

Developing leadership for sustainable environments: the international, interdisciplinary Master of Science ‘Environmental Governance’ (MEG) at the University of Freiburg, Germany

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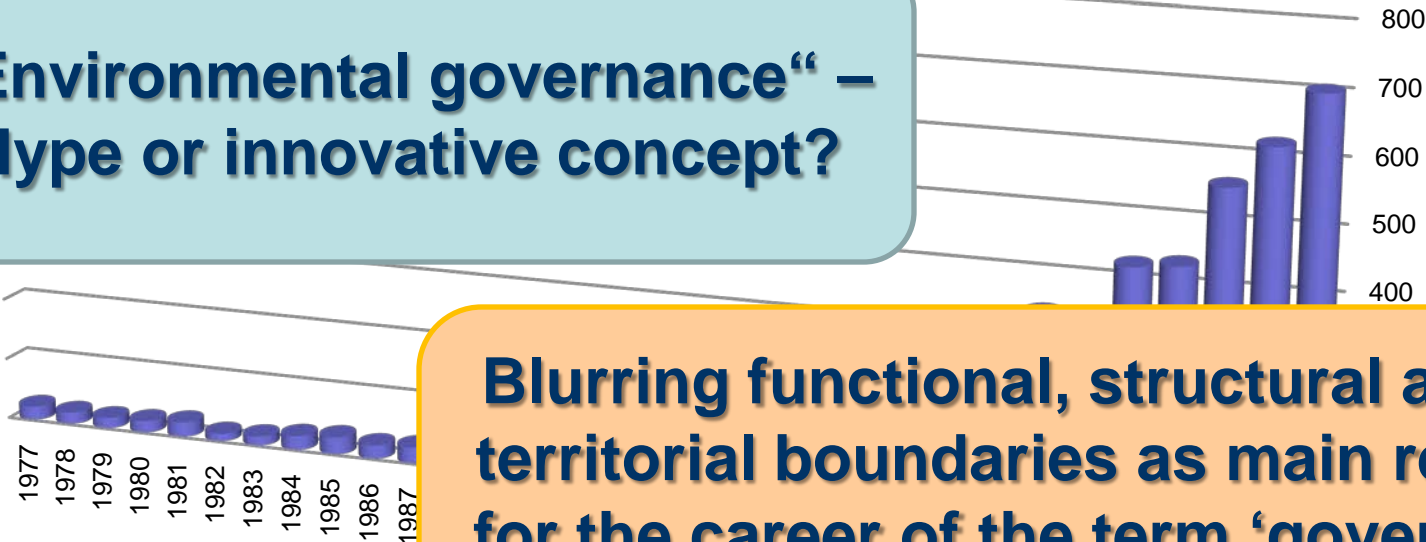
Prof. Dr. Margaret A. Shannon, FOPER II Coordinator and University of Freiburg

Outline

- Why environmental governance?
- Challenges of environmental governance
- MEG's mission and focus
- Strategic design of the MSc program
- Institutionalization

Career of a term: „governance“

„Environmental governance“ – Hype or innovative concept?



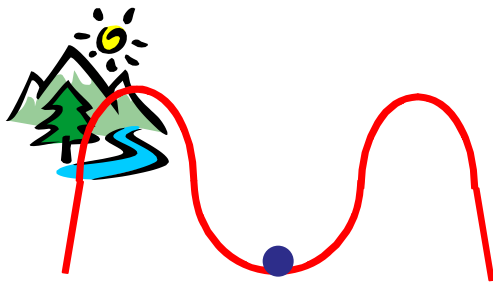
Blurring functional, structural and / or territorial boundaries as main reasons for the career of the term ‘governance’ in environmental policy?

Frequency of the term “governance” in the title of journal articles included in the ISI Web of Knowledge databases

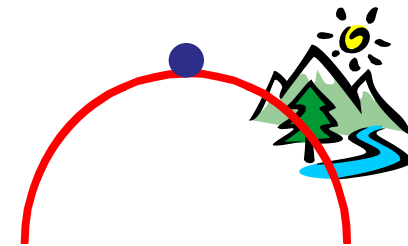
Challenges of Environmental Governance

- *Uncertain facts:*
complexity; pervasiveness; multiple
causations; mutual interdependencies
- *Provisional facts:*
dynamic change; non-linear threshold effects;
catastrophic, irreversible and discontinuous features
- *‘Wicked’ environmental problems*
 - No accepted definition of the problem
 - One problem is interrelated with others
 - Precarious solutions: no right or wrong, only more or less adequate

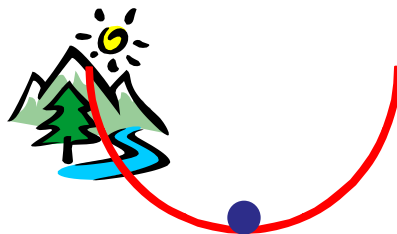
Sound of clashing certainties



Nature Perverse / Tolerant



Nature Ephemeral



Nature Benign



Nature Capricious

Implications

- Growing awareness of
 - social constructivist perspectives in general
 - ‘skills of governance’ are seen as necessary for the management of problems due to the limitations of natural sciences to provide ‘proof’
- Alternative perspective on environmental knowledge:
 - environmental knowledge is created anew in argumentation processes;
 - sharp distinction between scientific and ordinary knowledge is disappearing
 - communicative action itself informatizes

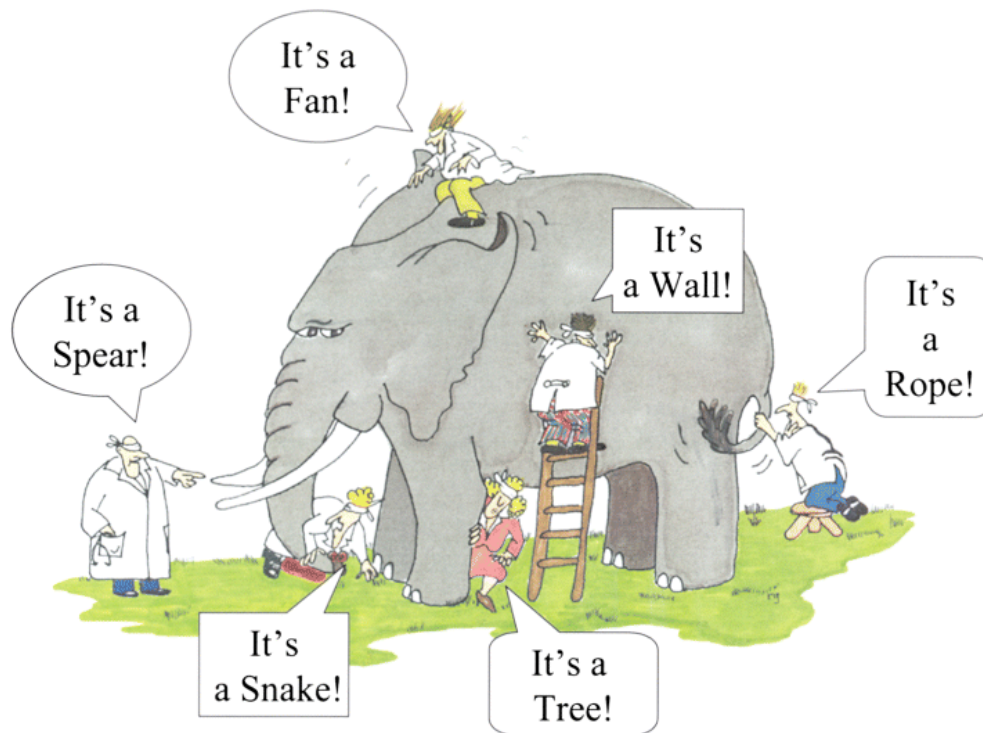
Requirements for education programme

- Sound knowledge about global environmental and societal changes
- Ability to reflect on societal decision-making processes from different theoretical perspectives
 - Realization of pluralism of science
 - Comparative reflections on various disciplinary approaches
 - Teaching 'not know-how, but know-why' (i.e. students themselves draw conclusions)
- Skills to design decision-making processes effectively (reconciliation the manifold chorus of stakeholders' interpretations of sustainability)

Program Mission

- To train at academic level leaders able to reconcile different social perspectives with regard to the sustainable use of environmental resources as a basis for sustainable development:
 - leaders with grand, innovative ideas about environmental governance arrangements beyond the traditional functional, structural and territorial boundaries (*'sustainability designers'*),
 - leaders who embrace and understand these ideas, and are capable of finding ways to implement them in organisations, enterprises and administrations in a context-sensitive manner (*'sustainability facilitators'*)
- for any development, at any scale from local to global, and in any context worldwide.

Program Focus



Reconciliation of the manifold stakeholder interpretations of sustainable use of environmental resources.

Strategic design of program

- interdisciplinarity: positioned in the strategic gap between political and natural science-oriented programs
 - ability of reflection: provocative confrontation with different scientific “frames” to arouse ability for reasoned argumentation – “not know-how, but know-why”
 - deliberative role: acquiring argumentative skills in public discourse and learning “soft” skills like moderation, mediation, or facilitation
 - context sensitivity: rejection of any universal templates or blueprints
- tripartite structure: **realising – understanding – managing**

MEG module structure



4. Sem.

Master Thesis (30 ECTS)

Electives

Environmental
Law

Environmental
Ethics

Knowledge
Management
& Organizational
Learning

Technology
Assessment &
Sustainable
Development

Environmental
Conflict
Management

Corporate
Governance

Role of NGOs in
Environmental
Governance

3. Sem.

Internship

Research
Skills

Elective 3

Elective 4

Case Study 2:
Integrated
System Design

**Student-
Organized
Event**

2. Sem.

Elective 2

Economics,
Institutions &
the Environment

Environmental
Policy
Analysis

Sociology and
Psychology of
Environmental
Knowledge

Ecosystem
Management

1. Sem.

Sustainability
and Governance

Global
Environmental
Change

Global
Societal
Change

Managing
Human-
Environment
Interactions

Elective 1

Case Study 1:
Regional
Studies

Joint module
with MSc FEM

Joint module
with MSc FEM

Didactic concept

- 3 week bloc modules
- team teaching with guest lectures and excursions
- integrated case study modules at the end of each semester
- 'Student Organized Event': students conceptualize and realize international event in the first three semesters of the program



Institutionalization

- **Team of lecturers:**
 - from across many different departments at the University of Freiburg
 - as well as from external research institutes
 - and national and international partner universities
- **Program Committee:**
 - Responsibility/tasks: admission, quality assurance, control of content
 - Members: Program Director, faculty, students (elected)
- **Advisory Board:**
 - Responsibility/tasks: feedback, networking
 - Members:



Dr. H.J. Elshorst
Transparency
Internation



**Dr. M. Bieberstein Koch-
Weser**
GExSI / Earth 3000



Dr. M. Betz
BASF Head of Dept.
for Environment and
Monitoring



Ms. B. Unmüssig
Heinrich-Böll-
Foundation



Dr. H.P. Schipulle
Congo Basin Forest Partnership
Ministry for Cooperation and
Development (retired)

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