the investigated organisations had some kind of environmental communication offer before project beginning (not surprising mostly environmental organisations). However, the most interesting result is

environmental topics at all with their international partners or other transnational institutions. It is remarkable that international communication about environmental topics is by far restricted to tourism trade organisations. Even ecologically oriented organisations do not communicate extensively on the transnational level. For conclusion, by running envi-
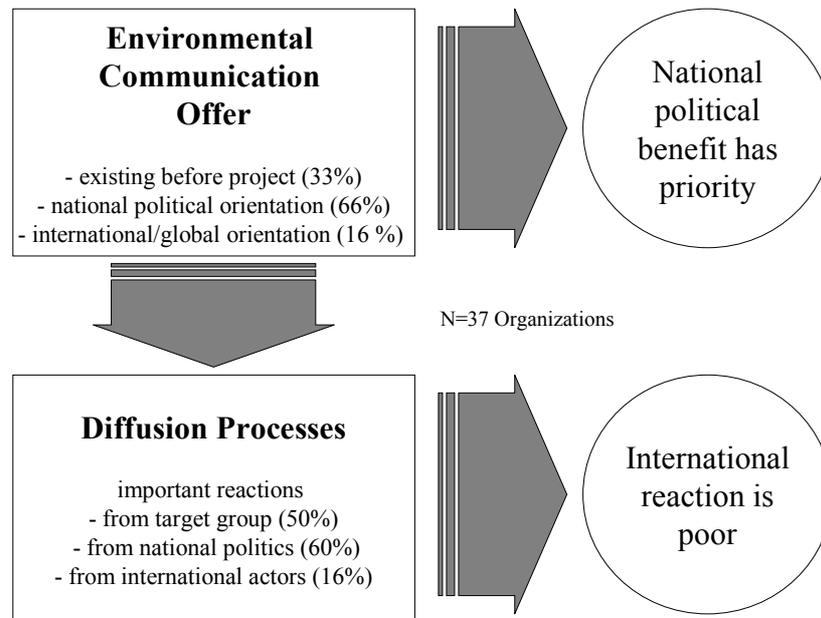
Environmental Communication Offer

- existing before project (33%)
- national political orientation (66%)
- international/global orientation (16 %)

National political benefit has priority

N=37 Organizations

Diffusion Processes

important reactions
- from target group (50%)
- from national politics (60%)
- from international actors (16%)

International reaction is poor

Figure 2: External Environmental Communication Processes

here that federal associations are badly informed about the impact of their project measures and in many cases they do not seem to be very interested in getting any information about them at all. Because of the federal structure of nearly every association, distributing information to members is mainly a task for regional parts, who are suspicious of any regulative demand from the national part of their own organisation. In most cases, the implementation of a national department within the association structure happened only for political reasons, especially for common public relation work and for lobbying nation state members and organisations. Therefore, federal organisation staff judges project success first by (national) public and political impacts, not by goal attainment and the usability of project services for their own members. International or global orientation is still the exception: although almost all associations are somehow in contact with associations from other (mostly European) countries (and to keep in touch with them is one task of national departments), only a small minority of associations have communicated about the supported projects, their outcomes, or

To conclude these findings with respect to the three research questions above:

ronmental communication projects national political benefit has priority for federal associations—even more than the usability of the offers for their own members.

None of the evaluated federal associations has a professional management system to systematically collect data for impact and feedback control. Only some smaller environmental organisations even try to get some information which can be used for improving their offer. However, there is no valid information existing on diffusion processes of project services. Occasionally reactions from target groups or national politics (mostly positive ones) were reported to the associations staff. Requests from other countries or transnational organisations were only reported from a very small group of associations. International reactions are just as seldom as the adoption of innovations from other countries or transnational organisations. Environmental communication policy of NGOs is strongly directed to national authorities and internal use, and their communication networks are constructed likewise.

(1) For environmental consultancy as a new and cooperative form of regulating environmental behav-

iour, both nation state and non governmental organisations brought in project ideas. Nation state organisations as well as NGOs are "trendsetters" and this is one reason, why the evaluated programmes were such a great success with respect to internal sustainability. In many cases, initiatives from nation state (especially from federal environmental agency) led to the first engagement for environmental topics of some associations. While most associations developed innovative ideas as well, trends from transnational level are rarely recognised within associations. Although the discussions about sustainable development had been taken into account, this had been more often a reaction to nation states initiatives.

(2) Federal associations, which developed a new infrastructure for environmental communication, included them into existing communication networks. With the exception of some very small associations, they all had well-developed internal communication structures long before project start. If there are any efforts made for building up or to improve communication networks including other associations, these activities are always pushed by nation state. Although there do exist some weak ties to organisations from other countries, they are rarely used for developing new and autonomous ideas for environmental communication. Associations behaviour is oriented to adapt to state's regulation and there are yet no trials to change this.

(3) On one hand, nation state and its regulation system is of highest importance to federal associations, while activities from transnational organisations and institutions had only been perceived by a small minority. On the other hand, new ideas and innovations are seldom diffused on an international level. Transnational communication networks of NGOs are still very weak and no change had been recognised for the last 10 years. National departments of federal associations are strongly aligned with nation state and its agencies. Even the EU is, up to now, only of secondary interest.

Conclusion

As mentioned before, it is not easy to generalise the findings of our evaluation studies on environmental communication support programmes in Germany because of the peculiarity of this case. Nevertheless, in this section some general conclusions will be presented and should more be seen as thesis for further research than as final results. Focus will be set on the differences of governmental and non-governmental organisations with respect to their contribution for environmental policy. Especially some reasons, why

the three assumptions derived from globalisation theory failed will be put up for discussion.

Nation state and its institutions are often criticised for being inflexible and equipped with an overblown bureaucracy. However, the impact of this public criticisms of governmental organisations is frequently underestimated by most people. There are several efforts made to modernise state organisations by "new public management" improving customer orientation and public-friendliness. Our example proved governmental organisations (Federal Environmental Ministry and Federal Environmental Agency) to be able to develop policy innovations and to achieve satisfactory impacts by using support programmes. There are also some attempts to introduce management instruments like monitoring and evaluation to get feedback's for further improvement of policy. Of course, nowadays state bureaucracy needs too much time to change and to adapt to new societal developments—but they are aware of this problem and they are trying to enhance services step by step.

While nation states and its institutions seems to be "slowly learning" organisations, it is difficult to judge about non-governmental organisations in general. However, contrary to nation states, the organisational performance of NGOs seldom is publicly discussed. If there is any criticism of management practice, it normally comes from members or organisation parts. Federal associations in Germany usually have strong regional sub-organisations and only a weakly equipped national department, which tasks are largely reduced to public relations work and lobbying. They often do not have the capacity to develop new ideas or policies.

Furthermore, membership control instead of public control leads to strong restrictions when expanding the tasks of national departments of federal associations. While regional sub-organisations are aware that national departments do not exceed their authorities, members ask, whether resources are spent for their interests or not. Therefore, associations often act as egoistic actors, trying to enforce their own goals and do not mention public interest at all. If they co-operate, they do it for their own targets and not for community. In fact, this is not to criticise—but because of this lack of public control, NGOs are not able to build up and continually care for networks which could replace state organisations.

Compared with governmental organisations, NGOs are much faster in acting but they are less interested in continuously working on topics, which they assume not to be of high priority for their members. However, national departments only notice the needs

and problems of their members if they report it to the regional part of the association and this sub-organisation itself informs the national department. There is no systematic surveying of needs nor any impact monitoring of the services offered to the members or some kind of professional project management. Therefore, it is hard to argue that associations are "learning organisations" and have advantages compared with governmental organisations for these specific points.

Within federal associations in Germany, the regional sub-organisations are the leading parts. National departments are strongly directed to the nation state and its institutions. There are well-developed formal and informal communication channels to national government, agencies, single politicians, and organisation staff. After the formation of a common opinion within the association, it is the target of the national department to transfer this opinion to national policy. Because of personal contact and communication networks, there are several possibilities for co-operation and innovation transfer between national governmental organisations and federal associations.

Although international discussions sometimes will find entry into this opinion-leading process, there are no communication networks, which are *regularly* able to bring in or to spread new ideas from or to other countries. Again governmental organisations and their longstanding communication structures seems to be better in taking up innovations or to diffuse them into transnational policy fields (especially within the European Union). Moreover, nation state organisations have better contacts to scientific research institutes and use their expertise to improve political action.

For example, the sustainable development discussion had some significant impacts on both evaluated programmes and especially pushed the trial to establish environmental communication structures in associations. This discussion was largely introduced to the environmental policy dialogue by state organisations, but there was also an important input from some NGOs (especially environmental organisations). Unfortunately, a systematic analysis of the diffusion process of the topic "sustainable development" is still not available. Our data suggests that the origins of its rise to one of the most important discussion subjects is merely an outcome of intensive dialog between state and non-state actors (with state organisations doing the first step), supported by existing, highly developed communication structures.

This might be a special result for Germany with its relatively week nation state and therefore well-developed orientation on co-operation with NGOs and other political forces. To come back to the three assumptions, the first one (governments tend towards Moderation instead of Regulation) proves to be wrong—German national government and its agencies have a long-lasting tradition to involve various politically relevant groups formally and informally in decision processes.[213] This might be the reason, why globalisation processes do not have any visible effect on governments action.

The second assumption, non-governmental actors are "learning organisations" while national government organisations suffer from "bureaucratic sclerosis" definitively proves to be wrong. German federal associations do not have any institutions or management structure which will allow them to be "learning organisations". Probably, there might be more "bureaucratic sclerosis" in national government, but there is also more "bureaucratic efficiency". Moreover, government organisations are aware of the problems and caused by public pressure there are some trials to implement a modern form of "new public management".

Finally, the third assumption that the role of individual actors (as they were respected by political actors) changes to get more chances to participate by giving NGOs more power, seems to be wrong too. Because associations represent particular membership interests and they do not have any systematic monitoring to get valid and representative information about the needs and the will of their members, especially big associations have no advantages in representing peoples interest in political decision processes. Today, a self-regulated nation without nation state seems to be unthinkable. There are even no tendencies in Germany for a development in that direction observable. And if de-nationalisation without any comparable transnational institutions would lead to more democratic participation is at least questionable.

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[213] For the relevance of informal communication channels between members of parliament and government see Schwarzmeier (2001).

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