



Who pays for which ecosystem service – where, how much, and why? The social and cultural comparison of PES



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Research Questions

- How do different societies organize civic engagements for environmental and nature conservation, and what is the significance of foundations?
 - What tasks in environmental and nature conservation are assigned to the government, the economy, and civil society organizations?
 - How is the division of tasks and relevant stakeholders evaluated in the public ?
- How are values assigned to the different social ecosystem services?
 - To whom should the responsibility for remunerating PES be assigned? The government, the economy or civil society?
 - Which socio-cultural conditions enable or block the valuation and remuneration of ecosystem services and with what consequences?

Background

Where is the development of our society heading? Two major paradigms in the social sciences, the structure-universalist and culturalistic paradigm, are competing in the interpretation of social development. This also applies to developments in the field of civil society and the valuation of ecosystem functions:

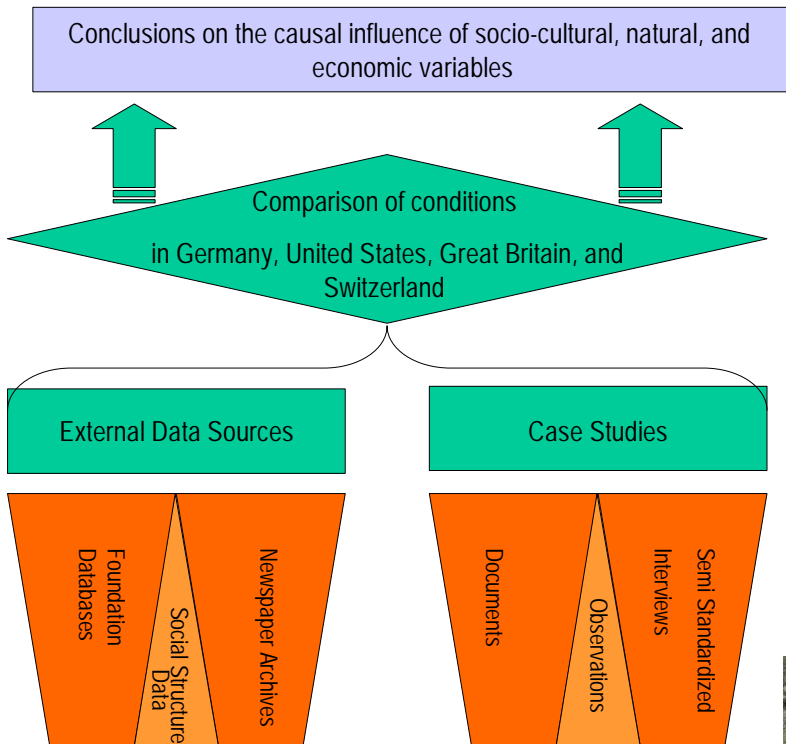
Views of the structural universalist paradigm

- Citizens that are involved in public matters, could achieve democratic social order everywhere.
- Ecosystem services could be traded everywhere on markets that function according to the same mechanisms.

Views of the culturalistic paradigm

- 'Citizens', 'Democracy', 'Public' and also 'Ecosystem Services' are cultural specific concepts, which under other cultural contexts would lead to other consequences.
- The concept of looking at nature from the aspect of ecosystem services is bound to certain culturally determined images of nature that are not readily transferable to all societies.

Methodology and Data



- Secondary analysis of existing data for the identification of relevant aspects of social structure in Germany, Great Britain, USA, and Switzerland.
- Quantitative content analysis of foundations and their public reputation.
- Observation of initiatives that implement PES, and of qualitative content analysis of interviews and self-portrayals that make statements over:
 - (a.) citizen's understanding,
 - (b.) the image of nature und
 - (c.) the social economic development perspectives of stakeholders.
- Systematization of observations and interpretations, and analysis of qualitative comparative methodology.

The two views are not mutually exclusive. As paradigms, they are taken into consideration in the analysis of development. Socio-cultural characteristics as well as natural and economic characteristics are considered possible causes for the success or failure of a PES scheme.

Expectations of the results

- An overview of the organizational structures of civic environmental engagements in the U.S., Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland could provoke thoughts for the consideration of alternative societal design, including its possible consequences.
- Knowledge of the influence of socio-cultural and natural circumstances can support the development and implementation of PES schemes and at the same time correct unreasonable expectations of control effects. The methods of case comparison or comparison of societies can provide a solid argumentation basis for sustainability research, which works mostly on individual case studies.
- The concept of ecosystem services will gain through a social- theory informed revision of transparency and capacity.



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Research topics in CIVILand:

Comparison of societies and cultures, ecosystem service consumption, organizational forms of civil society, social capital and sustainable development

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