Conference Volume	6th Symposium for Research in Protected Areas 2 to 3 November 2017, Salzburg	pages 567 - 569

Let's cooperate: How collaborative governance approaches can help to address institutional fit in protection areas

Claudia Sattler

Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF), Müncheberg, Germany

Abstract:

One challenge in environmental governance is to reach a good 'institutional fit' that is to ensure that the governance structures put in place are spatially and temporally well-aligned to the ecosystems and ecosystem services they are meant to govern. In this context, we analyzed how collaborative governance approaches, involving partnerships between public, private, and civil society actors, can address and mitigate institutional misfit. The analysis was done based on empirical research in three European protection areas: the Biosphere reserve Spreewald, Germany, the Nature park Jauerling-Wachau, Austria, and the Berg en Dal region as part of the National Landscape Gelderse Poort, Netherlands.

Keywords

ecosystem service governance, institutional fit, public-private-civil partnerships, social-ecological systems

Introduction

One critical challenge in environmental governance is to reach so-called 'institutional fit', which means to ensure that the established governance structures by a social system are spatially and temporally well-aligned to the ecosystems and ecosystem services in the given ecological system they are meant to govern (e.g. COX, 2012, EKSTROM & YOUNG, 2009). Only then ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation can effectively be provided to society (cf. FREMIER et al., 2013). This seems particularly important in protection areas, designated in locations with high potentials for the provision of a multitude of different ecosystem services and as crucial hot spots for biodiversity protection. In this context, we analyzed the potential of so-called collaborative governance approaches to alleviate issues of institutional misfit, since such approaches have gained in importance in governance more recently (cf. LOFT et al., 2015) when compared to two other common approaches in governance, hierarchies and markets (VATN, 2010). Thereby, we define collaborative governance as the vertical (across different scales) and horizontal (across different sectors of society) cooperation of multiple actors, involving partnerships between the public, private, and civil society sphere of society. In specific, we investigated the following research question: Through which distinct features can collaborative governance approaches help to address and mitigate institutional misfit?

Methods

The analysis was done employing quantitative and qualitative empirical research methods in case studies from three European countries, which all represent protection areas: the Biosphere reserve Spreewald, Germany, the Nature park Jauerling-Wachau, Austria, and the Berg en Dal region as part of the National Landscape Gelderse Poort, Netherlands. For the analysis we used a mixed method approach, combining the Net-Map tool (SCHIFFER & HAUCK, 2010) for social network analysis (MCKETHER et al., 2009), semi-structured interviews (e.g. BOYCE & NEALE, 2006), and workshops with focus group discussions (FREITAS et al. 1998).

Results

First, the specific features of the analyzed collaborative governance approaches are presented against the different background settings in the selected case studies, both in view of their communalities and differences. Analyzed features include, for instance, the type of actors (e.g. public administrations employees, staff of the protection areas, land owners and managers, locally active NGOs and associations, etc.) who are involved into each approach, the roles that these actors assume in the governance arrangements, and how these actors interact with each other. Interactions include sharing of information, leveraging funding, spurring trust and mitigating conflicts. Furthermore, actors' motives, their influence and power in decision making procedures, as well as their obtained benefits are presented.
Second, these features are related to the potential of each approach to help in addressing and mitigating institutional misfit in reference to our research question.

Here, the following features seem most relevant:

- Collaborative governance often emerges as a response to a governance deficit, such as the absence of any governance approach (regulatory gap), an insufficient implementation of an existing governance approach, or a lack in stakeholder participation in an existing governance policy, which can all be interpreted as some sort of misfit.
- Since collaborative governance emerges problem-driven based on the given deficit, it is in general open to the voluntary engagement of all concerned stakeholders, and thus typically forms according to the magnitude and spatial extend of the perceived problem rather than political boundaries, as opposed to hierarchical approaches which are based on mandates and authorities typically linked to certain administrative units and jurisdictions, not congruent with the scale at which the problem manifests itself.
- Because of its problem-oriented nature, collective governance is also more time-sensitive: it forms in response to a vexing problem for concerned actors, but also dissolves again, after the problem has been adequately addressed and solved.
- As many different actors are involved, usually interests and motives are versatile, but despite this fact, often win-wins can be realized due to the actors' high levels of individual motivation for solving the problem.
- Also, collaborative governance often allows access to additional resources held by the different actors, which can be critical in properly addressing a problem, e.g. in terms of the local knowledge the actors possess, the voluntary engagement for specific activities they offer, or their ability to raise additional funding for addressing their cause.
- Finally, collaborative governance supports more flexibility as procedures are not as prescriptive when compared to hierarchical and market-based approaches, which gives more leeway to the actors to establish procedures that are better aligned to the specific context of the problem at hand.

Discussion & Conclusions

In summary and in response to our research question, we found evidence that collaborative governance often takes the form of ‚tailor-made' approaches to existing problems and hence supports a better alignment and fit between the established governance structures and the environmental problem addressed. However, collaborative governance can also have some limitations, since participatory and often decentralized decision making is more time-consuming in general. And due to deviant interests of actors, decisions made often constitute rather a compromise (least-common-denominator solutions) that all actors can live with, than an optimal solution for the problem (COGLIANESE, 1999). And, if power imbalances exist between actors, also in collaborative governance insufficient participation of less powerful actors can occur (RUNHAAR et al., 2016).

Acknowledgements

Research presented in this manuscript is an outcome of the cp³ project entitled 'civil-public-private-partnerships (cp³): collaborative governance approaches for policy innovation to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services delivery in agricultural landscapes' (www.cp3-project.eu). The cp³ project is funded through the 2013-2014 BiodivERsA/FACCE-JPI joint call with the national funders BMBF (Germany), FWF (Austria), and NWO (Netherlands). We would like to thank all involved stakeholders from the different case studies for participating in the interviews and workshops and for sharing their knowledge and insights with us.

References

BOYCE, C., NEALE, P., 2006. Conducting in-depth interviews: A Guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews. Evaluation 2, 1–16.

COGLIANESE, C., COGLIANESE, C., 1999. The Limits of Consensus The Limits of Consensus 2138, 28–33.

COX, M., 2012. Diagnosing institutional fit: A formal perspective. Ecol. Soc. 17. doi:10.5751/ES-05173-170454

EKSTROM, J.A., YOUNG, O.R., 2009. Evaluating functional fit between a set of institutions and an ecosystem. Ecol. Soc. 14. doi:16

FREITAS, H., OLIVEIRA, M., JENKINS, M., POPJOY, O., 1998. The focus group, a qualitative research method. ISRC, Merrick School of Business, University of Baltimore (MD, EUA), WP ISRC No. 010298, February 1998. 22 p.

FREMIER, A.K., DECLERCK, F.A.J., BOSQUE-PÉREZ, N.A., CARMONA, N.E., HILL, R., JOYAL, T., KEESECKER, L., KLOS, P.Z., MARTÍNEZ-SALINAS, A., NIEMEYER, R., SANFIORENZO, A., WELSH, K., WULFHORST, J.D., 2013. Understanding Spatiotemporal Lags in Ecosystem Services to Improve Incentives. Bioscience 63, 472–482. doi:10.1525/bio.2013.63.6.9

LOFT, L., MANN, C., HANSJÜRGENS, B., 2015. Challenges in ecosystem services governance : Multi-levels ,. Ecosyst. Serv. 16, 150–157. doi:10.1016/j.ecoser.2015.11.002

MCKETHER, W.L., GLUESING, J.C., RIOPELLE, K., 2009. From Interviews to Social Network Analysis: An Approach for Revealing Social Networks Embedded in Narrative Data. Field methods 21, 154–180. doi:10.1177/1525822x08329697

RUNHAAR, H. A. C., MELMAN, T. C. P., BOONSTRA, F. G., ERISMAN, J. W., HORLINGS, L. G., DE SNOO, G. R., TERMEER, C. J. A. M., WASSEN, M. J., WESTERINK J., ARTS, B. J. M., 2016. Promoting nature conservation by Dutch farmers: a governance perspective, International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability, doi: 10.1080/14735903.2016.1232015

SCHIFFER, E., HAUCK, J., 2010. Net-Map: Collecting Social Network Data and Facilitating Network Learning through Participatory Influence Network Mapping. Field methods 22, 231–249. doi:10.1177/1525822X10374798

VATN, A., 2010. An institutional analysis of payments for environmental services. Ecol. Econ. 69, 1245–1252. doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2009.11.018

Contact

Claudia Sattler
csattler@zalf.de
Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF)
Institute of Socio-Economics
Eberswalder Strasse 84
15374 Müncheberg, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 33432 82 439