

Fair competition for ideas - environmental and social aspects of the New Water Paradigm

Justus Lodemann & Rafael Ziegler
Social-ecological Research Group GETIDOS
University of Greifswald

The End

“The programme creates the conditions for improving the **quality of the lives** of those people who will continue to select the Slovak Republic as *a better place to live.*”

from the Program Restoration of the Landscape and Integrated River Basin Management and Landscape of SR

How? What barriers and opportunities may arise?

The aim: Fair competition of ideas for a better life

Ideas as a concept including the „mere thought“, pionier projects, scaling of projects and institutional change (law and customs)

Evolution of ideas through different phases as plausible heuristic (conservation, creative destruction, reorganization and exploitation)

Co-evolutionary perspective: ideas interlink with values, knowledge, technology, organisation, and the environment

In practice, ideas are at very different levels of their development.

There can be a lock-in: some ideas are so-well established („conserved“) – tightly interlinked with values, knoweldge, technology, organisation and the environment (head start) – that for a while other ideas will hardly have „a chance“.

The hydraulic mission as „old“ (established) water paradigm (OWP)

“The 20th century has witnessed the apogee of the so-called ‘hydraulic mission’, a period in which engineering approaches at dominating nature fully blossomed, leaving behind a balance of 50,000 large dams and 280 million hectares of irrigated land, on which a substantial part of humankind's food and energy” depend (Molle et al., 2008).

Hydraulic mission in Slovakia: 50 large dams, circa 2399.24 MW of hydropower accounts for almost 30% of energy production in Slovakia; simultaneous land “melioration” program: sustained effort to drain agricultural land to increase productivity.

By now recognized problems: advancing soil erosion, decreasing biodiversity and decreasing presence of functional vegetation, reduced influence of the community and local municipality for management of water resources in their area, coercive resettlement of people etc.

Still: situation of head-start for OWP, i.e. a set of instruments, values, knowledge and organisation

Creative Destruction and Creative Confusion

- Velvet Revolution in 1989: Slovakia's citizen sector grows from 11 citizen groups in 1989 to more than 10,000 in the first 10 years later >> flourishing of thoughts in civil society, many do not survive.
- For those NGOs that survive question of further development of their ideas. Window of opportunities for idea development: change in government, shocks (environmental disaster like a flood) or deliberate policy of government for fair promotion of ideas
 - But should any idea be promoted?
 - Selection criteria need to be developed, we propose criteria for well-being and sustainability
 - What about NWP concerning these criteria?

NWP and (strong) sustainability

- Ecologically sustainable: as behaviour that does **not negatively affect the resilience of an ecosystem**
- With respect to water: acting in a way that the capacity of freshwater to regenerate itself as well as its multifunctional role for ecosystem services is not negatively affected

provisioning services (e.g. food: growth of crops, water for animal farming, industrial processing)

regulating services (e.g. climate regulation: energy-dissipating effect on at least local climate)

cultural services (e.g. recreation and ecotourism: lakes and rivers as 'magnets')

supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling: transport, solvent)

→ **NWP management implication of water retention seems to promote the goal of ecological sustainability**

NWP and well-being (human capabilities)

Capability	Possible contribution of NWP	Open questions
<i>Life and bodily health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - directly, if there is violent conflict due to water shortage - reducing the risk of floods and droughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mitigation of extreme weather events? - Unforeseen consequences? - Dependent on appropriate politics - Water-bodies as sources of water-borne diseases?
<i>Affiliation and sense of place</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catchment perspective and various sources of solidarity (commonality, differentiation, and community of risk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Sense of place' regarding a dam or rectified river? - 'Play' in the recreational sense develop in and around 'temples' of the OWP
<i>Control over one's environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more effective political participation due to principle of subsidiarity - possibilities for job creation in the sphere of landscape reuse and fresh water retention in rural and urban domains 	<p>Participatory commitment is not a necessary corollary of the ecological idea of the NWP.</p> <p>Major challenges regarding land ownership may intervene.</p>

(Exerpt, full list available from Lodemann, Varga, Ziegler : The New Water Paradigm and Strong Sustainability, forthcoming in the International Journal of Water Management)

The „Program Restoration of the Landscape . . .“, Evaluation and the global Sustainability Challenge

Conceptually plausible that New Water Paradigm promotes (strong) sustainability and well-being (human capabilities), but now more testing and evidence needed!

→ Pilot projects needed for evidence, “taking the risk” (bearing in mind the lock-in of the OWP: catching up, creating a space for fair competition)

Important: include evaluation program along with pilot phase 2011:

- **How do pilot projects promote (strong) sustainability?**
- **How do they promote well-being (human capabilities)?**

More evidence would contribute to the global discussion of climate change and sustainability – and the possibilities and limits of the New Water Paradigm in various ecological and social contexts.

ĎAKUJEM! Danke schön!
Thank you !



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