

***An obituary for National Forest Programmes?***  
***An analysis on the  
strategic use of National Forest Programmes in Bulgaria and  
Germany***

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Conference Change in Governance as Collective Learning Process:  
Management, Politics and Ethics in Forestry

## **Structure**

- 1. Introduction: concept of National Forests Programmes**
- 2. State of art: NFPs as 'new' governance tools'**
- 3. Research approach**
- 4. Results**
- 5. Discussion**
- 6. Conclusions**

## Introduction: Concept of NFPs

### National Forest Programmes (NFPs)

- instruments to implement/concretize abstract international forest policy consensus on SFM at national level
- criteria: public participation, intersectoral coordination, long-term iterative/adaptive planning



URL: [www.schulen.rosenheim.de](http://www.schulen.rosenheim.de)

## State of the Art

- ‘Mainstream’ in the literature: NFPs as instruments of change/policy learning
  - from government to (reflexive/new) governance
  - from instrumental to communicative rationality
  - from timber production forestry towards SFM highlighting social and ecological aspects
- Empirical research concentrates on learning processes & obstacles/dysfunctionalities

## Research Approach

### Our research design

- **objective:** understand the role NFPs play in forest policy → Do they meet the expectations?
- **embedded in policy analyses of the cases:** Bulgaria, Germany
- **drawing on the ACF (Sabatier)**
  - instrumentally rational actors guided by core beliefs
  - organized in advocacy coalitions
  - long lasting policy conflicts/stalemates
  - learning mostly reduced to secondary/instrumental aspects
- **method:** interviews, literature analysis, participatory observation

## Results I: NFP process



### Germany (1999-today)

- **NFP as negotiation process of stakeholders on a consensus in forest policy (round tables)**
- **stakeholders: forest sector/environmental sector**
- **3 phases (1st&2nd negotiation phase 1999-2003, evaluation phase 2004-2006)**
- **seen as truly participative (until 2003), but**
- **evaluation results: barely no policy effects**
- **crucial question/conflict: implementation of results**
- 2006: most important ENGOs quit the process
- today: communication process without claim for implementation

## Results I

### Advocacy coalitions in German forest policy (cf. Memmler, 2003)

	<b>Nature Conservation Coalition</b> (Env. Ministries, NGOs, scientists, Green party, SPD)	<b>Forest coalition</b> (Agriculture Ministries & Forest-Services, scientists, CDU, FDP)
<b>View of forest</b>	Dynamic ecosystem, biodiversity	Resource
<b>Actors of concern</b>	Society & non-human livings	Forest owners and forest industry
<b>Problem-definition</b>	Ecological sustainability at risk due to purely economically oriented management	Timber harvest and use with economic and ecological benefits
<b>Problem-solution</b>	Concretized legal SFM standards und protected area networks	Deregulation in order to use economic potentials



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## Results I

	<b>NATURE CONSERVATION COALITION</b>	<b>FORESTRY COALITION</b>
Prior 1990	<b>Government regulation &amp; planning</b> Federal Nature Conservation Act (1976); Environmental Planning	<b>Governmental Regulation &amp; planning</b> Federal Forest Act (1975) Regional Forest Planning
<b>Winterstorms 1990 – „Crisis of forestry“</b>		
1990-1998	<b>Private standardization:</b> FSC international/national (1993, 1997)	<b>Private/ governmental standardization:</b> Symbolic legal SFM standards (1990 <sup>th</sup> ) Symbolic labeling (1996)
<b>Federal Government Social democrats and Green party 1998, Forest ministry to Green Party 2001</b>		
1999-2001	<b>Government Regulation:</b> Amendment of Nature Conservation Act including SFM standards (1998 - 2002)	<b>Private standardization</b> PEFC (1999)
<b>Conservative-liberal majority in the Federal Assembly (since 2002)</b>		
2001-2005	<b>Government Regulation:</b> Federal Forest Act: Demand for an amendment (since 2002, failed 2005)	<b>Strategy of Denial</b> Rejection of the Amendment of the Federal Forest Act (2002-2005)
<b>Federal Government Grand Coalition (Conservatives, Social Democrats) (since 2005)</b>		
Since 2005	<b>Strategies &amp; Regulation</b> Federal Environmental Code (2007, failed 2009) National Biodiversity Strategy (2008)	<b>Strategies &amp; Regulation</b> Overall Forest Strategy (since 2008) Amendment Federal Forest Act (failed 2009)

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## Results II: NFP process



### Bulgaria (2003/2004 - today)

- NFPS launched by government and assisted by international consultants
- consensus-oriented negotiation process (including 40 structured stakeholder interviews, survey of public opinion, regional and stakeholder workshops, SWOT-analysis)
- seen as truly participative
- but: results were not accepted by the parliament
- NFPS process blocked/lost importance

## Results II

### Advocacy coalitions in Bulgarian forest policy

	<b>State-oriented forestry coalition</b> (e. g., state forest services, scientists/consultants, left-wing parties)	<b>Private-oriented forestry coalition</b> (e. g., private forest sector, non-state forest owners, scientists, right-wing parties)	<b>Socio-ecological welfare coalition</b> (e.g. environmental NGO's, some forest service staff, consultants)
<b>Problem definition</b>	Weakened state and poor private management after privatizations. Finances on decline, disturbing interference by politicians	Poor state management and hindered forest-based business development. State monopoly and corruption	Primacy of economic and political self-interests. Timber primacy and corruption. Neglect of forest ecosystem functions
<b>Problem solving</b>	Strengthening state management through financial, operational and statutory independence of the state forest service	Liberalization, privatization and market orientation. Co-option by private sector based on clear rules. Forestry and timber industry development	Reorientation toward socio-ecological goals. Public involvement is strived for. Strengthened state control. Forest services market regulation

## Results II

- **100% state run forest management until 1997**
- **Forest reform of 1998: privatization and liberalization**
- **Change in government 2001: plan to restructure forest sector through (re-)establishing of state enterprise**
- **World Bank loan of 40 million USD to finance reform: NFPS as obligatory demand**
- **Set aside, when blocked by a stalemate between privatization and state forestry coalition (just weak formulations) – World Bank project failed**
- **Revised in 2006 by new government and contributed in a symbolic manner to 2008 Forest Reform**

## Discussion

**In both countries: NFP embedded in political struggle between actor coalitions**

- **In Germany: forestry vs. nature conservation coalition**  
**NFP as an instrument**
  - to demonstrate commitment of the Federal Government towards international politics
  - to bridge a critical situation of weakness of the (sectorally) dominant forestry coalition
- **In Bulgaria: state forestry vs. private sector**  
**NFP as an instrument**
  - to satisfy the expectations of international donors
  - to legitimize the incorporation of coalition beliefs/interests into public policy

## Discussion II

### In both countries

- No major policy learning (core beliefs did not change)
- NFPs as periodic instrumental strategy – nowadays replaced by more ‘closed’ strategies
- NFP as instruments that maintained the status quo/stalemate (intentionally or unintentionally)

### However

- Democratization/learning effect of the analyzed NFPs (governance “footprint”)?

## Conclusions

### Research on NFPs/participative governance arrangements/collective learning must encapsulate

- political functionalization of ‘new’ governance modes (no a-priori bias)
- the history of policy processes
- long term effects of learning

### Designing governance/learning processes

- improvement within the concept of NFP?
- Avoid the ‘strategic’ national policy level – reflexive governance at the local level?