

ECPR JOINT SESSION OF WORKSHOPS, GRANADA, 2005

Workshop 17: Initiating Sustainable Development: Patterns of Sub-National Engagement and their Significance

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Focus of the Workshop

This workshop explored patterns of sub-national, regional and local implementation of national sustainable development strategies. In particular, we were interested in identifying three features of the engagement with sustainable development:

1. The character of central government programmes and initiatives aimed at the promotion of sustainable development at the sub-national levels.
2. The nature of the sustainable development initiatives that these central government programmes have given rise to at different tiers of sub-national government.
3. The type and extent of partnership arrangements that have developed between public and private actors in these initiatives.

Our interest in these three features was driven by two theoretical positions: first that the promotion of sustainable development acts as an *orientating concept for governance*. As such, it can stimulate the use of new environmental policy instruments; it can give rise to new patterns in the relationship between national and sub-national tiers of government and between the public and the private sectors that address multilevel governance and public and private partnerships; and through encouraging participation, it can give rise to new understandings of what constitutes (green) democratic practice.

The papers in the Workshop were organised according to the following themes:

Conceptual that addressed new environmental governance for the promotion of sustainable development:

Marko Joas, Susan Sundback, Bob Evans & Kate Theobald, *Governing local sustainability*

Eva Mineur, *The Role of Sustainability Indicators in a Local Context: Governance and Discourses in Practice*.

Comparative that explored central government programmes for the promotion of sustainable development at the sub-national, regional or local levels; their features; funding mechanisms, their explicit sustainable development component; sub-national targets, partnership arrangements and implementation expectations:

Susan Baker & Katarina Eckerberg, *Comparing Central Government Funding Initiatives in the EU*

Panu Kontio, *Assisted Interventions – a tool for sustainable development?*

Gerald Berger, & Reinhard Steurer, *Implementation of National Sustainable Development Strategies at the Regional Level: Comparative Analysis of the Experiences in Europe*

Regional that looked at how sub-national tiers of government have taken up central government initiatives, their character, partnerships arrangements, the features of sustainable development that they prioritise and their institutional location:

Anna Meincke, *Germany Spatial Development Policy: ‘Regions Active’ a model and demonstration project of the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture*

Jean-Baptiste Harguindéguy, *Sustainable Development as a Constitutive Dimension of Territorial Policies: The Case of the Franco-Spanish Cross-Border Co-operation*

Kenneth Hanf, & Francesc Morata, *Institutional Prerequisites for a Transition to Sustainable Development*

Josu Mezo, *Spanish Regional Strategies for Sustainable Development: How Much and Why Do They Differ?*

Eugenio Pizzimenti, *Governing Sustainable Development: A Short Comparison Between Two Regions*

Country-specific that explored similar themes as those above:

John Barry, *Sustainable Development in Northern Ireland: From Environmental Mal-Governance to Joined up Thinking?*

Frans Coenen, *The Role of Local Authorities in Initiating Sustainable Development in the Netherlands*

Andrew Flynn, *Governance and Sustainability in Wales*

Kristine Kern, *Sub-National Initiatives in Federal States: An Intra-National Comparison of Sustainable Development in Germany*

Issue area that examined subsidiary implementation in distinct sectors:

Harriet Bulkeley, Matt Watson & Ray Hudson, *Governing Municipal Watse: Central and Local Government in Pursuit of Sustainability?*

Bernadette Connaughton, Nicholas Rees & Brid Quinn, *Rhetoric or Reality? Responding to the Challenge of Sustainable Development and New Governance Patterns in Ireland*

Sissel Hovik, *Network Governance and Democratic Legitimacy in Rural Sustainable Development in Norway*

François-Mathieu Poupeau, *Local Partnership and Market as a Way to Promote Sustainable Development?*

The Workshop concluded with summarizing some of the major themes:

- the role of regions and the importance of structural arrangements;
- the tension between government and governance in implementing sustainable development;

- the need for state support to capacity-building, and to provide various policy instruments including funding;
- the importance of local politics and networks of trust;
- the influence of discourses and the way the concept of sustainable development is understood in policy practice.

We also decided to make a proposal to Routledge for a publication, with the possibility of bringing the results of this Workshop to a larger audience.

Katarina Eckerberg and Susan Baker