Florian Kadletz

The potential of local authorities for the European Union

Presentation of a practical approach to put the EU commitments of more effective and efficient territorial cohesion, more involvement of different actors in the decision-making process and an increase in legitimacy into practice

Advisor: Mr. George P. Kyriacou

Master in Advanced European and International Studies

2009/2010

Cife/IEHEI - Centre international de formation européenne, Institut européen des hautes études internationales

Table of Contents

Introduction

Latest since the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty there is room for more involvement of local and regional actors in the decision-making process. Especially in times of recovery after the economic crisis, as the Committee of the Regions (CoR) points out, a closer cooperation between different tiers of governments is necessary to meet objectives like territorial cohesion, enforced integration of the Europeans and more efficient and effective policies.

Among scientists at least, it is widely discussed that there is a need for closing the gap separating individuals from political institutions on the national and the EU level. The negative referenda in France and the Netherlands also made politicans admit that there is a need for more and especially regular dialog with the people because the referenda just mark the endpoint of a short electoral period why, out of several reasons that will partially be discussed here, hardly any real interaction could take place. The huge unknown is still how to proceed and what exactly can be done? The White Paper on Multi-Level-Governance as well as the White Paper on European Governance propose a list of options. But still everything is vague. That is why this research presents an approach that can realistically be applied because it is based on well known and accepted tools.

The first chapter therefore gives an overview of the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) and its two objectives: (1) contribute to meeting the objectives of EU Regional Policy more effectively and more efficiently and (2) contribute to an increase in legitimacy of the EU and all national actors from member states involved. Core to it are Local EU Experts (LEUEs) and the Project Cycle Management (PCM). To prove is the relevance of interpersonal communication for bridging the gap between political and every day life reality. Thus, an overview of research on media and communication with a focus on a discussion of the advantages of interpersonal communication and the limits of mass communication is given, also considering differences between urban und rural areas. In

addition the role and the limits of the internet are discussed in the light of the question of citizen involvement.

The second chapter focuses on giving a theoretical basis to the MCA approach by introducing the theory of deliberative democracy. Core is the higlightening of similar goals like adding quality into the political process through deliberation, rational discussions and impartiality. On the other side differences are worked out like the most fundamental one that deliberative democracy is here not seen as an alternative to todays representative democracy but as supplement.

The third chapter finally introduced the second aspect the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) focuses on: the PCM-Workshops as a tool to meet the first mentioned objective of the MCA. Here the Project Cycle Management as a means for analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation is discussed in the light of the results of the ex-post evaluation of Cohesion Policy Porgrammes 2000-2006 and the question of how to improve project and program outcomes through considering the social aspect. Here the Outcome Mapping Approach as additional tool is introduced to do justice to the fact that cohesion policy has not only economic but especially social, environmental and territorial objectives. Here questions of indicator development and program/ project ownership are discussed as factors of success or defeat. The rounding up is provided by a final discussion of why the communicative experiences individuals can make in the PCM-Workshops are especially valuable to meeting the ultimate goal of bridging the gap between individuals and politics. The whole MCA therefore positions itself as a means to assist in bridging that gap even though the approach still needs more fundamental theoretical support and a phase of empirical experimentation.

Leading questions

(1) How can local authorities contribute to meeting the objectives of EU Regional Policy more effectively and more efficiently, i.e. (1) Convergence, (2) Regional Competitiveness and Employment, (3) European Territorial Co-operation and (4) Coherence?

(2) How can the involvement of local authorities into EU policies contribute to an increase in legitimacy of the EU and all national actors from member states involved?

1. The "Mutual Communication Approach" (MCA)

The "Mutual Communication Approach" (MCA) doesn't exist yet. It stands for a combination of the well known approach (1) Project Cycle Management and a concept based on local experts, (2) so called LEUEs (Local EU Experts).

The following research will focus on two different fields of application of this "Mutual Communication Approach" (MCA) according to the leading questions: First, the added value of the MCA for concrete policy planning, implementation and evaluation will be discussed, e.g. within cross border programs and how the approach helps strengthening the capacity of local and regional authorities under the political conditions of the EU. Second, the contribution the MCA can make will be discussed to bridge the gap separating the people from the EU institutions and to increase the legitimacy and transparency of the EU.

The following diagram shall give an overview of the MCA:

Decicions Makers from national and European level

Training carried out by „life-long learning institutions"

LEUEs

PCM Workshops

Presentations for and Consulting of local assembly

Presentations for local public

Informal Conversations

Collected Data: positions of people

Position of local assembly
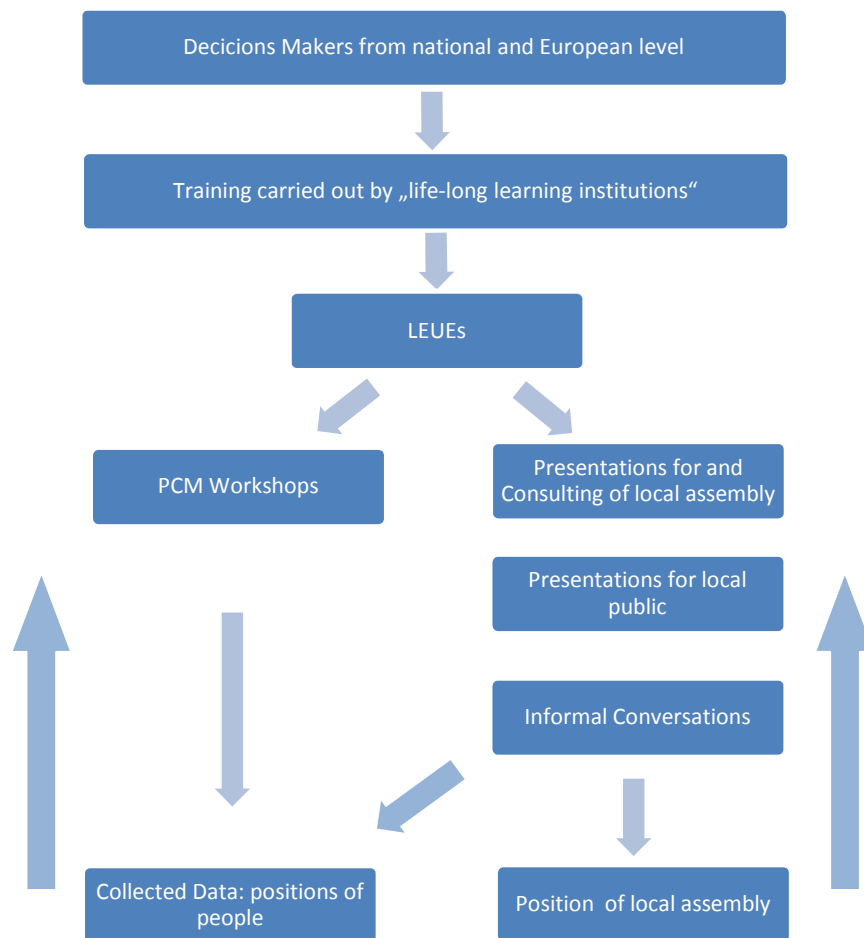
1.1. Introduction to the MCA – explanation of the diagram

Based on an agreement of representatives of the EU member states and the EU institutions the Mutual Communication Approach is implemented as a regular common policy. That is the prerequisite to its functioning, which will be explained in detail in this research. The policy foresees that life-long-learning institutions cooperate with the EU and are responsible for the implementation of the MCA by carrying out the initial training of the Local EU Experts (LEUEs), the follow-up trainings and the general consulting and looking after.

Local EU Experts (LEUEs) are individuals who already work in already existing local official institutions, like the local assembly, the town and city district assembly. The approach is therefore seeking to be integrated in

already existing structures. Out of every local authority two persons, that have to be elected by the local assemblies for e.g. a period of 2 years (open extension period), will be trained by any official or private life-learning institution – like EIPA or other institutions providing trainings for local or regional authorities, like the Assembly of European Regions (AER).

The training focuses on (1) the European Union, in particular on its functions and policies also in consideration of its history as well as on its competences and principles (relation to member states, etc.). The idea is to build "Local EU Experts" (LEUEs) who permanently live and work in their village, town or city district. The EU is therefore physically present on the grassroots level and the LEUEs are on the one hand side (a) regularly conducting presentations about current topics related to the EU and about general topics related to the EU within the Local Assemblies as well as they consult them, (b) conducting regular presentations for the local public and (c) are by nature always availbale for informal conversations at the supermarket, in the pharmacy, the restaurant, the church, etc. On the other hand the LEUEs (d) conduct PCM-Workshops. What that means will be explained in detail in chapter 3.

In order to make that possible the initial training of the LEUEs also focuses (2) on the Training of Trainers approach and how to conduct the PCM-Workshops. Besides they get regularly updated via an online platform, where all LEUEs can exchange good practice examples and where the training institutions can offer follow up information and information about further trainings.

The essential part of the MCA is – that is where its name comes from – (a) that the local assemblies can take up a qualified position on EU legislation and proposals through services of the LEUEs and can *communicate* that position to the regional, national and European level, (b) that they can actively contribute to the formulation of a National Strategic Reference Framework and (c) that they can themselves come up with ideas for programs and projects within the scope of EU Regional policy (increased

absorption capacity). On the other side, the people can communicate directly with decision-makers from all tiers of government through the data on their positions collected in the PCM-Workshops.

Enabling reciprocity in the communication process is the main aim of the MCA in order to contribute to meeting objectives like strengthening democratic rule (legitimacy, accountability, responsiveness), increasing the involvement of different tiers of government in the decision-making process, building up European Citizenship and increasing European Cohesion.

Why the MCA is thought to be able to contribute to meeting these objectives shall be laid out here:

1.2. Insights from Research on Media and Communication

In order to argue for the MCA as one useful approach to contribute to meeting the above mentioned objectives, results from research on media and communication shall be presented.

1.2.1. Mass media and interpersonal communication

The construction of reality is carried out on basis of two dimensions: the type of reality (objective, symbolic, subjective) and the distance social elements have to the direct experience one can make.[1] Objective social reality means the reality that exists outside the individual, the one it is confronted with. Symbolic social reality means the symbolic use of the objective social reality in art, literature and media. Subjective social reality means the sum of individual concepts of reality and experiences of reality, an individual draws from the objective reality and the symbolic reality.

The essential point here is that the subjective reality is organized by a concept of different zones of relevance. The distance an individual has to the objective or symbolically presented reality is either close or not. Social elements and persons that the individual regularly has face-to-face contact

---

[1] See Schenk (1987), p. 436ff.

with form part of the „primary zone", whereas abstract social elements, like the public opinion or the social order are part of distant zones.

In modern societies there will be a continuous increase in distance between the social elements and the individual. Informal, direct channels of communication will not be able to grasp all the elements. Particularly characteristic for modern societies is in fact an increase in complexity of social reality through a constant functional division so that subsystems like the political, the economical and the information system become more and more autonomous. Individuals are therefore less capable to experience all by themselves. But of course it is essential that individuals establish concepts of the objective reality (in politics, economy, etc.). Without a minimum of common concepts social integration is not possible. That is why the mass media plays an important role in modern societies to balance the different levels of information people have in a society and to restore the lost common ground. The dependance of the members of modern societies on mass media is therefore obvious.

It is the task of the mass media to offer relevant information for life and relevant symbols. But the media can't fulfill this task alone in the necessary qualitative way. Additional structured and institutionalized communication is necessary. Especially unexpected incidents, conflicts and changing social roles through social change produce ambiguities through a lack of information and a lack of integration of useful information into the individual concept of reality, the individual life context.[2] The European Union is without any doubt one of the most dynamic political structures worldwide that is shaped by rapid and constant change and therefore constantly produces ambiguities. Complementary communication to the one that mass media offer is therefore needed also because the media do not work as the mirror of the political system but they apply their own rules in selecting and framing political news.[3] Still European decision makers believe in the role of the media as mirror even

---

[2] See Schenk (1987), p. 437ff.

[3] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p.12.

though the legal-normative context is not taken one to one, but the "facts" are de- or reconstructed, the functional perspective is linked to different world-views and life-world expectations. Such a mediatized public sphere is therefore doing less to close the gap between citizens and elites than is commonly assumed.

1.2.1.1. The added value of interpersonal communication

The more distant facts are from the individual experience, the more difficult is the reconstruction of such realities and the more individuals are dependent on and easily influenced by the interpretation of others.[4] But the dependance on the media for the construction of reality, for the understanding of reality is decreasing if individuals can make direct experiences with social elements through interpersonal communication. It makes therefore sense to find ways of letting people *experience* such complex and dynamic social elements like the European Union to enable them to remain competent in all aspects of life. Being capable of constructing reality means being more competitive in economic and social life.

The added value of interpersonal communication for the subjective construction of reality depends to a high degree on the social integration of individuals into small and homogenous groups[5]. Against all expectations and in contrast to research outcome in the USA, small, homogeneous and tight social networks are still the norm in Europe – in rural and urban areas.[6] If individuals form part of more heterogeneous groups then they are more exposed to the symbolic reality constructed by the mass media. One risk resulting for the European Union from that is that the distance to the people increases the risk of communication failures because (1) it is clearly talking *to* people and not *with* people and (2) communication always has to be re-contextualized, meaning adapted to the respective

---

[4] See Schenk (1987), p. 437ff.
[5] See Schenk (1987), p. 439ff.
[6] See Schenk (1995), p. 182, S. 232-233.

context of a country and even region to restart a debate.[7] The painful experience the EU makes is that mediatized debates obey to different rules than deliberations that take place within the Institutions. Mediatized debate has the propensity to make context more important than content. The transformation of the European media landscape into the direction of "infotainment", which is mainly provided by private television and the tabloids stands opposite of the European institutional actors who still provide their information for quality newspapers, which causes a trend towards misunderstanding.[8] Moreover the media is under economic pressure (struggle for attention) and needs to get as much attention as possible: The "Bullshit strategy" is therefore the most supportive for them, meaning skipping the value of truth to increase sales figures. That also causes the erosion of EU legitimacy. A "rational commitment" to the EU is less likely in a communicative setting characterized through symbolic politics and populism: A clear argument for structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication.

1.2.1.2. Differences between rural and urban areas

Interpersonal communication loses its importance for the interpretation of social facts and incidents in heterogeneous social networks in contrary to the importance it still has in homogenous groups. Consequently it is increasingly difficult for individuals to get their bearings. Due to research outcome in the USA and social change triggered by globalization and modernization the assumption came up that social networks are more heterogeneous and shaped by weak ties in urban areas at least.[9] But research on social networks and their communicative behavior doesn't support that, in contrary, networks don't get bigger because of higher education, they only get more diverse in the sense that not chosen relationships (mostly to family and relatives) lead to more interactions with

---

[7] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 11, S.12.

[8] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 15-16.

[9] See Schenk (1995), p. 46 ff.

people from different educational backgrounds. But in general individuals stay in homogeneous groups, surprisingly more in urban areas than in rural environments. Social networks in rural areas are even less tight, less closed and show more weak ties than those of urban citizens. But in general there are no severe differences between social networks in cities, towns and villages: In all cases small, homogeneous, closed and stable groups are typical. Interpersonal communication is therefore completely underestimated in times of high media penetration.[10] Individual opinions and attitudes get formed in social interactions and insufficient consideration of that blocks the view of political actors and journalists to realize that individuals do have an opinion and something to say within their personal networks. But political communication takes place on another, a mediatized level between elites. Approaches that offer structured interpersonal communication and integrate individuals are therefore more and more essential.

But even though there might not be severe changes in social networks social reality changed, especially in urban areas: There is an increasing amount of individuals who are less part of homogenous groups and who form part of many different, even contradictory and widely branched social groups, without the need of being really based in one.[11] Those individuals then become confronted with a higher amount of different point of views and opinions within their own social networks. Stability of values and the classical integration function of primary groups (family, relatives, neighbors, religious groups, etc.) don't exist anymore to a huge extent. It is more colleagues at work instead of family and neighbors that build the frame of reference for the formation of opinions – especially when it comes to politics. It is more friendly relationships to single persons and loose relationships than groups that build the context for relationships to others. Usually these social networks are more open to the outside world than the traditional, locally anchored groups of relatives, neighbors and cult groups

---

[10] See Schenk (1995), p. 232.

[11] see Schenk (1987), p. 278ff.

according to research on urban sociology.[12] Personal Relationships are shaped by widely branched and loosely connected networks. But those individuals are more conscious about modernity and its political and social implications because they get confronted with by far more information and experiences than others, mostly rural citizens. But still, it remains to be interpersonal communication that is more important for the setting of the agenda (what is talked about), the evaluation of subjects and the formation of opinion.[13]

The importance of interpersonal communication in modern and urban societies is therefore not decreasing at all.[14] They remain to be the main sources of formation of opinion. Interpersonal communication just became completely separated from the public political communication. That is the crucial problem here. The negative referenda in France and the Netherlands are a proof for the need for more and especially regular dialog with the people because they mark just the endpoint of a short electoral period in which there was, due to many reasons that will be partly laid out in this thesis, hardly any opportunity to get into real interactions.[15] What needs to be stressed here is that even the upcoming of social networks characterized by heterogeneity, openness and weak ties would argue for structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication. The reason is that the influence on the public opinion by the media is increasing if individuals form part of heterogeneous social networks because the direct effects of the media aren't reduced through interpersonal communication which influences the subjective concept of reality. It is less to fear that in European societies comprehensive mass manipulation is expected, but, as shall be laid out now, the media has limited competences.

---

[12] See Schenk (1987), p. 278ff.

[13] See Schenk (1995), p. 232.

[14] See Schenk (1987), p. 275; and Schenk (1995), p. III.

[15] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 10.

1.2.1.3. What media can and cannot deliver

Mass media are one factor of influence among many in society, which makes them not be the only cause of effects. Other factors of influence that cause effects of mass communication by media are:[16] (1) The predispositions of percipients and their consequent selective exposure to media services, selective perception and their selective retention, (2) the normative influence of primary, secondary and reference groups, (3) the interpersonal distribution of messages from mass media, (4) the opinion leaders or makers as well as (5) the structure of commercial mass communication in a free market economy. Mass communication therefore has an effect shaped by the five factors and is never a direct cause-effect phenomenon.

General observation of media and communication research is that mass communication reinforces already existing attitudes, opinions and behavior. Only in rare cases it leads to a change in attitudes.[17] On the other side, mass communication is effective if attitudes and opinions are built about facts on which percipients don't have an opinion on yet, like the diffusion of new products, the socialization of children or rapid social change.

But the evaluation and the interpretation of such information distributed by mass media as well as the gathering of additional information usually take place in small groups and social frames of reference.[18] Interpersonal communication therefore takes up a complementary function to mass communication. While mass communication mainly creates knowledge about innovations within societies, it is the interpersonal communication channels that are mainly responsible for persuasion, for the building of attitudes and for changing them as well as opinions and behavior.[19] When it comes to persuasion and decision making, face-to-face communication

---

[16] See Schenk (1987), p. 424.

[17] See Schenk (1987), p. 425.

[18] See Schenk (1987), p. 431, p. 439 and see Schenk (1995), p. 232-233.

[19] See Schenk (1987), p. 295.

plays an essential role. Mass media only deliver the topics for these interactions. In the process of adoption of information mass and interpersonal communication complement each other.

Adoption means the psychological attitude of individuals towards an innovation or a new information in the sense of a voluntary acceptance of the same.[20] The term adoption explains the individual learning process that takes place during the period of reception of an innovation along the five steps: (1) awareness, (2) interest, (3) evaluation, (4) trial, (5) adoption or rejection or further research. The added value structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication can have to assist individuals in the creation of their subjective concept of reality, to understand reality and to act upon this knowledge is not yet acknowledged. Only small scale experiments like "deliberative polling" are carried out.[21]

By presenting the Mutual Communication Approach, a first trial for a large-scale approach shall be carried out, that focuses on interpersonal communication in order to increase the capability of individuals to cope with inconsistencies that arose in their cognitive systems through information inputs. Especially political realities can hardly be directly experienced by people and therefore every transmitted information about politics and especially international politics causes inconsistencies, demonstrated by a lack of understanding, rejection or even fear if those inconsistencies can't be resolved. It is therefore important to acknowledge that news most of the time reach the people almost directly, because they are important. The more important an incident is, the more it gets spreaded.[22] The importance of an information is related to the amount of people whose life is decisively influenced by an incident (hard news). The European Union for instance by covering almost every policy field of a

---

[20] See Schenk (1987), p. 286.

[21] See Fishkin,
http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/docs/summary/
(06.05.2010; 17:19h)

[22] See Schenk (1987), p. 296-297.

normal Nation State influences the lives of a huge amount of people. Many people know about news like the Lisbon Treaty, but rarely people know what it stands for and what it means for their life.

For that reason again it must be stressed that, according to the analysis of communication channels, (a) mass media deliver inputs (information, knowledge about innovations) and (b) interpersonal communication is the means to evaluate inputs on the basis of cultural norms and values, to legitimize, adopt or reject or modify them until they fit into the existing culture.[23] Conventional political PR to convince people of the advantages of the EU can therefore be seen as little successful. Moreover it is less to think about how to convince the people – like the argument that policy impact will do so – but more the question of how to assist individuals in (a) diminishing inconsistencies and (b) how to assist individuals in better understanding reality, in being more capable of establishing a subjective concept of reality even though they can't personally experience many social elements of society. That bridges the gap separating the people from the reality they can't experience and reduces complexity of modern life which builds trust. And it is exactly trust, solidarity and understanding that need to be built so that people support the European Union.[24] Using the media for informing the people means squeezing information into the corset of special news values which means severe selection and modification of it.[25] Usually EU news is not selected because it doesn't correspond to the general news values. Moreover, issue attention circles are short and there are many issues competing for attention in the media. This severely restricts the possibility of long term debates and therefore learning processes based on discursive interchange.

---

[23] See Schenk (1987), p. 298.

[24] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 4-5.

[25] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 17

1.2.1.4. Structural knowledge versus subject knowledge

There is a crucial difference between (1) subject knowledge, understood as knowledge about circulating subjects and (2) structural knowledge or background knowledge, understood as knowledge of causes, involved actors, effects, solutions, etc.[26] Knowledge about subjects can be equally distributed among the different segments of society even if privileged individuals might know earlier about news, whereas different levels of structural knowledge among social segments usually remain.

Mass media have especially influence on the level of subject knowledge. But it is important to know that knowledge can also erode in well informed social segments and therefore all segments are vulnerable to forget. The Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) puts its focus on the aspect of increasing the structural knowledge among all social segments on a regular basis. Mass media in contrary tend to treat topics according to the logic of the free market.[27] Subjects come up as news and disappear rapidly again without usually following up on them. Instead new latest news is presented. The shortage in resources and space (newspapers, time for TV, etc.) reinforce that phenomenon.

The argument that the MCA can be useful here is based on the insight that the flow of information is more equal in small and homogenous[28] groups than in big and pluralistic ones. Differences in the amount of knowledge are therefore smaller if the flow of communication goes through interpersonal communication channels instead of those of mass communication.[29] The goal is to acknowledge the relevance of the two different degrees of knowledge for the individual capacity to (1) orient oneself in all situations in life and (2) to overcome difficulties of daily life. Mass media alone by just broadening subject knowledge can't therefore be sufficient in a complex society which is an argument for the

---

[26] See Schenk (1987), p. 308-309.

[27] See Schenk (1987), p. 227-228.

[28] Referring to congruence in opinion, similar educational background, similar age,etc.

[29] See Schenk (1987), p. 311.

establishment of structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication especially in urban conurbations where a lack of small and homogeneous groups is potentially reality which results in a decreasing influence of interpersonal communication for understanding reality.[30] The symbolic media reality is furthermore problematic because topics and incidents presented in the media don't necessarily correspond with the developments of the objective reality. That is the case because the goods the media offer are determined by the selling of attention according to the category of news. Understanding presupposes attention but most of the European public communication ends as un-received message because it doesn't find its way into the media.[31]

Image-Agenda-Setting on the other side is something the media can deliver in contrast to Issue-Agenda-Setting, for example before elections, where the image of a candidate (name, personal characteristics, activities, ideology, but less qualifications for the position) are being presented.[32] But the EU for instance doesn't have one face. Even during the elections for the European Parliament there is little possibility to create an image of the EU, especially because it is only one of several institutions. The structure is too complex for the symbolic reality of the media. That is why the reduction of complexity carried out by the media has fatal effects, like EU is „Brussels". Brussels becomes to be the symbol for many negative outcomes of globalization and unpopular policies that are in reality the responsibility of the member states – if for example the Council takes a decision.[33] But the role of different actors in the decision making process is too unclear, as also the White Paper on European Governance admits, to prevent that the simplification of the media causes that.[34] And as long as there is no other source of information than the mass media there won't be a solution to that.

---

[30] See Schenk (1987), p. 439.

[31] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 17, p. 18.

[32] see Schenk (1987), p. 212.

[33] See European Commission (2001), p. 7.

[34] See European Commission (2001), p. 10.

The MCA can contribute here, also because results from research show that interpersonal communication reduces the effects the media and the development of the objective reality have on people.[35] If structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication takes up subjects transmitted by the media and assists in interpreting them on a local level, a real added value for individuals is created. Topics and objects that cause an intense need for orientation usually lead to the intensive use of the media.[36] But as studies prove, interpersonal communication is more effective to bring about understanding, assist in orientation because of its interactive character, the existence of a reverse channel.[37]

1.2.1.5. Understanding – the goal of all communicative behavior

Understanding means that the communication process is successful, that the message sent is understood the way it was meant. That is guaranteed if the communication partners share the meaning of the sent signals.[38] In other words, human communication requires that in the consciousness of both communication partners the same meanings are constantly updated as well as it requires that both posses a stock of symbols that symbolize the same objects to the other communication partner, i.e. objects of everyday use, states of being, ideas, views, etc. George Herbert Mead talks about „significant symbols" that are characterized by standing for an idea that is also being activated in the mind of the communication partner which leads to understanding.[39]

Communication is therefore seen as „common actualization of meanings".[40] A shared basis of meanings is essential to successful communication. Here is exactly the crucial aspect spelled out about the

---

[35] See Schenk (1987), p. 222.
[36] See Schenk (1987), p. 223.
[37] See Schenk (1987), p. 219.
[38] See Burkart (2002), p. 26, p. 56.
[39] See Mead (1968), p. 85.
[40] See Luhmann (1971), p. 42.

role the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) can play for successful communication between politicians and individuals.

The MCA contributes to the creation of a common stock of meanings upon which understanding can be reached. Understanding doesn't in the first place mean acceptance of ideas, but the comprehension of ideas. The individual itself decides voluntarily whether to accept something or not – according to the process of adoption of information explained above -, but the huge assistance from outside is to facilitate awareness and understanding. That is the one added value of the MCA. Another one is related to the reverse channel: Nowadays individuals draw their knowledge about politics in the first place from mass media, as explained above, as well as politicians know about the interests of the general public to a great extent from the mass media, if one disregards for a moment the instrument of public opinion polling.

But both, mass media and public opinion polling, like the Eurobarometer, are insufficient means to know about the needs and interests of the individuals, to understand them.[41] Political decisions are mostly taken on basis of quantitative data and the opinion of experts.[42] Let's assume such quantitative data about population, unemployment rate, education rate, higher education graduates rate, economic growth, etc. are available. In order to boost economic growth for instance there are five different approaches on the table. It is usually mainly ideological arguments that define which one should be applied. But if qualitative data from the PCM-Workshops about the problems and needs of the individuals were available the quantitative data could be interpreted on the basis of relevant criteria: three out of five of the proposed policies to boost economic growth may work out but would bring about unwished side-effects by reinforcing problems and not meeting the needs of individuals. Therefore two policies remain and make a lot more sense than policies just selected for

---

[41] See Held (2006), p. 247.

[42] See European Commission (2001), p. 19.

ideological reasons or party-color.[43] Such a "Do no Harm Analysis" [44] in order to assess if a policy doesn't have unwished side-effects can more easily be carried out if these qualitative data are available. The so called "mixed methods approach"[45] talks about the use of quantitative and qualitative data in one approach in order to interpret the quantitative data and avoid misinterpretation.

Anyway, to let politicians and public administrators know more about the individuals and not only about the general public, which is necessary in times of modern, intercultural and pluralistic societies, adapted approaches have to be created. The MCA is a tool that offers political decision makers and public administrators high quality data about the individuals which can be used to interpret the quantitative data and weight the opinions of experts on basis of the needs of the people. The main aspect of the MCA approach is to ensure the qualitative deepening of the European integration process by introducing tools to do better what is already done, not to invent new miracle-like answers.

1.2.1.6. One-sidedness versus reciprocity

The intra-systemic (within a society or group) and the inter-systemic (between societies or groups) communication structures societies.[46] It transmits and modifies values and norms. The meaning of communication for societies is not debated anymore, because it is the precondition for interpersonal, for social behavior, for mutual influence and reciprocal orientation of behavior of individuals. Especially verbal communication, language, as the conveying of meaning between human beings, is important. What happens is exchange, interaction, understanding, participation and relationship, which brings in the special importance of interpersonal or direct face-to-face-communication:

---

[43] See Held (2006), p. 275.

[44] See Anderson (1999), p. 68 ff, p. 145.

[45] Johnson/ Onwuegbuzie (2004), p. 1-13.

[46] See Schenk (1987), p. 11ff.

The process of interpersonal communication is always reciprocal and makes the reverse channel possible which is essential for the realization of understanding. Feedback is necessary to clarify the meaning of a received message. That is how disruptive factors like the ambiguity of words or the individual misinterpretation of a statement because of different backgrounds can be overcome and the non-realization of understanding can be avoided.

On the opposite side there is the one-sided communication process of the mass media characterized by the transmission of information from A to B, by a stimulus-response logic without a reverse channel. The crucial difference between interpersonal and mass communication therefore lies in the by far more limited feedback possibilities in the mass communication process. The special meaning of direct communication is therefore obvious. Mass media are champions in spreading information but interpersonal communication is crucial for the interpretation and the integration of this information into the individual life context, in order to apply it in daily life. Here statements get assimilated.[47]

Interpersonal communication (also face-to-face or primary communication or interaction) stands opposite of mass communication (secondary communication), whereas the later is a special version of the first one.[48] With face-to-face-communication (1) the chance for successful conveying meaning is extremely high because it happens in a relative homogeneous surrounding in which norms and values are well-known by all participants of an interaction. (2) There are almost no disruptive factors because of the immediate possibility of feedback. In opposite the characteristics of mass communication are (a) a bigger space-time distance, (b) a bigger socio-cultural heterogeneous group of participants with a lower level of identifying themselves with senders of messages, (c) a lower frequency of communication, (d) a lower intensity of being in contact and (e) a lower chance of successful communication (reciprocity of communication)

---

[47] See Schenk (1987), p.19-20.
[48] See Schenk (1987), p.17-18.

through a (f) higher susceptibility to have disruptive factors involved. The coming up of a reverse channel through Pay-TV, Internet or similar inventions doesn't lead to substantial changes in this respect. The Internet shall anyway be discussed here later.

Mass communication is oriented towards a huge, heterogonous and anonymous audience.[49] As stated, mass media are champions in spreading information, but the focus shall be on the qualitative added values of information, on the *understanding of information* and the *integration of information into the individual life context*, which mass media cannot facilitate. Scientific research on media effects show that mass media reach the people but that individuals are only open within interpersonal communication processes for really tackling subjects which leads to the formation of opinion, meaning to the transformation of information into knowledge.[50] That exactly is important for the political culture and the lasting success of the European Union as a project of economic and political cooperation aiming at maintaining and expanding peace and stability.

Saying this, the focus directly needs to be put on the challenges Nation States face concerning their democratic system through being member of the EU. Mostly already existing democratic problems on the national level get potentially reinforced through the handing in of sovereignty to a higher level which shows that it is in the first place the deficits on the national levels that cause problems for the functioning of democracy.[51] Besides potential democratic deficits of the EU institutions[52], the membership at the

---

[49] See Schenk (1987), p. 19ff.

[50] See Dröge in Aufermann (1973), p. 174.

[51] See Pollak/ Slominski (2006), p. 177 and

[52] This vast topic can't be treated here, but see Menéndez (2007), S. 27ff. who talks about a four-fold democratic procedural deficit, related to (1) the democratic legitimacy of European constitutional norms; (2) the democratic properties of European law-making procedures; (3) the protection of fundamental rights in Union law and (4) the procedural guarantees in the process of application of Union law.

EU just reveals the problems of national democracies in a globalized world more likely and claims that the EU causes that are getting louder. But interesting enough, it can be that pressure on the EU to be more legitimate that can change the national democratic structures towards more integration of different tiers of governments and the people into the decision making process. The White Paper on multi-level-governance of the Committee of the Regions and the Lisbon Treaty, which gives room to the realization of such proposals, let assume such a trend.

1.2.1.7. Opinion leaders – making use of research results

Human beings are neither an anonymous mass audience or helplessly at the mercy of the mass media nor isolated individuals, but members of small groups and networks that deal as frame of reference for the formation of their individual opinions, attitudes and behavior.[53] Scientific research verifies that communication conveyed by the media is not characterized by a direct stimulus-response-relation.[54] It is a multi-level or cyclic[55] process in which the media sends out information which triggers further communication. It is proved that there are always so called opinion leaders or opinion makers within social groups that are characterized by (1) having more interest, (2) gathering more information, (3) discussing and communicating more with other people than others.[56] That this interpersonal communication process is especially important for the formation of opinion is also proved. The essential point thus is that the use of the media or the interaction with other people is motivated by the wish to minimize uncertainty. Opinion leaders, amongst others, fulfill the function of assisting in "overcoming insecurity in political behavior".[57]

---

[53] See Schenk (1995), p. III.

[54] See Eurich (1976), p.41ff.

[55] See Schenk (1995), p. 231.

[56] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 122ff.

[57] See Eurich (1976), p. 62.

The personal influence of opinion leaders on the attitudes, opinions and on the behavior of individuals in their direct social environment is higher than the effects of mass media. Important here is that opinion leaders and other people form part of the same primary group. Opinion leaders take up the task to connect the group with the wider surroundings.[58] Because they are interacting with mass media and other opinion leaders scholars talk about a multi-step-flow or cyclic flow of communication within a net of social relationships. The flow of information is said to be more or less direct from the mass media to the individuals.[59] Then people talk about the incidents they heard about from the media. Here the opinion leaders come in by providing further information to the individuals because they are better informed. Based on that insight from research the significant role of the Local EU Experts (LEUEs) can be understood.

LEUEs can act constructively here by providing further information through (1) regular presentations for and consultancy of local assemblies, (2) regular presentations for local public, (3) informal conversations in (a) the office or (b) on the street, in the pharmacy, the restaurant, the church, etc. as well as through (4) conducting PCM-Workshops, where in the process of analyzing the living situation of the individuals the interrelation between different tiers of governments and the private life gets discussed. Fears and rejection that arise out of not knowing well about social segments can actively be overcome by providing high quality information in face-to-face interactions. That contributes to strengthening the EU as central political structure of our modern times which is crucial because it is obvious that there is no alternative to it in the globalized world.

But provision of information by LEUEs should not be misunderstood as a process of manipulation or conviction of individuals to make them be in favor of the EU and national politics. LEUEs are locals and therefore advocates of the local interests. But they are well informed about and knowledgeable of aspects of political realities what normal individuals

---

[58] See Schenk (1987), p. 251.
[59] See Schenk (1987), p. 254.

usually aren't. The idea is to consciously and artificially create the situation where two people (the two LEUEs) know more and share their knowledge in order to provide structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication that is necessary to deal with the output of the mass media. Because the LEUEs are locally based a permanent presence of the topic EU and a permanent communication process are guaranteed. It can be understood like the convergence between the fox and the little prince in the story of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The fox can decide voluntarily if it wants to trust and accept a relationship – based on the chance it gets to know more about the little prince.

Of course research on media effects is carried out along the question if and how the media and opinion leaders can persuade the people.[60] But the LEUEs aren't there to persuade the individuals of how good the EU is. Political Marketing, according to media research, doesn't work out that well because mass media confirm existing attitudes, opinions and behaviors and have very limited influence to change them.[61] What LEUEs can do is, like the little prince, to give the individuals the opportunity in face-to-face interactions to get familiar with the complex social reality of politics today. The potential chance of getting in touch with the EU that gets a face through the LEUEs and gets touchable, closer and the chance to understand the interrelation between the EU and the individual life through the PCM-Workshops shall be increased through the LEUEs.

Integration is a process that can't be forced but is characterized by the free and voluntary decision of individuals. Having subject knowledge about the EU and its successes (typical political marketing approach) is a minimum basis but for successful integration the direct *integration* of the social reality of the EU into the individual life context is important, meaning real understanding as a starting point. Political Marketing about how good and important the EU is, is not enough to let *interest* arise. Even though one tries to get more information it is still so confusing and time-intensive

---

[60] See Eurich (1976), p. 69.

[61] See Schramm (1964), p.90.

that real understanding is mostly never reached which leads to a decreasing interest. The lack of access and participation on the EU level triggers the lack of trust among Europeans which then is further upheld by the media with its critic view. Therefore there is a limited capacity on both sides to understand each other.[62]

Political Marketing therefore can't lead alone to the successful and lasting integration of individuals, because that needs in the first place a voluntary and independent acceptance of the EU which is facilitated through the *integration* of the complex reality of the EU into the individual life context. To persuade somebody is not enough out of several reasons. One is that the acceptance of the EU is not just a rational process. To emotionally comprehend the importance of the EU means to be able to link the reasons of individual problems to solutions and policies that are at least in the shared competence of the EU. Why nevertheless politics loses legitimacy is, as laid out above, that policies for instance to boost the economy are chosen on basis of ideological criteria and not on basis of the needs of the people which often reinforces social problems.

To not give misunderstanding the way, it is necessary to stress here that the complexity of the EU is not the problem but rather reflects the complex and pluralistic societies which it tries to deal with. The problem is that individuals don't get many opportunities to learn about the EU and its importance for their lives. *Direct experience* is essential for human beings to grasp reality, as explained before. And those are not made by consuming media output. But the EU is always a big topic in the media and the bigger the news value of an incident is the more important the interpersonal communication is in the process of diffusion.[63] People talk more about topics with high news value, like the assistance to Greece from Euro-countries. The added value of LEUEs is that the diffusion of further information on the respective topics can be carried out (a) with by far more area coverage and (b) with high quality information. LEUEs add

---

[62] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 12.

[63] See Schenk (1987), p. 256.

quality information and objectivity into discussions which gets lost if transmitted solely by the media as explained above. The likelihood that individuals who interacted with the LEUEs in any form pass on information to members of their social networks or groups they belong to is extremely high, because interpersonal communication has its primary function in the diffusion of information.[64]

According to the consistency theory of Troldahl, individuals who receive new information that is inconsistent to their predispositions or previous convictions feel inner tension that motivates to restore balance in the cognitive system.[65] Opinion leaders can help to overcome inconsistencies and restore balance and so can the LEUEs play an important role to fulfill this need of individuals in a highly professional way. LEUEs assist that individuals are able to assess the received information, to overcome inconsistencies and to adapt previous attitudes, opinions and behaviors to new realities.[66] Even though opinion leaders aren't alone, but only additionally to the mass media, responsible for the transmission of information and for influencing about what people talk, the interpersonal communication is highly important for the mass communication process. The problem is that the communication flow only within and not in between groups is well-developed.[67] The added value of the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) is that it brings together members of different social groups – e.g. in the PCM-Workshops – and therefore contributes to spreading the information in different social segments or groups. Groups are usually characterized by homogenous opinions.[68] LEUEs would act as bridge-builders between those groups and offer the same access to information for all and *listen* to all to the same extent (at least in the PCM-Workshops).

---

[64] See Schenk (1987), p. 258.

[65] See Schenk (1987), p. 262.

[66] See Schenk (1987), p. 268.

[67] See Schenk (1987), p. 271.

[68] See Schenk (1995), p. 147.

The MCA therefore gives individuals the opportunity to have access to other social segments. That makes "cultural fusing" possible and in the end social cohesion. The exchange of information about attitudes, opinions and behavior makes a cohesion process possible between the external and the internal culture of small groups. It is a process of social integration.[69] The import of new information and ideas from outside gets especially accelerated through relationships with individuals that are outside of a group and who make a relation between separate groups and subgroups possible. LEUEs would totally correspond to such individuals. Central is that members of groups interact with opinion leaders of their groups who themselves spread again the information within the respective group – which has been already approved by science.

Putting that into practice would contribute a lot to the formation of an informed citizenship, of a „critical public opinion", which is essential for the functioning of a representative democracy within a pluralistic society.[70] The objective of the MCA is to contribute to the formation of a critical public opinion and enable a constant exchange or interaction between political decision makers and individuals. The mass media can't do that alone. A structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication process is crucial for the formation of such a critical public opinion. It is characterized by well informed individuals that can form an opinion on basis of their knowledge. To understand a subject is the precondition to further critical reflection of a subject. Exactly that qualitative added value the MCA should bring about: It is necessary for the reason of a lasting success of the project EU to guarantee (1) clarity and (2) comprehensibility. That means to be transparent, but not in the sense of "pellucidness", which is tried to secure through adding more legitimacy to the EU by integrating the EU Parliament more intensively, but in its qualitative two senses just mentioned. Here transparency is related to the people not to political structures and activities.

---

[69] See Schenk (1987), p. 273.

[70] See Burkart (2002), p. 391, p. 521.

1.2.1.8. The critical public opinion

Nowadays the public comes into being from and comprises of information that was published by the mass media, meaning information becomes accessible for the general public.[71] "Public opinion means published opinion".[72] As a rule today, political decisions are only to legitimate if they are the expression of the will of a majority of the affected population. But the establishment of objectives, or more concrete, the formation of political objectives require clarification as well as discussion of opinions and point of views. The media is a platform on which different positions compete with each other by articulating the diversity of interests and opinions: They are the megaphone for all democratically acceptable political parties, associations and interest groups of a society. That this conveying of information by mass media is also in itself problematic as a political function should not be subject here. The issue is more that the inadequacy of the performance of the media points out the importance of institutionalizing and structuring interpersonal communication in addition.

Political communication on the grassroots level is necessary, meaning communication between individuals and political decision makers about problems and which decisions to take.[73] Only then a pluralistic public can come into being in which different interests can be articulated and compared with each other. The mass media alone can't fulfill this task because they are lacking a reverse channel. The communicative contact or connection between individuals and political decision makers is never the less today mainly established by the mass media. That makes them practically hold a monopoly on political communication because discussions in political organisations like political parties, associations or clubs are not in competition with them due to their almost complete absence. For deeper criticizing the political functions of the media there is no space in this thesis, but I already wrote my first master thesis about a

---

[71] See Burkart (2002), p. 391.

[72] See Schenk (1995), p. 1.

[73] See Burkart (2002), p. 521.

new interpretation of the functions of the media on basis of a reflection of the cultural history of modern democracies.[74]

Burkart continues that the individual only has an opportunity to act reasonable if he reaches *clarity* about the political problems, conditions and circumstances (structures and institutions) and about the political thought and political activities of the different interest groups and institutions.[75] The MCA can assist in establishing such transparency, still in the sense of (1) "clarity", "comprehensibility", not (2) „pellucidness". The thesis argues for an increase of "clarity" about the EU or "comprehensibility" of the EU among the people of the EU member states in order to be more transparent and more likely to be accepted by the people. The focus will be the people and not the political decision makers, which would be the case when focusing on "transparency" in the meaning of „pellucidness". Here the discussion is about the *lack of democracy*, the lack of *pellucidness* within the decision making process of the supra-national and intergovernmental bodies of the EU.

Of course it is not possible that human beings deal with all political questions within a highly specialized society.[76] That is not meant with the MCA. It is just stated that the necessary reduction of complexity carried out by the media is insufficient as well as the fact that the media as the only source for political information causes problems and that there are additional approaches needed. It is characteristic for a pluralistic democracy that all relevant societal groups have the opportunity to express their interests. With more complex structures like through membership of the EU, existing societal problems get reinforced. So the fact of a disproportional influence of economic actors on politics in comparison to the pressure for action triggered by individuals that only

---

[74] Florian Kadletz: „Die Zukunft des Fernsehens – zur konstruktiven Kritik der Informationsgesellschaft" (2005)

[75] See Burkart (2002), p. 523.

[76] See Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 18.

have a say in election times every four to five years,[77] or the threat that individual liberty and minority rights get sacrificed in the name of the majority.[78] Important is that the MCA is free of ideology as a structure. The MCA has no intention to emancipate, to criticize or to revolutionize. It reflects the basic values of modern polyarchies[79] with their focus on basic liberties and rights. It tries to reinforce and improve existing structures. Goal is the qualitative strengthening of the practicality of existing structures.

The point of view Habermas adds to the discussion about the critical public opinion argues for the MCA as approach. He states that a discourse can only occur if communication partners can start from the idea that they have the same chance and opportunities to articulate point of views and to get the other to agree to them.[80] The special structure the Project Cycle Management (PCM) offers, that is applied in the PCM-Workshops, guarantees that the individuals have exactly that secured – which will be explained in detail in chapter three. Communication partners assume that consensus between them is based on the pressure of the better argument. That is in general the communicative theory of a democratically organized public: Societal questions that are causes of conflict are treated (1) according to specific rules of equality of opportunity (general accessibility as accessibility of all individuals to information and as transparency of knowledge and interests as well as the opportunity to articulate point of views) and (2) rationally in the sense of a reasonable and argument-based debate. Both aspects are guaranteed by the PCM-approach of the PCM-Workshops.

General accessibility and rational discussion are the necessary elements of a practical structure that can produce a critical public opinion.[81] Only such a democratic public that is organized by communication oriented

---

[77] See Heywood (1997), p. 33, S. 94.

[78] See Heywood, (1997), p. 80.

[79] See Heywood (1997), p. 32.

[80] See Burkart (2002), p. 527.

[81] See Burkart (2002), p. 529.

towards *understanding* seems to contribute to meeting the objective of the Enlightenment, i.e. that individuals are able to think by themselves without being steered by others.

1.2.1.9. Advantages of face-to-face communication

In comparison to the mass media personal relationships are potentially more influential out of two reasons:[82] The coverage area is bigger and they have psychological advantages. Political discussions on the level of interpersonal communication are more influential than broadcasting and the press – when it comes to structural knowledge and not subject knowledge. The psychological advantages of interpersonal communication, the reason of its higher influence are: (1) Personal influence is more powerful because the informal and direct interaction can less often be chosen as free as the use of mass media. Political topics get picked up more often because they occur in passing and unexpected in informal conversations. Because one is less mistrustful of being persuaded in direct interactions, one is more open than when using the media where one is already prepared to pay attention and reject.[83] (2) The flexibility of personal relationships make more possible than mass communication: The reverse channel and the opportunity of a development of a conversation are unique. Trust can be established through personal contacts. On such a basis mutual influence is by far more likely to happen which can be described as "opinion sharing". Schenk adds that individuals trust more those they know since longer time than a distant newsreader or author of the mass media.[84]

Other scholars complete that view: The likelihood that individuals are open towards statements is more likely in face-to-face communication because they are mistrustful of the mass media due to knowing their intensions.[85] Man to man contacts are more flexible and allow direct feedback. Face-to-

---

[82] See Lazarsfeld (1969), p. 190.

[83] See Lazarsfeld, (1969), p. 192ff.

[84] See Schenk (1987), p. 248.

[85] See Schramm (1964), p. 120.

face communication therefore has the potential of triggering developments through allowing passing comments become more prominent or allowing personal influence through passing comments. Empirical research shows that most political conversations happen between individuals that share the same characteristics, like age, similar profession und same political bonds.[86] Meaning individuals communicate mainly with individuals who agree with them. That explains why most of the time attitudes, opinions and behavior don't change. But it is also interpersonal communication that has the potential for change. The added value of the MCA is that individuals from different social segments get together and share their point of views, especially in the PCM-Workshops which can be enriching for the political culture and the individuals.

Individuals with different opinions get reached through face-to-face communication. They go less on the defensive if they get addressed. They experience direct rewards through agreements of the communication partner if consensus can be reached.[87] Another aspect is that the sum of information and opinions produced by the sum of formal communication channels, the media, is enormous and that it is impossible to cope with it. That explains why individuals seek to go into interactions to assess and interpret what they have heard and seen and read. Especially the informal conversation that happens by chance is important for the question of the distribution of information and for the formation of opinion. That's why it is important to have the LEUEs locally based so that they can constantly meet people on the street, be present and accessible. That's what makes the EU come to life and be relevant for the daily life on the grassroots level.

Research on communication supports that point of view: Effective communication needs several channels. But different channels fulfill different functions in the process of the formation of opinion and the

---

[86] See Schramm (1964), p.123-124.
[87] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 128.

formation of decision.[88] Mass media establish the first contact with information but personal conversations are used to gather further information (through seeking contact with opinion leaders). Personal advices are important to develop new ideas. The mass media can't fulfill that, they confirm existing positions. Research shows that just the fact that someone forms part of a group influences the perception the percipient has about a statement as well as it has influence on the acceptance of a statement.[89] It therefore makes a qualitative difference if LEUEs are locally based and live and work in a community where they come from or experts from the capital or even Brussels or the Parliament in Strasbourg come to do similar work.

Especially in rural areas where the process of transition to a modern and urban industrial or knowledge society takes place the man to man communication is very important.[90] That is especially the case in new EU member states or accession countries but also in the old member state countries, to convey innovations from the outside world. *That is crucial because traditional opinion leaders are not able any more to connect their group with the wider societal system (the EU in that case).* But in the case of the European Union it is not just about conveying information, the task is to interpret information, assist in understanding it (transparency aspect). That makes a deeper treating of information necessary in addition to the initial informing the media carry out.

Another argument for face-to-face communication and therefore for the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) is the common assigning of cosmopolitans to modern and locals to traditional social systems.[91] The traditional interpersonal communication of the MCA approach will therefore be attractive to locals and the interactive element will be interesting for cosmopolitans, because their world of values is strongly characterized by self-determination, personal liberty, being responsible for

---

[88] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 128.

[89] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 134.

[90] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 135.

[91] See Eurich (1976), p. 79.

the environment and the community. Not to neglect in this context is the outcome of research on communication about political inactives. Inactives are characterized by reading less news magazines, by being less capable of retelling incidents of national or local relevance, by having lower educational background, by being less involved in informal or formal social activities and by assessing themselves less as opinion leaders.[92] They participate less in the general communicative events (mass media and interpersonal communication) and are therefore often called "opinion avoiders". The media has stronger influence on inactives and less interested as on politically actives.[93] Because in the total population there are more inactives the MCA can have positive influence here and pick up the inactives from where they are: from their own life context with their own problems. Within the PCM-Workshops those individual problems get connected to the bigger political context which can start an integration of the complex political reality into the individual life context. This moment of insight may even turn inactives into political actives, but at least it serves to reach a better understanding of the own individual person within a society. The phenomenon of nationalist parties that strongly criticize the EU as well as their attractiveness can also be fought because frustration has an outlet where pressure can be reduced also by having the real experience of being heard within state structures.

But the conditions for successful intervention of the LEUEs are that they are real experts, that they are informed above-average and turn their attention actively and regularly to the media to know what the individuals know or might have questions about.[94] What that means in detail shall be explained now.

---

[92] See Schenk (1987), p. 265.

[93] See Schenk)1987), p. 225.

[94] See Schenk (1987), p. 251.

1.2.1.10. Features of opinion leaders

Individuals are to be understood as a net of relationships in which opinion leaders play a crucial role.[95] But what are features of opinion leaders? What makes a person be an opinion leader? The "service" opinion leaders provide for others is to reduce insecurity in behavior through interpretation of information and the reduction of complexity to the level of the respective social context of a group.[96] To be able to fulfill that task they have to have some typical features:[97]

(1) Have a great interest in subjects in which they are opinion leaders in,

(2) Having a vocational position that lets assume that a person has competences in a field (position with high professional expertise)

(3) Be easily accessible, sociable and knowing many people especially those also interested in the same topics,

(4) Having relationships to sources of information outside of the direct social environment, which is expressed by travelling activities to other towns or cities and a special use of the media,

Schenk adds another aspect to the already mentioned need for being competent and accessible:

(5) Being concurrent with the norms of the local and the wider social context.[98]

If LEUEs are successful, meaning credible, depends on those five aspects. To be more concrete, opinion leaders need to be communicative persons (1) who receive *respect* in the first place because of their professional expertise, (2) who are held in *high esteem* because of their knowledge about social norms and (3) who receive *sympathy* because of their knowledge about values.[99] That is what makes individuals turn to some persons as vocal points.

---

[95] See Schenk (1987), p. 252.

[96] See Eurich (1976), p. 86, p. 90.

[97] See Schramm (1964), p. 122, p. 125.

[98] See Schenk (1987), p. 300.

[99] See Eurich (1976), p. 85ff, p. 78ff.

The just mentioned features were put together by scholars as the result of research. Every time an individual turned out to be a vocal point for others to talk to, the person had those typical characteristics. This research outcome can now be used to artificially and consciously create a setting in which a person, the LEUE, can offer professional services through structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication. The logical conclusions are therefore:

In order to let LEUEs be credible, meaning successful, it is obvious according to the above mentioned aspects that the LEUEs are meant to be locally based. That is what makes them be knowledgeable about the local norms and values and that is what makes them be accessible. The added value is that the EU gets a local face that can be trusted in – like the metaphor of "Le petit prince" given before explains. Through their position in the local assembly, the town or city district assembly a certain official respect is guaranteed and training shall provide them with the expertise needed to fulfill their tasks. Knowing about the features of opinion leaders in general puts us into the position of creating a setting for LEUEs that lets them be credible. It is a vast opportunity that we shouldn't miss out.

It is important to point out that the aim is not to replace the local reality with the European one or to infiltrate the local culture. Traditional structures, opinions, attitudes and behaviors promoted by traditional local opinion leaders remain, but there is a new connection of each village, town and city district with the outside world through the LEUEs, who establish an active relationship between inside and outside world as "cosmopolitan opinion leaders"[100]. Within the light of the intention of the EU to maintain and strengthen diversity and local cultures and customs such a parallel structure is supportive, because new and traditional realities can coexist at the same eye level. The unknown gets touchable and gently integrated into the existing social reality until the normal process of development at

---

[100] See Lazarsfeld (1964), p. 125.

some point will bring about a hybrid culture that is made up of both realities.

1.2.2. How the work of the LEUEs looks like in practice

In order to give a better idea of how the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) should function, some more details shall be provided here.

The fact that the MCA is integrated in already existing *official state structures* opens vast opportunities for its success. If for example presentations about the European Union are carried out by NGOs or others there is usually little participation and those who come are usually already interested and are already more knowledgeable than the average individual. That doesn't mean that the people change because of the existence of the MCA, but there are new doors open to boost participation and therefore social integration. Mayors of a village, a town and a city officially announce through the media and / or direct mail advertising that presentations for the public are being held. They inform about the topic, that the presentation will be held in each village, town district and city district at a special venue and that participation is for free.

Based on that official announcement a certain kind of value is given to such an event. It is not just an interesting gathering, but an official interaction between citizens and the state facilitated by local actors. Of course the presentation as the name says will have more the character of a one-sided process in the first place, but (1) it is carried out by locals in "local language" and (2) after the presentation there is room for questions and interaction. The interesting aspect is that individuals know get heard by the state, by official actors if they discuss, if they raise concerns or bring in constructive ideas. That is the added value of making use of official structures. It has a difference in quality and the MCA can be perceived by citizens as a step towards them.

No doubt that there is a difference between urban and rural areas but in every case the local actors personify the norms of the local groups of which they form part and "speak the same language" what makes them be

the ideal mediator between local and European reality.[101] Their duty is to provide orientation in order to reduce insecurity in behavior.[102] They help interpret, assess and explain information conveyed by the media in the presentations for the public and open the floor for questions and discussion afterwards. They contribute to the integration of the complex political reality into the local, everyday life reality by reworking the media output in presentations and by communicating formally and informally on the street, in the office like a doctor holding surgery. LEUEs can therefore also be the personal intermediary of the EU Ombudsman. The EC proposed in its White Paper on European Governance to establish further structures like that.[103] On the other side the LEUEs should clarify whether there are information needs through conversations, the use of the media and an awareness of actual developments. Precondition to do so is a level of being informed that is above-average as well as a communicative and social active behavior.[104] Of course also a feeling for not worning out the intervention activities but to remain within a predefined quantity of interventions (presentations for public, consultations of local assembly, etc.) is demanded.

On the other side the LEUEs conduct PCM-Workshops. How the workshops shall be prepared will be explained now but the details about what it exactly looks like will follow in the third chapter: National statistic institutes take a representative sample of individuals of each village, town district and city district. The approximately 15 people get a letter of invitation half a year before the workshop takes place. It is an official letter of the state like those sent for invitations to take part in the national census. For good reasons individuals can refuse but in general it is mandatory to participate like in the national census. This makes necessary that, authorized through the agreement for implementation of this policy on the highest political level in the European Council, the European

---

[101] See Eurich (1976), p. 87.

[102] See Eurich (1976), p. 43.

[103] See European Commission (2001), p. 25.

[104] See Eurich (1976), p. 45, p. 46.

Parliament, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, participants are given off for three days without consequences at school, work or training center. To give an idea: If a village, town district or city district has 10.000 inhabitants and PCM-Workshops will be carried out every four months, 60 individuals will participate per year. That means that it would last 166 years until every person participates once. A limit to maybe randomly get chosen only every five years shall be guaranteed in order to minimize the burden for the economy and the individuals. Of course the span of time for being excluded needs to be adapted to the number of inhabitants for each region to not face the problem of not having anymore individuals to invite.

Important is that the LEUEs collect qualitative data about the point of view of citizens and hand it over to all tiers of government. Considering the White Paper of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on Multi-Level-Governance, that would give local actors a new position and would contribute to a reorganization of political cooperation. There will always remain a certain power imbalance between local, regional, national and inter- or supranational actors. But through the proximity to the people established through the MCA, local actors experience an increase in importance by becoming directly responsible for their proximity. Local actors are directly connected to the individuals and present their will, point of views to other actors via transmitting the data. That opens the door for more cooperation which is wished by the CoR.[105]

By collecting the data about the problems and needs and point of views of citizens, local actors become literally the representatives of the people. These data are a powerful tool that they can use to involve themselves in the formulation of national strategy papers, in the development of the National Strategic Reference Framework, in bringing up ideas for Regional programs and projects. Local actors can write position papers on basis of the collected data that help them interpret their quantitative data and define which policies they want to carry out. These position papers have

---

[105] See Committee of the Regions (2009), p.34.

then a higher weight. But as explained above, the main added value of the PCM-Workshops is compiled out of three aspects:

(1) Individuals have a forum where they get heard and interact with the state. Being able to get heard is a crucial aspect to strengthen the legitimacy of a political structure and avoid experiences of democratic frustration. There is only a weak connection left between politics and the individuals. Scholars expect even a more progressive disempowerment of citizens to give inputs into the political process and see the role of citizens reduced to assess the political output. The reason for that is the increase in pluralism in society, of complex problems and the turn away from the logic of national-based behavior.[106] In order to remain capable of acting so called "leader democracies"[107] arise with charismatic leaders that take decisions which citizens evaluate in the aftermath. Consequences are a decreasing turnout at elections (political apathy), decreasing binding power of people's parties and feelings of political alienation through increasing amount of democratic frustration. Exactly these developments call for adapting existing democratic structures to maintain and expand their responsiveness. To solve structural weaknesses of the democratic reality with strong leadership is just a step back, as the Italian example that Berlusconi gives shows. If a leader is good or not depends on factors of personality and of the context. To risk having a bad leader can bring us where we come from. Therefore the MCA is a constructive alternative.

(2) Political decisions about which policies to carry out are based on quantitative data, expert opinions and ideological principles or positions.[108] The main contribution of the qualitative data collected in the PCM-Workshops is to have clear criteria on basis of which decision makers can clarify which policies to implement and which not. It is a kind of "Do no

---

[106] See ApuZ, 2-3/2010, 11. Januar 2010, p. 9.

[107] See ApuZ, 2-3/2010, 11. Januar 2010, p. 12.

[108] See European Commission (2001), p. 19 and see European Commission (2010), p. 62, p. 63, p. 112, p. 168-169.

harm"-approach that helps avoid unwished outcomes of policies that occur when policy makers don't take into account all aspects.

Elections every four to five years are not enough to consider the opinion and needs of individuals in a pluralistic and rapidly changing society and ideology as criteria to chose the appropriate policies are not sufficient anymore because society isn't shaped anymore by the line between workers and capitalists but is by far more diverse and needs are individualized and different per region and time. That is one reason why individuals lost their trust in politics, because ideological block thought isn't the right way to represent people anymore.[109] Politics implements policies to boost economic growth but neglects the real needs of human beings besides their existence as employees or employers because they base their decisions on the needs quantitative data obviously point out: We need more mathematic students, a shorter duration of studying, more research, etc. Expert opinions and the ideological position are further criteria to select which policies are to carry out. But "listening" to the people and taking up their needs as basis for making politics is asked.[110]

Of course the global pressures reduce the opportunities of free policy making, but out of five different policies for whatever area there is at least one that helps meet the objectives best and still takes into account the needs of individuals and therefore avoids unwished side-effects of policies. The objective is to maintain the opportunity for individuals to give input into the political process. That is essential to avoid a decreasing turnout at elections (political apathy), increasing feelings of political alienation and an increasing amount of democratic frustration.

Of course it is not possible to take up the needs of every single citizen and make it the basis for politics but by applying the MCA a good amount of input from the individuals is guaranteed and more important a *political culture* of listening and interacting is re-established.

---

[109] See ApuZ, 2-3/2010, 11. Januar 2010, p. 12.

[110] See Held (2006), p. 305, p. 307-309.

(3) The PCM-Workshops provide a basis for program and project planning for EU Regional Policy and the LEUEs as Experts on the EU help increase the absorption capacity of the regions so that money returns from "Brussels". The data collected in the PCM-Workshops can be used to identify areas of projects and programs. That can be used to assist in either applying for funds or to contribute to the formulation of National Strategy Papers and the development of the National Strategic Reference Framework. This shall be discussed in depth in the third chapter.

1.2.3. The role of the Internet and its limits

The clear division of individuals into transmitters and recipients is changing to a limited extent through the Internet.[111] The special innovation is the diversity of forms of possible ways of presentation of information that can be pictures, written words, videos, spoken contributions, etc. But the Internet is primarily based on technology and the use of a computer and is itself not seen as a medium because the pure technological definition of the term medium wouldn't allow to grasp the social aspect of it which is defined by the way the technology is used. The Internet is therefore in the first place a technology for communication, a communication channel, a communicative infrastructure, like cable or satellite TV channels, on basis of which media like websites, homepages, online newspapers, discussion fora, newsgroups, chats but also traditional ones like books, letters, etc. are establishable. Homepages or online newspapers are therefore also to define as mass media because they use a technology to spread information to an indeterminated amount of people.[112]

The main term describing the phenomenon is "multimedia"[113], talking of a development that combines television, personal computer and telephone to a multimedia-station. The term stands for media products and services that have basically three characteristics in common: (1) the opportunity of

---

[111] See Burkart (2002), p. 38, S. 44.

[112] See Burkart (2002), p. 172.

[113] See Burkart (2002), p. 362ff.

an interactive use, meaning the user is able to change contents or set off activities by using reverse channels. That makes the user not be bound to a simple role of a percipient; (2) individuals can use different types of media at the same time, meaning dynamic media like audio and video sequences are combined with static ones like text and graphic elements; (3) of course the digital technology is the basis of all these applications that facilitates the saving and editing of the conveyed data through specific compression processes. The interactive services for consumers will remain entertainment-related like different perspectives of cameras one can choose for sport events for example.

The other aspect is the international network that is created through new communication technologies that produces a complete new "virtual reality"[114], called Cyberspace which more and more individuals can enter by going "online". The Internet as a term describes the worldwide biggest computer network that is defined by the merger of regional, national and international computer networks. Through this network data can be transmitted from one to other computers that are connected to the network. Since 1991 the so called "world wide web" (WWW) was introduced as a tool to give access to many different ranges of goods that was established by CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire).[115] It is a collection of documents that can be accessed on all Internet-servers in the so called HTML-language. All documents are accessible via their URL-(Uniform Resource Locator)Address. This uniformity is the main strength of the WWW. Essential is that the WWW is not only facilitating the use of already existing information but facilitates the opportunity to give input into the system. Firms, associations, institutions, individuals can present themselves via homepages. The web is therefore useful (1) for the communication between participants via Email, newsgroups, chats, (2) for the obtaining of information and (3) for the description of oneself (presentation of information). There is therefore

---

[114] See Burkart (2002), p. 366.
[115] See Burkart (2002), p. 368.

a rising opportunity for the individual arrangement of information in contrast to the simple presentation of information in the classical media.

But of course the Internet shouldn't trigger too much euphoria, because in the first place by considering the economic perspective, investments into the data-highway are not done to improve humanity but to boost economic growth, in particular for special branches. The Internet and similar networks will lose their anarchic and subversive character (they have due to their decentralized infrastructure) soon like the radio, the video and the pop music did even though high hopes were linked to finally reach a real communication system where real interaction happens.[116] The conclusion is therefore that the interaction with other individuals is the less special quality of the data-highway. The more remarkable innovation of the Internet is the potential accessibility to a vast amount of data. For the first time in human history the whole knowledge of humanity can be accessed by a huge amount of individuals.

Interesting in this context is that the huge amount of data needs to be channeled again and the drive on the data-highway becomes a "guided tour" again by the services of "google" for example which orders and selects data in a more than questionable way (manipulating) in contrary to the common gatekeeping (selection of information) journalists provide.[117] Anyway, there is more influence of the percipient than with television. The change in role from a simple percipient to a user is expressed through the choice in using different services and especially in the possibility of interpersonal communication via Emails, networks like "facebook", discussion groups, chats, etc. But the "interactive user" won't completely replace the passive audience.[118] The interactive opportunities of the new communication channel are just reinforcing the chance to look for specific data which is the typical behavior of individuals. This selective use of the media is a common fact that is proved by research. The specialty of the

---

[116] See Burkart (2002), p. 369.
[117] See Schmidt (2008), p. 33.
[118] See Burkart (2002), p. 373.

Internet is therefore the increase in opportunities for the individual to *select* specific information by him or herself, because information is not like with television streaming towards the percipient but individuals have to choose the hyper-link actively and select therefore.

Concerning the aspect of interactivity offered by the connection between telecommunication and computer technology the new technical infrastructure that emerged opens the door for new opportunities of social interaction. But by reflecting them research showed that it is again the traditional social structures that come up.[119] Like for instance the fact that a few actors are dominating many fringe groups in internet forums. It is definitely an advantage that news can be published almost the time an incident occurs and that the briefness of news presented in television and radio can be reduced by offering online services and of course many online newspapers for instance offer interactive interaction with users, but the quality of the information given by "Peter from Bremen" or "Carole from Toulouse" is to question. So what is the real political added value? What is the contribution of the Internet to the democratic culture?

The mere existence of a reverse channel "[…] is not a guarantee for public resonance."[120] and can't still replace a face-to-face communication process.[121] It is and will always remain a difference in quality of experience if a person stands in front of another person and both can discern or recognize each other and align their behavior with the other or if a person communicates with another person or group of persons that are not directly experienceable but more the relation to the computer is in the forefront.[122] A good example is the increasing exhibitionism of individuals who, in the anonymity of the Internet, do things they would never do in real life, in real relationships. Another aspect is that locally based LEUEs are real human beings one can meet and trust because one can control them in the sense that there is permanent social control in social groups. The

---

[119] See Burkart (2002), p. 375.

[120] Fossum/ Trenz (2006), p. 16.

[121] See Harrer et.al. (2008), p. 319.

[122] See Burkart (2002), p. 376.

distrust towards the media in general is great as mentioned above so why should people trust anonymous individuals in the internet or administrators organizing political discussions through the internet?

A real person one can know, one can *respect* in the first place because of the direct experience of his or her professional expertise, one can *hold in high esteem* because of his or her knowledge about social norms and one can show *sympathy* because of his or her knowledge about values, is not to replace by an anonymous computer-based communication process that moreover normally is carried out alone at home in front of a personal computer. The added value of direct personal interaction in a social context of a public presentation, a workshop, etc. is not to replace by the Internet. The internet is an additional tool that has its advantages but can never replace a real person and the quality of relationship a real person can build with other human beings. And it is that difference in quality that the EU needs to ensure that it is anchored within the societies of Europe. Public opinion is not just to make via PR and mass communication. Integration is not just a process of convincing people. The complexity and difficulty of getting individuals on board should be acknowledged by putting into place high quality structures that do justice to that immense challenge.

Social changes triggered through globalization and the progressive individualization that go along with technological innovations are reality but that is no argument against direct face-to-face communication as a useful tool. In contrary, the in general as positive seen individualization is not at all inconsistent with approaches of interpersonal communication because of already above mentioned new trends like the wish of self-determination, the renaissance of a felt responsibility for the environment and the community. Locally based interpersonal political communication can especially be an asset in a globalized and individualized world where decisions are taken on supra- and international levels. Experiments about "deliberative polling" prove that.[123] Most crucial point remains that

---

[123] See Held (2006), p. 247.

interpersonal relations still remain the most important forum for the formation of opinion. That is why the Internet can never fulfill the same task as LEUEs.

The internet in contrary can be used to assist the work of the LEUEs: There should be a homepage where LEUEs share best practice examples, where they get updated, get information about further trainings and workshop and presentation materials, where e-learning is offered, etc. Individuals can use the Internet in addition to do further research on topics that were tackled in presentations or workshops. Here it can have added value because a problem remains if the Internet is seen is *the* solution: the necessity of being informed. Whatever is offered through the internet from taking a vote on specific laws to more referenda, etc. it doesn't solve the problem that individuals have to be well informed and form an opinion before. The mass media can't contribute to that process because here it is about structural knowledge and the formation of opinion and that is where interpersonal communication plays a bigger role. Moreover, there is the risk that through e-governance many segments of society like older people get excluded, even though e-governance is basically to support.[124] Research results show that web-2.0-users are generally males between 14-29 years old, highly educated and have a very good financial background, whereas all others (5% of German population) are web-1.0-users who don't give input into the Internet but consume only.[125]

What counts anyway is that the political reality remains far away from the everyday life reality of individuals which leads to not being able of experiencing that reality directly – a huge disadvantage as explained above.

The MCA guarantees the growing together of both realities on basis of which later applications of direct democracy via e-governance seem more realistic – although the MCA doesn't intend to install a new structure of direct democracy but to strengthen existing functioning structures and

---

[124] See Schmidt (2008), p. 26.

[125] See Gerhards et.al. (2008), p. 135, p. 139.

improve their functioning. However, the active involvement of individuals, the mere possibility of participation is not the solution itself.[126] Demanding that everybody is responsible to actively involve him or herself by taking part in the political process via the Internet is utopian. To counteract the tendency that the individuals have progressively less the chance to give input into the political process is in contrary worse working for, but doing so needs more than just the provision of a communication channel. Because that doesn't solve the problem that individuals need to be well informed and that participation levels are weak. A qualitative added value for individuals is requested which requires more expenditure – but not in the financial sense. The following argument shows why:

How can trust be restored between politics and the individuals? That is by far not just a rational question that can be solved by providing information, by carrying out successful policies (because success is subjectively assessed) to convince people. It is a question of emotions, fears, worries and needs like the one for security. Here the Internet can't assist in the first place. It remains just an impersonal communication channel that can be used by persons like LEUEs that work for building up trust, who establish closeness and contribute to a convergence between political and everyday life reality. Closeness is not established by the access to information (as tried via the Internet). To make up for the loss of trust in politics more personal relationships are necessary.

1.2.3.1. Research results on the "cans" and "can nots" of the Internet

"In the internet, nobody knows that you are a dog" (Peter Steiner)[127]

The Web 2.0 does not stand for a radical change of the Internet. It was just promoted as one, but in reality the specialty that every user is a potential transmitter who can give inputs into the network and connect contents, existed also before.[128] The term stands more for the whole sum

---

[126] See Witte (2008), p. 98ff.

[127] See Bross et.al. (2008), p. 271.

[128] See Schmidt (2008), p. 19, p. 21.

of applications the Internet provides than for a huge step in innovation. That helps to avoid being captivated by utopian thought. Nevertheless during the last years the changed individual use of the internet contributed to social change that is characterized by (1) the increase in active users that give input into the network and (2) the increase in public that is possible through more and more accessible information provided by the internet.[129] That is why the term "social web" came up describing the social character of the Internet expressed through an increasing communication among individuals and groups.

To provide an example, the most widespread application of the social web is Wikipedia but only less than 10% of users of Wikipedia (the total number of users is approximately half of all Internet-users) edited articles, wrote articles or uploaded videos.[130] 2006 it was 5% of the whole German population that actively used internet applications where they could give input.[131] The more fascinating aspect of such a still irrelevant active input of users is therefore the fact that knowledge and culture become to be objects of change and that each individual can influence this process of enhancement of knowledge and culture. The expansion of public through blogs and weblogs gives these new applications therefore a complementary role to the classical media and online-media – but still the quality of the content is to question.[132] In the anonymity of the Internet the responsibility of what is said is not guaranteed and the quality of the source itself (who is Peter from Bremen?) is not comprehensible.[133] Thus there is lots of room for manipulation in blogs and discussion groups.

Anyway the insight that the vast majority of Weblogs, videos, podcasts and contact platforms does not attract broad attention but is mainly followed by few people who know the publishers shows that the internet

---

[129] See Schmidt (2008), p. 19, p. 25.

[130] See Schmidt (2008), p. 26.

[131] See Gerhards et.al. (2008), p. 129

[132] See Schmidt (2008), p. 30.

[133] See Beck (2008), p. 67, p. 68, p. 71, p. 74.

public is not to equate with societal relevance.[134] It is more personal public that is established, meaning that individuals are active users to meet their objective of identity, relation and information management by presenting personal things that are potentially accessible by the general public.[135] But the societal relevant public is still established by traditional media and their online branches.[136] Users just add their opinions via blogs to articles or other applications which is crucial to understand the relevance of the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA). Considering other user-focused activities like the assessment of products, articles, etc. (e.g. in amazon) by the sum of many users the selection of the sum of information is facilitated through the internet. As well as the RSS-technology[137] helps to receive only information on news about subjects one chose in advance according to special keywords. But still that might shift the problem of selection of information only from the WWW to the individual feed-reader. What remains is still the need for an individual strategy to choose and weight information on its relevance. There is no reason why individuals should be left alone doing that in the field of politics if LEUEs can contribute to facilitate in selecting and understanding information.

Another problem occurring is the form-content-dynamic.[138] Authentic stories like one about a poor family and their problems lose their authenticity through their presentation in the media and especially if presented via video or pictures. The picture ritualizes the authenticity and lets it freeze in mere symbolism. The same might happen to the aspect of participation. If participation is measured along the criteria that individuals have the opportunity to describe themselves, there is an increasing risk that the term participation is being hollowed out. This becomes manifest in the common experience that the form of presentation dominates the

---

[134] See Beck (2008), p. 63.

[135] See Schmidt (2008), p. 32.

[136] See Witte (2008), p. 102.

[137] See Gerhards (2008), p. 131.

[138] See Witte (2008), p. 106ff.

political content.[139] An example of the Homepage of the German Green Party shows that users are invited to participate in the creation of the homepage but not in the discussion of political contents of the party. Similarities occurred in the way the Internet was used by politicians during the latest French and US election campaigns: Politicians avoid journalists and sell their messages directly to the public. But that is not grassroots politics, even though it should be seen so. It is political PR made by professional PR specialists and shouldn't be misinterpreted in another way. The crucial aspect is that the planned effects of such political PR are even hard to figure out for PR experts and less likely for amateurs of course.

However, fact is that democracy needs participation and participation needs public. Journalism usually establishes public but next to the media agenda there is the agenda of the internet-users expressed through blogs, websites, discussion groups, etc.[140] The avoiding of the gatekeeping of journalism by politicians is one example for that. The influence that such a parallel agenda has on journalism can really lead to more participation of the general public, but it is still more professional PR and politicians that make use of setting a parallel agenda and alternative counter agenda setting is still marginal.[141] The example of a video published by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in the Internet shows the problematic effects that a parallel agenda can have:[142] The public service broadcasting showed in its news program "Tagesschau" parts of the video of Merkel and not a self-made interview. But of course the traditional media feel pressure to take those self-published data into account for their work.

The potential for interactivity and the decentralized communication structure of the Web 2.0 are therefore basis of visions and hopes for the strengthening of elements of direct democracy. But up to now empirical

---

[139] See Witte (2008), p. 108.

[140] See Witte (2008), p. 111-112.

[141] See Wimmer (2008), p. 225.

[142] See Witte (2008), p. 98.

research couldn't verify relevant effects.[143] Just a footnote: In history many times with the upcoming of new information and communication technologies high hopes came up for changes in societal realities because human societies - their structures, internal power constellation and models – are mainly based on communication. That is why from a broad participation of individuals in the political process positive effects for the democratic development of a society are expected. The potential for interactivity is therefore seen as chance for the strengthening of deliberative processes and for direct democracy.[144] The argument of the democratic potential of the internet is based on its potential for interactivity whereas the equal access to the Internet is as problematic as with the traditional mass media – in both cases there are access barriers.

However, the thesis about "electronic democracy" is that the Internet can augment the participation of individuals in the political decisions. Background to that is the theory of deliberative democracy. Central thesis is that deliberation is crucial for democracy. Through rational public discussions of subjects more rationality is introduced into the political process and problems of modern representative democracy like the (1) alienation of individuals from their representatives and (2) from the political structures can be solved.[145] The Internet facilitates direct participation and could therefore complete existing structures. Risks that are mentioned focus again on the fact that not all segments of society use the Internet (digital divide of society as expression of the fact that barriers of access are unequally distributed). The conclusion is therefore that there aren't general effects of the Internet but rather different degrees of effects according to different social segments. That would not improve the chances for participation of the whole society but reinforce the chances of political participation of the information elite and contribute to the increase in imbalance between socio-cultural groups. The MCA in contrary avoids

---

[143] See Bräuer (2008), p. 188, S. 192.

[144] See Bräuer (2008), p. 190.

[145] See Bräuer (2008), p. 190ff.

those risks by making use of very traditional ways of communication. Of course the LEUEs themselves are intensively using the Internet and it is up to every individual to use the Internet as additional source to do further research before and after presentations, workshops or informal conversations.

The latest research on the internet and its effects on democracy show that the mere access to internet didn't change the ways of political communication.[146] The internet didn't contribute to more participation in the political process so far. Still it is potentially possible that Web-2.0-applications like weblogs, wikis, podcasts and video-casts may trigger more political participation. Arguments for that are the continuous equal exchange between communication partners, the cheaper and quicker internet why more people are joining and the technical potential for individual political participation. But research data show that the expansion of applications with the Web-2.0 didn't lead to more productive internet use or user generated content. In general one can state anyway that the Internet provides a new space for the discursive exchange between different societal actors. That is a potential without any doubt but in order to meet objectives like closeness between political and everyday life reality of individuals, to rebuild trust, fight political apathy, increase the legitimacy of political decision makers the internet can only be an additional tool that facilitates in a cost-efficient way the efforts of professional persons working directly via structured and institutionalized interpersonal communication for the above mentioned goals.

Research results show that the engagement of individuals in the active establishment of personal political statements didn't change since the Web-2.0 innovations.[147] That brings in again the argument that participation and political apathy are closely linked to the distance between political and private reality and that the service of involving the people is not done by providing communication channels but needs to include also

---

[146] See Bräuer (2008), p. 192.

[147] See Bräuer (2008), p. 204.

the service of informing and cooperating with individuals – like the MCA plans to do. That is the added value that makes the difference and that can't be provided through the internet as reality proves today: There is enough information out there but that doesn't help meeting the above mentioned objectives and the mere opportunity of a reverse channel won't change anything about that either.

The example of the "IT-Gipfelblog" shows clearly that blogs that are used for the involvement of the broader public into political discussions have as precondition that persons are well informed or are even experts in a topic and are highly motivated and interested in order to participate actively.[148] Most of the users were anyway passive and just read. Here the German IT-branches and politics discussed on a summit how to make Germany's IT-technology branches world leaders. The lack of involvement at the summit motivated the organizers to establish a blog to discuss topics in the aftermath and use the data for the next summit. An evaluation of the blog showed that participation only started through massive reporting of the mass media and that the participation rate decreased massively by 57% after three month.[149] The main reason given for that was the style of the blog which was considered as monotonous and without the opportunity for independent inputs. Another aspect that the MCA considers contrary to the blog is that the blog doesn't form part of official state structures and every contribution is an effort without the guarantee that it will be considered.[150] That also influences the motivation to participate. If, like in the PCM-Workshops, every contribution is considered as important and used by political officials as aid for decision making, the feeling of being heard and therefore the degree of willingness to participate must be a different one. But interesting of course is to establish blogs to keep discussions for example after PCM-Workshops or presentations of LEUEs for the general public or the local assembly alive. Here the Internet can

---

[148] See Bross et.al. (2008), p. 269, S. 276.

[149] See Bross et.al. (2008), p. 275.

[150] See University of Siegen et.al. (2010), p. 8.

play a role for those who use the Internet actively. That would definitely make sense.

A study on the social impact of ICT (information and communication technologies) of the University of Siegen and others carried out for the European Commission in the light of the "EU Digital Agenda" makes another point just reinforcing what was said before:

"Around the turn of the century, visions of a 'new democracy' incorporated predictions of mass participation in politics and policy making via the Internet. Similarly, it was the expectation of the Web 2.0 perspective (emerging after 2004) that citizens would
increasingly contribute to policy making in all kinds of ways, and that a multitude of creative contributions of user-generated content would influence the way policy is being developed and shaped in Europe. Such optimistic visions are still to be found. However, one would be hard pressed to find any real-world influence of e-participation projects and pilots on institutional policy and politics, at least in Europe.
[…] The main motive for governments and public administration to start experimenting with e-participation is to **close the gap that is perceived to be growing between governments and citizens** and to boost the legitimacy of government policy and administrative decisions. So far, there is **no robust evidence that this has occurred**. […] Those already engaged in traditional forms of political participation (a small minority of all citizens) are the most likely to engage in e-participation. This means an overrepresentation of high-educated and well-off citizens and, in some applications, an overrepresentation of males. A barrier to uptake of e-participation is that advanced digital skills are needed in addition to traditional citizenship skills, such as social skills and knowledge of decision making
structures & processes)."[151]

The added value of the MCA is that there are no preconditions for the individuals to take part. There is no unwished side-effect of reinforcing social divide. It is just the LEUEs that need to be trained and of course there needs to be a "Do no harm" analysis done on the possible side effects such LEUEs have on the internal power balance of local authorities to not trigger hierarchical power struggles. Anyway, the Internet has potentials, as the study also shows:

---

[151] University of Siegen et.al. (2010), p. 6, p. 7, p. 8;
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=5789 (18.05.2010, 09:59)

"E-participation is already proving effective for producing learning among participants,
thereby contributing to informed citizenship. E-participation projects increase awareness about the capacity of the population to contribute knowledge and innovation for tackling societal challenges."[152]

The conclusion of the potential of ICT applications and the problems that still remain is that the Internet can for the time being only be an additional tool that is used by human actors working for bridging the gap between citizens and governments. The MCA can play the crucial role of preparing the ground for later upcoming e-participation. But it is obvious that e-governance is not applicable from the scratch. There needs to be work done before its implementation. The main problems that individuals have to be well informed, have to be highly motivated to participate, have to have trust in the political system, have to feel heard aren't solved just by the provision of participation channels. Interpersonal Communication is the key to tackle those challenges. That is why also the final recommendation of the study is arguing for the same:

"For the time being, it is essential that initiatives for enabling political participation make use of multi-channel approaches, so that all citizens can be reached regardless of their digital literacy skills and type of online access."[153]

---

[152] See University of Siegen et.al. (2010), p. 8;

[153] See University of Siegen et.al. (2010), p. 8;

2. Deliberative democracy as the appropriate theoretical concept to support the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA)?

In connection with the discussion on new forms of participatory governance a brief look should be taken on the theory of deliberative democracy as one concept coming close to what the MCA proposes. Therefore the theory could give partially a theoretical fundament to the approach. But it is important to stress that there is no need to challenge the current political system in its totality, because it is basically functioning well. There is just the need for adaptations – fundamental adaptations, but still just adaptations. Deliberative democracy, as I go along with certain scholars, should therefore rather be seen as the most consistent democratic theory within which the representation mechanisms that are characteristic of modern parliamentary democracy can be defended and upheld instead of being characterized as an alternative to classical representative democracy.[154] In that light the whole MCA-approach is proposed here in order to strengthen and improve existing structures. Every proposal that needs fundamental reforms before it starts to function is to neglect out of a good reasons: Such approaches claim to be better but no one can predict it before trying. Instead a pragmatic approach that starts where we are now and that contributes to give direction to political activities in a new light but still fits into existing structures helps to adapt the political reality to the social reality of pluralism, individualism, globalization of politics and economy, an increase in political apathy, a decrease in turnout at elections and an increase in distance between individuals and governments.

Anyway, deliberative democracy is seen as a political approach that puts its focus on improving the quality of democracy through enhancing the nature and form of political participation which means by far more than just

---

[154] Menéndez (2007), p. 8.

increasing participation like it was discussed in the last chapter.[155] That is motivated by the insight that the source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals but the process of the formation of the will itself that is called deliberation.[156] A fundamental conclusion of deliberative democrats is that institutional designs of modern democracy must be based on the principle of "reciprocity".[157] Therefore the focus must be put on procedures of preference formation for politics. In order to do so additionally to the act of voting there need to be "dialogical forms of making one's voice heard"[158] in place. A political theory therefore needs to focus not only on political macro-institutions but needs to think about mechanisms that foster and hinder deliberation and debate. Considering what was explained in the chapters before that would contribute to ensure a cooperative link between individuals and governments right from the beginning.

In order to link the theory directly to the MCA the following contributions, that are said deliberation makes to enhance the quality of public decision making, are reflected upon the question of how the MCA can or cannot fulfill the same. Deliberation contributes to the enhancement of the quality of public decision making through:[159]

(1) Sharing information and pooling knowledge – in accordance with the principle of openness, that is also highlighted in the White Paper on European Governance[160], so that the relevant information and documents are accessible and the opportunity for public debate and scrutiny is given

(2) Transforming the individuals' understanding of complex problems and improving their skills to grasp those problems – in accordance with the principle of accountability that obliges political actors to explain the roles of

---

[155] See Held (2006), p. 232.

[156] See Stie (2008), p. 2.

[157] See Held (2006), p. 233; and Menéndez (2007), p. 8; and Stie (2008), p. 3.

[158] See Held (2006), p. 234.

[159] See Held (2006), p. 237; and see Stie (2008), p. 4.

[160] European Commission (2001), p. 10.

different actors in the legislative and executive process to establish clarity.[161]

(3) Contributing to the individuals' understanding of elements of their living situation which they had not appreciated before like aspects of the interrelation to public issues or of being actively involved,

(4) Producing outcomes of democratic processes that are thoroughly examined, justified and therefore legitimate.

The hope of deliberative democrats is to strengthen the legitimacy of democratic procedures and institutions by embracing deliberative elements. Those elements are in place to expand the quality of democratic life and enhance democratic outcome. Reflecting on the four bullet points quickly makes clear that the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) has very similar objectives and claims. The MCA is less revolutionary in its claims – that's why not all potential contributions of the theory of deliberative democracy are listed here - but focuses more on pragmatic contributions of the involvement of individuals in the political process for the enhancement of political outcome. Still there are parallels. For instance it was mentioned that the collected data of the PCM-Workshops are to use as one set of criteria on which decision-making over policies can be based (ad (4)). That legitimates the decisions because obviously political actors took into account the directly communicated interests of individuals. "Ensuring wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to Implementation"[162] – is also what the White Paper on European Governance proposes. An important point is that, contrary to the claims of some deliberalists to include all individuals' opinions, "The key argument [here] is to include the plurality of needs, interests, preferences, facts and positions so that an as qualified as possible decision can be made"[163]. Discourse theory, that usually holds that position, argues for "elected" representatives to deliberate and not the public which is neither

---

[161] European Commission (2001), p. 10.

[162] European Commission (2001), p. 10.

[163] Stie (2008), p. 5.

to agree on but rather that not everybody needs to deliberate, but a randomly "selected" representative sum of people. Of course data delivered by for instance the Eurobarometer can never have the same weight as those from the MCA: first of all because individuals are not defining what to discuss about and second it hasn't the same area coverage.

The aspect of quality through debate and deliberation is another point in common and integral part of the MCA which gets explicit where the PCM approach of the PCM-Workshops secures rational dialog in the light of equal opportunities for all – although this position in contrary is not idealistic. Economic and other inequalities don't need to be diminished before the MCA can be implemented. Anyway, central is that deliberation is only seen as free and therefore well functioning if it is not constrained by prior norms or requirements and if, as Habermas added, the only exercised force is the one of the better argument.[164] Deliberalists in fact talk about the necessity to base decision making less on ideological positions and self-interest by stressing the need for the best argument as the only legitimate basis. That is exactly what the PCM proposes: The best argument is defined as the real needs of individuals per region that help interpret and weight quantitative data and expert opinions in the dilemma of the political need to work for economic growth and equality, social integration and cohesion at the same time. The outcome of that process builds the best argument on which decisions can be taken. That is why the MCA data should be added as important criteria for deciding which decisions to take and the issue is not that the individuals decide like in direct democracy.

Therefore individuals don't need any requirements for the participation in the PCM-Workshops. They are experts about their own lives, their needs and problems. That is all they need. The LEUEs then assist in rationalizing

---

[164] See Held (2006), p. 238; and Menéndez (2007), p. 8.

the "private views" through the specific method of the PCM approach. But still, the dialog taking place during the workshop enhances the aspect of the preference for the better argument as the only legitimate force to reach consensus because there is an arbitrary ensuring it in the person of the LEUE. The workshop therefore provides the ideal setting for dialogs where individuals have to justify their statements and bring forward arguments and counterarguments until consensus is reached. That counterworks outcomes reached by coercion, manipulation or bargaining because all participants enjoy formal and substantial equality. Of course some participants are more educated than others but the structure of the PCM-Workshop allows to balance that because participants aren't confronted with each other but rather complement each other. For instance one person brings up a problem during the establishment of the problem tree. The LEUE asks whether this is a root cause or a consequence cause and the discussion starts with the person who mentioned the problem. Then other persons come in and add their views. It is less about being wrong or right but more about establishing a professional problem tree together by finding consensus about the type of problem. The aspects of what causes it and what it effects doesn't lead to confrontation but to dialog because everything that is said is relevant and pined on the e.g. wall. It is more about finding the right expressions, the appropriate definition of problems. Of course, that idea needs to be defended by the LEUE and then equality and the preference for the force of the better argument will be maintained as a realistic application of the idealistic claim.

This is important because being clear about common problems is the basis for clarifying common needs. "The European general publics are [definitely] insufficiently interconnected, and as a consequence, they have a weak and erratic impact upon the processes of lawmaking. The emergence of European publics would require the interconnection of local, regional and national *publics*, something which would presuppose that issues are debated simultaneously and according to a roughly similar

agenda, so that the arguments can flow across borders and influence the debates of general publics, such as the European Parliament."[165] Of course the MCA can't fulfill that task alone but it can contribute to a simultaneous public discussion on similar agendas through a constant and Europe wide deliberation that helps even creating a European public. But this topic is too vast as to discuss it here.

Another crucial aspect of deliberative democracy is impartiality which is defined as being open and assessing all point of views before deciding what is right or just in contrast to following self-interest.[166] That describes an ideal attitude of political decision makers also and in relation to the MCA it describes the openness of public actors to the input of individuals to use them as a set of criteria for choosing policies instead of basing decisions mainly on ideology, which is equal to self-interest. In contrary to the theory of deliberative democracy the MCA doesn't seek to reach the best arguments through deliberation on which decisions can be based but to reach consensus about an analysis of problems and wished solutions of the common living situation of different communities and that this rationalized opinion of individuals is offered to decision makers. Then the set of qualitative data can be used to assess which policies are appropriate for each policy area because the data clearly differentiate between different policy areas. Therefore it is obvious that the not existing claim of the MCA to directly produce political decisions on the grassroots level through debate but provide a set of criteria to legitimize and facilitate the taking of political decisions by representatives, needs the active commitment and cooperation of political actors. That should be reached by the decision on the political level of the EU of all member states and EU institutions to implement the Mutual Communication Approach.

What the MCA can contribute to the political culture in this regard is reinforcing the aspect of "impartiality" in the making of decisions by

---

[165] Menéndez (2007), p. 32.

[166] See Held (2006), p. 239; and Stie (2008), p. 4.

introducing one more element into the decision making process that needs to be taken account of and weakens therefore the partial because ideological point of views. That contributes to enhancing the quality of public decision making because the necessary simplification of public interests in ideological block thought is getting interpreted in its soundness by comparing it with a snapshot of the real pluralism of interests in real society. That control mechanism contributes to ensure that decision making on policies is appropriate to the many individuals and not only to the supporters of a political party with a specific ideology that might govern at a time. That avoids unwished side-effects of policies that are possible if not weighting up potential choices for policies with real interests if individuals. That would correspond with the universal principle of democratic deliberation: "Always listen to the other side"[167], which corresponds with the goal of the MCA to bring in again the heterogeneous interests, the diversity but without threatening the functioning of the state by introducing the pure rule of the many.

Practical tools proposed by scholars of the theory of deliberative democracy are deliberative polls[168], deliberative days, citizen's juries, expanding voter feedback mechanisms, citizen communication, reform of civic education, etc.[169] Ideas that can be drawn from for instance the deliberative poll for the MCA are that results of the workshop can be published in the local media so that the general public would be stimulated to consider their own views. The argument is that collecting data through tools like deliberative polls or the PCM-Workshop as comparable approach has a particular recommending force because the data represent what the public think in contrast to ordinary opinion polls that assess what electorates think given how little they know. Experiments in the US showed that those debate groups do work out and have positive impact and there is evidence that governments in many countries are

---

[167] See Held (2006), p. 244.

[168] See Fishkin (2006), p. 1-2.

[169] See Held (2006), p. 246ff.

making use of for instance citizen's juries that are similar to deliberative polls, to help create an informed environment for public debate and political decision making.[170] The example of "voter feedback" mechanisms reflect the aim of the MCA to improve communication and understanding between decision makers and individuals. But still the difference of the approaches lies in the argument that the MCA is an additional tool fitting into existing structures.

The conclusion is therefore, according to the aim of this research, that the idea of deliberative democracy can support the MCA in its aim to improve the quality of the political process and to bridge the gap between political and everyday life reality but claims like the "European Union can only exercise its powers legitimately if […it…] ensure[s] European citizens a sufficient degree of participation and influence."[171], aren't applied that radical in practice. Moreover, it is obvious that the internet is completely incapable to realize what was discussed above and can only be an additional tool to support what interpersonal communication can deliver.

---

[170] See Held (2006), p. 248ff.

[171] Menéndez (2007), p. 2.

3. The PCM-Workshop

As exhibited by the diagram explaining the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) the LEUEs also carry out PCM-Workshops. As the name already points out, the well known and well respected approach Project Cycle Management (PCM) builds the basis for the workshop. What that means exactly and how such workshops are structured and why they are considered to make sense exactly like that, shall be explained in detail now.

3.1. The Project Cycle Management (PCM):

This tool, initially invented by the US Agency of International Development in the 1960's to better plan, implement and evaluate programs and projects, is today the approach used by the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and many other project based organisations, also in private economy.[172] The quality of this tool is not to put into question anymore. What will be done here and what makes sense is, to discuss limitations and introduce ways to overcome them by introducing the Outcome Mapping approach. But PCM is definitely worldwide seen as a top tool for analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

In the context of this research, the emphasis will lie on the analysis-tools and the planning-tools offered by PCM, according to the profit one can draw from that for analyzing the existing situation of a village community or of a community of a district of a town or city and for the question of planning specific activities. PCM is a useful tool to investigate the relevance of eventually already proposed projects (e.g. within a cross-border program) or to identify potential objectives and strategies to solve unaddressed or insufficiently addressed problems (e.g. for the development of the National Strategic Reference Framework) - in cooperation with beneficiaries, the people. This "Partnership"-principle is

---

[172] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 57.

one of the essential advantages of the approach that helps guarantee the **ownership** of development processes by the target population which will be discussed in the following parts as essential for success.[173]

In particular, the outcome of the PCM-Workshops can be used on the one hand for communicating the needs and positions of individuals to decision makers and on the other hand for the planning of specific programs and projects within, for example, cross-border programs: The results of the problem, objectives and strategy analysis are used as the basis for planning in cooperation with other stakeholders. This would be applied if for example within a cross border program a project between an Austrian and Hungarian village is planned to boost economic growth or to take care of the natural reserve park together. Then the data collected in the workshops would be integrated into the planning of projects to ensure that projects are (x) relevant to the real problems of target groups or beneficiaries, (y) that projects are feasible, meaning that objectives can be realistically achieved within the constraints of the operating environment and capabilities of the implementing actors and (z) that benefits generated by projects are likely to be sustainable. Important is that the European Commision stresses in its PCM handbook that the achievement of these aims requires (a) the *active participation of key stakeholders* which also includes the citizens and (b) the *promotion of local ownership* which brings in the local authorities.[174]

For carrying out the PCM-Workshop the four main elements of the "analysis stage" of the Project Cycle Management approach are essential. Number 2, 3 and 4 will be taken into account for the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA).[175]

---

[173] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 6, p. 14.

[174] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 17.

[175] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 60.

(1) Stakeholder Analysis, including preliminary institutional capacity assessment, gender analysis and needs of other vulnerable groups such as the disabled,

(2) Problem Analysis, profile of the main problems including cause and effect relationships,

(3) Analysis of Objectives, image of an improved situation in the future, and

(4) Analysis of Strategies, comparison of different options to address a given situation.

3.1.1. Problem Analysis

What is understood by problem analysis is that the negative aspects of an existing situation are identified and "cause and effect" relationships are established between the identified problems. The three main steps in this sub phase of the cycle are (when already adapted to the PCM-Workshop and to the work of the LEUEs):[176]

(1) Definition of the framework and subject of analysis:

In the initial phase of the workshop the LEUE explains again what was already written in the invitation letters, namely why everybody was invited and further refers to the analysis the individuals now will carry out of their own living environment. That also helps clarifying the subject of the workshop which is to define as follows: perception of problems and wished solutions in the direct living environment;

(2) Identification of the major problems faced by target groups and beneficiaries: (What is/are the problem/s? Whose problems?); and

(3) Visualization of the problems in form of a diagram, called a "problem tree" or "hierarchy of problems" to help analyze and clarify cause–effect relationships. Important is that problems are also getting clustered according to policy areas, e.g. education, economy, infrastructure, etc.

Of course reality is never simple like that and there are no direct cause-effect-relationships in social realities but for the process of making

---

[176] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 67.

complex reality understandable in the first place it is a useful tool. Attention needs to be paid to not take this mindset of apparently existing direct cause-effect-relationships over and apply it when formulating (a) activities for implementation and (b) indicators for monitoring and evaluation which usually is done. Here the main weakness and source of mistakes of the PCM approach is to identify which will be discussed. Anyway, a proper and comprehensive problem analysis provides the basis for developing a set of project and/ or program and policy objectives that are relevant and to do justice to the needs of individuals.

3.1.1.1. Creating a problem tree

According to the second bullet point after the definition of the framework and subject of the workshop the LEUE continues with the facilitation of the creation of a problem tree. The approach to create a problem tree will be directly explained on the basis of the PCM-Workshops carried out by the LEUEs. In general the whole process is a participatory group event. The only requirements are a room for around 17 people, individual pieces of paper or cards on which individual problem statements can be written and a smooth surface like a wall to pin the papers or cards into cause and effect relationships visible to all. The course of the workshop is clearly structured by eight steps:[177]

Step 1: The LEUE as workshop facilitator hands out cards or pieces of papers and a marker to each participant and asks them to write down all the problems that come to their mind (one problem per card expressed by the maximum of three words) according to the prior defined subject "problems of the direct living environment". A timeframe of 10-15 minutes is set out before. The aim of the first step is in general to openly brainstorm problems which stakeholders consider to be a priority. This first step can either be completely open (no pre-conceived notions as to what stakeholder's priority concerns/problems might be), or more directed,

---

[177] See European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 67.

through specifying a "known" high order problem or objective (e.g. improved river water quality) based on preliminary analysis of existing information and initial stakeholder consultations.

Step 2: The LEUE selects the cards/ papers with the problems written down during the brainstorming exercise one by one and opens a dialog about each single card. By taking the first card the LEUE asks whether the problem, e.g. poverty, is a root cause or a consequence cause (meaning if it is a consequence of another root cause or problem).

Step 3: Through discussion about this question the group looks for related problems to the starter problem. Things mentioned might already be written down by other people and the respective cards/ papers can directly by handed over to the LEUE who pins them according to a special hierarchy on e.g. the wall.

Step 4: Thereby a hierarchy of causes and effects is established: (a) problems which are directly causing the starter problem are put below, (b) problems which are direct effects of the starter problem are put above.

Step 5: All other problems are then sorted in the same way – the guiding question being 'What causes that?' – so that a whole problem tree is created. If there are two or more causes combining to produce an effect, they are placed at the same level in the diagram.

Step 6: The LEUE connects the problems with cause-effect arrows – clearly showing key links.

Step 7: Together the group reviews the diagram and verifies its validity and completeness. The facilitator asks the group whether there are important problems that have not been mentioned yet and if so, asks the group to specify the problems, to write them on cards/ papers and includes them at an appropriate place in the diagram.

With that seventh step the first day of the PCM-Workshop is over and the participants leave the venue.

Step 8: The final step is done only by the LEUE after the workshop: Copying the diagram onto a sheet of paper to keep it as a record, and distribute it (as appropriate) for further comment/information on the next

day. Important is that the original cards/ papers remain on the e.g. wall for the following day.

One crucial difference between the common way such workshops are carried out and the way the approach is used in the PCM-Workshops within the MCA is that not for each problem mentioned a problem tree is established but only one: the papers or cards are collected and each problem is discussed along the question of being either a root or consequence cause. The papers or cards are pinned e.g. on the wall into clusters per policy area and according to the cause-effect-logic mentioned above. A comprehensive problem tree therefore is created where the questions of (a) how single problems relate to already mentioned problems and (b) if there is a need to add other problems only have to be dealt with once. The added value of this is (1) to give a comprehensive overview to the whole political reality including all policy areas and different tiers of governments, (2) to conduct a comprehensive problem analysis within a single day and (3) especially to avoid the monotony that arises when repeating discussions about more or less the same causes of problems during the establishment of several problem trees come up which tends to kill enthusiasm and triggers pessimistic views. An example shall explain that process: (source: EU PCM Handbook, p. 68)

Problem analysis – river pollution
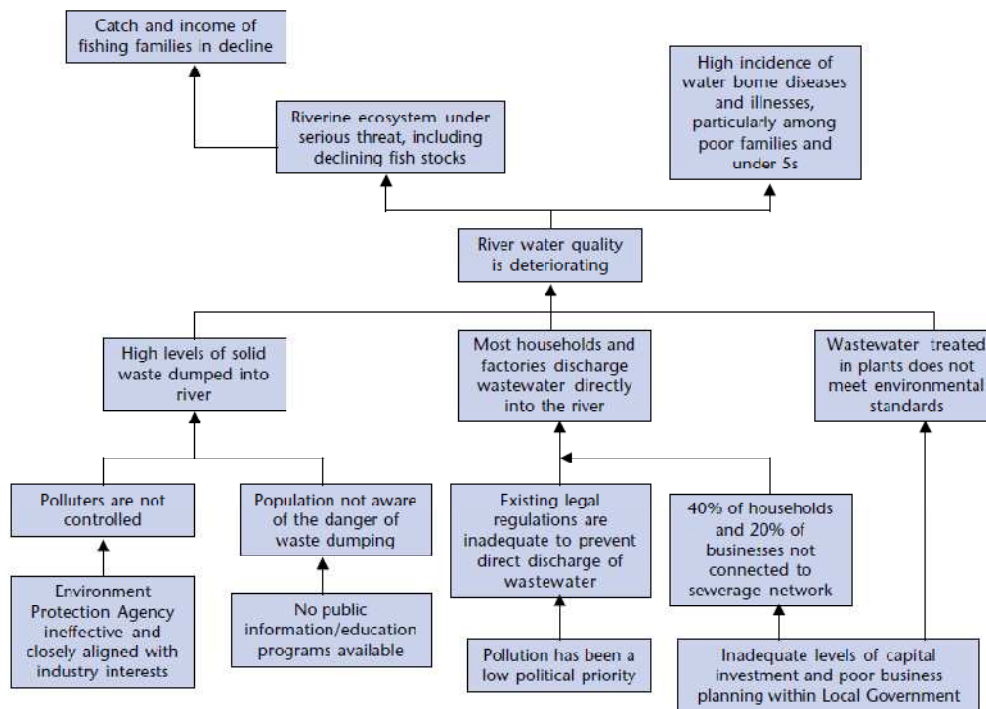
3.1.2. Analysis of Objectives

The second day of the workshop starts with a brief summary by the LEUE about the last day and the work process and outcomes. What is done next is the rephrasing of the problems into solutions that stand for an improved situation in the future. For example, the problem was phrased as "water pollution". Hence, the objective can be called "High water quality".

This is done with each single problem until a new tree, called objective tree, is established. The way to do it is to take one card/ paper after the other from the wall and discuss in the group what the solution should be and write it on the backside to pin it again on its place. That makes visibly the problem tree disappear. This marks the end point of the second step. Usually there should be enough time to start already with the analysis of strategies: 3.1.3. An example of the second step gives further explanation: (source: PCM Handbook, p. 70)

Objective tree – river pollution
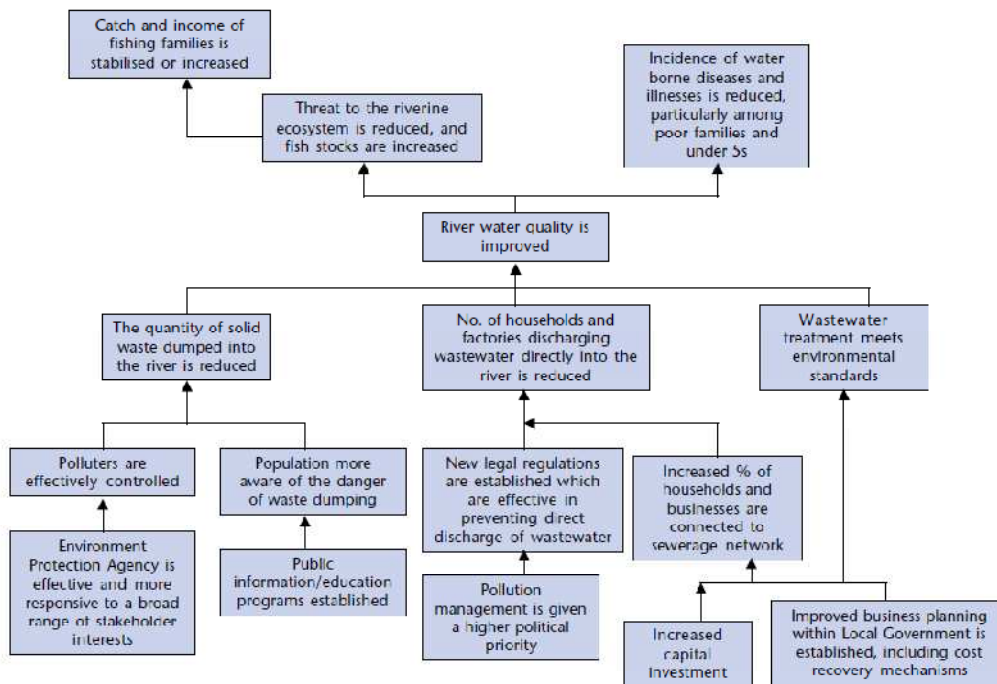
3.1.3. Analysis of Strategies

In this stage, the question is, how to reach the objectives, the wished outcome, just defined. The data can be used when it comes to practical planning of projects, programs and/ or policies. The PCM method will be critically discussed here, because it was invented to organize the construction of roads or bridges but not to focus on projects dealing with human beings. And according to the range of policies the EU deals with including social policies especially concerning cohesion policy which has "social, environmental and territorial objectives"[178], not only economic ones, there is a need to adapt the policy planning tool and to create appropriate indicators to secure policy success.

The essential argument here is, that the EU programs can be much more successful if the planning stage is carried out in an adapted way: The Outcome Mapping approach, as an additional tool that can be integrated into the PCM approach, suggests to involve the people into the planning of

---

[178] European Commission (2010), p. 153.

concrete projects, not only to secure accountability and ownership[179] and therefore guarantee a sustainable effect of programs, but also to develop indicators that can be reliably linked to activities of projects and programs to measure success – which is to measure through "behavioral change". Exactly those suggestions get support from the "Ex Post Evaluation of Cohesion Policy Programmes 2000-2006":[180]

Even though "The primary conclusion to emerge from the evaluation is that cohesion policy made a major contribution to the economic development of the regions assisted by the Structural Funds over the 2000-2006 programming period […and…] At the same time, cohesion policy helped to further social cohesion and improve territorial balance across the EU."[181], there are fundamental problems concerning indicators and the ability to link funding and activities to outcomes, to measure social and territorial cohesion and to ensure sustainability. A need for improvement is obvious as the Barca report recommends: Objectives provided from the desk in Brussels may have no precise meaning for any individual region therefore "[…] policies should not be imposed from above but have to start from the specific circumstances and needs of individual regions. In other words, they have to be 'place-based' to use the Barca report terminology and to be 'bottom-up' as much as 'top-down'."[182] Exactly that will be discussed now.

3.1.3.1. Outcome Mapping

The added value of the Outcome Mapping Approach is that it takes into account the special quality of the social context by focusing on outcomes as "behavioral change".

"Outcomes are defined as changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a

---

[179] European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office (2004), p. 9, p. 14.

[180] See European Commission (2010), p. 10, p. 11, p. 64, p. 153, p. 154, p. 162, p. 165.

[181] European Commission (2010), p. 153.

[182] European Commission (2010), p. 166.

program works directly. These outcomes can be logically linked to a program's activities, although they are not necessarily caused by them. […] Boundary partners [in the case of the EU: local, regional and national authorities] are those individuals, groups, and organizations with whom the program interacts directly and with whom the program anticipates opportunities for influence."[183]

The main ideological difference to the common PCM approach is that Outcome Mapping according to its focus on the social context acknowledges that long-term impacts can never be reached by the work of a single actor or a single program or project. The complexity of the development process makes it extremely difficult to assess impact of one program or project. Moreover assessing – during a mid-term evaluation for instance - if a project or program brings about an admired *impact* doesn't provide the kind of information and feedback that programs and projects require to improve their performance: because they can't reach these ultimate goals, so what should they change? Impact is the ultimate goal to reach, but each program and project can only contribute to it and can't – according to the cause-effect-logic – have direct impact. That is exactly the problem the EU faces because the focus is put on impact instead of on improving performance in order to contribute to meeting certain objectives that themselves then contribute to meeting ultimate goals.[184] What the Outcome Mapping approach facilitates therefore is to help adapt activities and improve the performance of implementing actors in order to secure the meeting of their objectives through which they contribute like many others to reach an ultimate goal. The focus therefore shifts away from impact to improving performance. That also entails the involvement of local actors into the planning stage, as explained now:

"As development is essentially about people relating to each other and their environments, the focus of Outcome Mapping is on people. The originality of the methodology is its shift away from assessing the development impact of a program (defined as changes in state — for example, policy relevance, poverty alleviation, or reduced conflict) and toward changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a development program

---

[183] Earl et.al. (2001), p. 1.

[184] See European Commission (2010), p. 10-11.

works directly. This shift significantly alters the way a program understands its goals and assesses its performance and results. Outcome Mapping establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental betterment to which the program hopes to contribute and then focuses monitoring and evaluation on factors and actors within that program's direct sphere of influence. The program's contributions to development are planned and assessed based on its influence on the partners with whom it is working to effect change. At its essence, development is accomplished by, and for, people."[185]

Why it is important to take account of the changes in behavior is the fact that changes in state, like cleaner water or stronger economy, are always correlating with behavioral changes. The focus on behavior helps to better plan and evaluate contributions of programs or projects to the common effort of meeting specific objectives. For example, the objective is to reach cleaner water by installing purification filters. Traditionally progress or success is evaluated by counting the number of filters installed and measuring the level of contamination before and after the filters were installed. But water doesn't remain clean without people being able to maintain its quality over time – a shift in focus away from the pure belief in technical feasibility towards the additional need of focusing on changes in behavior to ensure sustainability. Outcomes are therefore evaluated in terms of whether the responsible actors for water purity in the communities not only have, but _use_ the appropriate tools, skills and knowledge to monitor the contaminent levels, change filters or bring in experts when required. That also makes obvious that different or additional activities need to be planned and carried out if the simple cause-effect-logic is left behind. This should not replace the PCM approach but be an additional tool.

That is also relevant if for instance a road should be build in order to facilitate trade between two regions. The goal is therefore not reached when the road is built, but the moment it stimulates trade. Therefore activities must not be reduced to building the road in order to meet the objective, but more aspects need to be involved in the planning phase to

---

[185] Earl et.al. (2001), p. 2.

secure that certain measures really will lead to certain wished outcomes and unwished outcomes are minimized. It might even be that the initial idea to build a road is not supportive at all.

Anyway, with the conventional PCM tools it is not possible to observe a direct link between the input of a program/ project and the results, as also admitted in the ex-post evaluation, and the assumption of a direct causality between the construction of a road and increased trade is often misleading and tempts policy makers to take wrong decisions.[186] Again, when it is only about planning the construction of a road, the traditional PCM approach is a constructive tool to organize work load and plan timelines. But if the social aspect is involved in a wished outcome the direct causality of action and result is not valid anymore. Therefore planning needs to acknowledge the non-existence of direct causality between activities and outcomes and involve the social reality. That also makes it necessary to involve local actors and individuals in identifying problems and wished outcomes, because in order to have meaningful and effective objectives, which form the basis of a good program or project, they need to be derived from the needs of individual regions.[187]

On the other hand the acknowledgement of the social reality in the planning of programs and projects needs to give way to additional ways of monitoring and evaluation: Focusing on behavioral change makes it possible to obtain useful feedback about the program's performance and results within its sphere of influence. Separating process and outcome evaluation is definitely misleading.[188] That is why indicators upon which to evaluate success of activities should measure the degree of "behavioral change" of involved actors. That takes the social reality into account and improves the ability to link outcomes to activities, to measure policy success. But the most essential aspect of the focus on behavioral change is that actors can *learn* from monitoring and evaluations and it is not just a

---

[186] See European Commission (2010), p. 112.

[187] See European Commission (2010), p. 166.

[188] See Earl et.al. (2001), p. 5.

painful burden anymore which helps meeting goals that contribute to meeting overall objectives of programs and policies. And as long as the largest portion of all public service work is devoted to the attainment of immediate and intermediate goals, which appear to have only a very indirect bearing upon ultimate goals, the focus on measuring behavioral change makes sense. That contributes to improving the concrete performance of involved actors which itself contributes to meeting the overall objectives.[189]

The involvement of the people into the planning phase is simply reached by carrying out the PCM-Workshops. If programs or projects are planned the data can be used or the other way around the data can be used to propose projects or programs. The involvement of such data shall help to overcome the linear cause-effect thinking that contradicts the understanding of development as a complex process that takes place in circumstances where a program cannot be isolated from the various actors with which it will interact neither from various factors by which it will be influenced. The risk is that programs and projects today are explicitly planned in order to fit into the linear logic which reduces the scope of possible projects and squeezes reality into a corset which dramatically reduces sustainability.[190] Paradoxically, it is the pressure to demonstrate impact, meaning to provide evidence for bringing about sustainable improvement in the environment or in the well-being of a large number of targeted beneficiaries that leads to propose projects that are in the linear logic. The misleading perception is that the extensive sum of planning and reporting documents of the traditional PCM approach *themselves* increase the quality of projects or programs and the manager's influence over the achievement of results. But the key factor for socially sustainable development is that communities take ownership of program or project components. That requires the devolution of planning, decision making and other elements from external to internal actors. The following figure

---

[189] See Earl et.al. (2001), p. 6.

[190] See European Commission (2010), p. 11.

illustrates the influence local actors and external actors have over time, from the program or project start till real impact.[191]
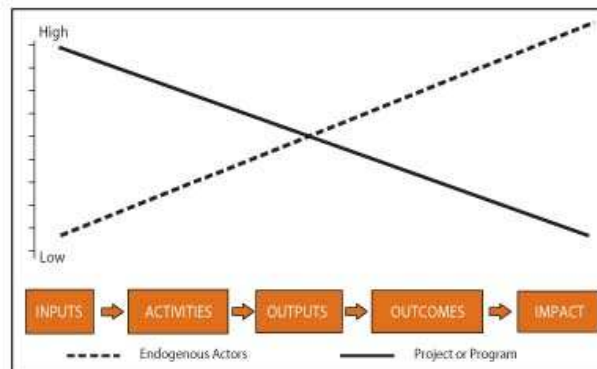
That makes obvious that the involvement of local actors and especially the people is crucial to ensure sustainability. Local ownership needs to become effective so that outcomes can be relevant and lead to long-term, large-scale, sustainable benefits, impact. The aim to show measurable results can shorten the vision of an initiative to aim at goals that are available in the short term with very low risks – but also low sustainable impact, as also the ex-post evaluation shows.[192] This is important because politics is about implementing programs and projects, especially in the area of EU Regional Policy and the goal of cohesion in Europe. Here the best example is to give: Cohesion is nothing that can be reached once, a constant work for cohesion is necessary which can best be reached by building endogenous capacity to maintain the ability to respond to ongoing changes. The area of capacity building itself is purely social in nature. That is why sustainable social development needs local ownership. The focus on *changes in behavior, actions and relationships* seems to narrow the scope of programs or projects but in fact these short-term achievements made in the realistic sphere of influence of actors ensure that the large-scale, prominent achievements in human well-being can be attained. The intended impact of a program is its guiding light but it is not the yardstick against which performance is measured.

---

[191] See Earl et.al. (2001), p. 8, p. 9.

[192] See European Commission (2010), p. 11.

The Mutual Communication Approach (MCA) can contribute to increase local ownership (1) through involving individuals in the analysis of problems in their living environment and (2) through enabling local authorities (a) to take up responsibility that the interests of the people get heard on higher levels of decision making and (b) to ensure local ownership of programs and projects by carrying out (1) and (2a). To be more concrete, the LEUEs conduct PCM-Workshops and the participants themselves analyze, come up with solutions and plan activities. When it is about behavioral change, it is them to change. That is why it is crucial to involve them in planning projects and programs. If it is them to define certain problems, them to propose certain solutions and objectives, sustainability and success are more likely. As long as "Politics creates and conditions all aspects of our lives and it is at the core of the development of problems in society and the collective modes of their resolution"[193] individuals need to be more involved into the planning of policies, programs and projects.

3.1.3.2. How the analysis of strategies is carried out

The step to do here is to brainstorm on possible activities to achieve the respective outcomes defined in the last phase of the establishment of the objective tree. Of course the use of this approach within the PCM-Workshops is very limited but the step is still significant (1) to provide individuals with a forum where they get heard and (2) to facilitate the decision making process about appropriate policies. If there is a specific program in place within a community or projects are planned this stage can of course be extended. However, the capacity of the LEUEs allows that for each program funded by the European Union they can assist in planning together with local stakeholders and individuals also outside of their normal sphere of activity.

The concrete steps are the following: The LEUE initiates a brainstorming on possible activities that can be undertaken to reach each single wished

---

[193] Held (2006), p. 270.

outcome. He or she starts with one paper/ card by asking how to reach e.g. "High water quality". Activities, one by one, shall be written on a paper/ card also indicating who is responsible for carrying it out (EU, national government, local authorities, individuals, etc.). This becomes essential because the problems mentioned include problems that can be assigned to all tiers of government, from the international, the EU, the national to the regional and local level. Crucial here is that the LEUE explains that there are two approaches complementing each other: the cause-effect idea (e.g. building a road to bring about effects) and that every development is also related to *changes in behavior, actions and relationships*. Therefore strategies need to take that into account. The LEUE collects the papers or cards after about 5 minutes and each paper/ card is discussed in plenum. Thereby a kind of action plan is established for this certain wished outcome. That is done for each single wished outcoem which also marks the end of the three days workshop. By ending the PCM-Workshop with the active involvement of individuals in planning activities within official state structures a fundament is put in place for strengthening the responsiveness, accountability and legitimacy of political decision makers.

After the workshop the LEUE puts all the collected data into written form and distributes it to all tiers of government, the national statistic institutes that can evaluate the data according to regional trends etc. and also to the (local) media and the participants (on an online platform [of the local government]).

3.2. The added value of communicative experiences made in the PCM-Workshops

While concretely using language a speaker or listener updates his or her linguistic and communicative competence, i.e. his or her fundamental ability to use language and establish communication with others.[194] That we speak differently to a three year old child than to a work colleague is based on the fact that human beings select the suitable language out of their linguistic and communicative *repertoire* in relation to the specific situation and circumstances. Each use of language is to understand as a selection of language from the existing repertoire (even though a free selection doesn't exist but is characterized through specific constellations of conditions and pressures that program the selection). Anyway, it is that repertoire of symbols and rules that is of our interest in this section and it is closely linked to paralinguistic (intonation, accentuation) and nonverbal (body language: gestures, facial expressions) attendant circumstances that state the meant sense of the communicative contact more precisely. That "understanding each other" is also dependent on paralinguistic and nonverbal factors stresses one more time the advantage face-to-face communication has in comparison to mass communication or the internet – especially when very complex and distant components of reality like politics is subject to communication.

A recipient of linguistic information decodes and interprets. Individuals listen, read and watch television with different presettings and anticipations and have specific internalized patterns of selection for the reception of information at their disposal. If someone hears, reads or watches something about the EU on television he or she falls back on a specific repertoire of patterns of selection that were determined by individual experiences, socialization and education.[195] Patterns of selection are created when communicative experiences are made in specific situations with specific topics and under specific linguistic

---

[194] See Schlotthaus (1973), p. 126.
[195] See Schlotthaus (1973), p. 129.

conditions (lyric, newspaper article, TV discussion) which leads to the development of a repertoire for coping with such situations.[196] But as discussed above, the mass media can't contribute much to the expansion of structural knowledge and therefore neither the media can alone by themselves deliver a sufficient repertoire for individuals to really understand the complex political reality of modern times. One argument for that is that the mass media uses a restricted language code in order to reach a wide public, which corresponds to the typical language of „lower classes" and is characterized through illustrative and vivid depiction and its focus on concrete situations and its conditions.[197] But it is the elaborated code, characterized through communication that is independent from specific situations or contexts that enables to understand, abstract and differentiate factual, societal and historical realities and interrelations. The "discussion" as communicative situation is a setting in which this form of code occurs more likely.

To offer a special communicative setting shaped by (1) face-to-face communication (2) under the condition of discussions, makes therefore experiences possible that expand the repertoire of individuals in the area of politics in a more qualitative sense – a necessary addition to the services of the mass media. That helps individuals to better understand the political reality they can't directly experience themselves and therefore strengthens their ability to cope with this complex component of reality, meaning an expanded repertoire makes an extended reaction within social communicative situations possible because individuals „*speak the same language*" as politics, meaning they integrated the political reality into their own life context through the integration of linguistic and communicative signs and rules offered in the PCM-Workshops or other events. In other words, the integration of communicative experiences into the individual life context leads to the expansion of the individual linguistic and communicative repertoire made up of symbols and rules in order to cope

---

[196] See Schlotthaus (1973), p. 126.

[197] See Schlotthaus (1973), p. 135.

appropriately with special situations. The MCA and in particular the PCM-Workshops therefore contribute to an increase in understanding of the European Union and politics in general as well as to an increasing ability of individuals to cope with the distant and complex political reality.

The generalizing of daily or individual problems in the workshops through discussion is the most crucial aspect of this approach in that sense. The process that occurs is the integration of complex reality into the individual life context by the participants. For example, the problem poverty or unemployment is mentioned by a participant. Then through discussion, triggered through questions of the LEUE, the group figures out that those are not yet final root cause but that there are other problems causing poverty or unemployment. Even though some might have been aware of that, the discussion process is crucial because each person is on a different level of knowledge and awareness and the diverse knowledge within a group is fruitful and helps enlarge the consciousness of participants.

Crucial here is the fact that individuals name problems they have a personal relation to, meaning emotions about, or at least have an awareness about through the media or stories from friends, relatives or work colleagues. Anyway they mention problems they somehow can grasp because they are asked to take problems from their direct living environment – which doesn't exclude huge political topics like unemployment or globalization. The interesting process that can start from there is that through discussion the problem that is emotionally attached to a person is being defined in its nature as root cause for other problems, as consequence cause of other problems and in its relations to other problems. First of all, the understanding of this multi-level and complex problem is therefore facilitated and the chance that understanding, meaning the integration of information into the personal life context is reached is extremely high. The experience made by people in the PCM-Workshop therefore is, that there is interdependency between individuals and the society/ politics – private sphere and public sphere. It's not that

individuals weren't aware of that, but it had a different quality or meaning for their personal life. That is the qualitative added value of the PCM-Workshop, especially because that enables to *understand* the importance of political realities like the EU for solving personal problems.

An eventual support of the people for the European project is therefore not established through manipulation or political marketing but sustainably reached through the independent decision of individuals who experience "informed participation", i.e. (a) enlightened understanding and (b) effective participation, their integration into political decision making.[198] "Enlightened understanding" stands for the equal opportunity for all to discover and affirm what choice in a matter before them best serves their interest. To reach that, understanding of the political reality is the first step. If politics takes the step to ensure such an "informed participation" then an increase in legitimacy will follow because the MCA is based on the people being active in the PCM-Workshops and defining the topics to discuss. In discussions and presentations of the LEUE for the public or in informal conversations, the issue is always a factual explanation of what is discussed on the EU level, what was discussed or decided and what does that mean. It is never manipulation in the form of convincing people to accept the EU as important. It is to offer high quality experiences to individuals so that they can themselves make qualified judgments.

Implementing the MCA therefore doesn't mean that everybody will agree to everything political decision makers decide but an "informed share of government" and thus a qualitative change of political culture reconciles. Thus the focus of the MCA is not on (political) education but on building a bridge again between political and private sphere and on how to manage best the involvement of the people, because political parties alone aren't appropriate structures anymore to do so.[199] The MCA therefore tries to facilitate the establishment of a balanced repertoire of communicative

---

[198] See Held (2006), p. 279.

[199] See Held (2006), p. 275.

experiences for the wide public so that individuals can approach the complex political reality including the one of the EU more easily.[200]

Considering the EU principle of subsidiarity the MCA can play a crucial role too, because during the PCM workshops many topics will come up – many will be within the range of competence of local or regional actors, others within the one of the national and EU level. But exactly because the policy areas are strongly intertwined nowadays a problem analysis carried out by local actors at local level taking into account all levels makes sense in order to assist first of all (1) Europeans to grasp the political reality. Considering the practical use of the MCA for politics, the approach assists (2) to clarify which areas are to assign to which level of government. Countries can become more efficient and effective through the awareness local actors have about the EU competences ensured by presentations and consultations of the LEUEs and the collected data that indicate spheres of influence of different tiers of governments. Also the Lisbon Treaty gives room for the involvement of local and regional actors in that sense.[201] The MCA can therefore be considered as "[…] common structure of political activity […ensuring the…] "conditions necessary for the equal autonomy of all citizens […]"[202], whereas autonomy stands for "[…] the capacity of human beings to reason self-consciously, to be self-reflective and to be self-determining. It involves the ability to deliberate, judge, choose and act upon different possible courses of action in private as well as in public life"[203].

---

[200] See Schlotthaus (1973), p. 139.

[201] See Committee of the Regions (2009), p. 6.

[202] Held (2006), p. 277.

[203] Held (2006), p. 263.

4. Conclusions

As tried to lay out in the three chapters of this research, it is to stress that interpersonal communication is completely underestimated and completely left out today and there is too much blind reliance on the services of the media and technological innovations like the internet from the side of politicans. Media services are overestimated as well as the current potentials of the internet to fulfill the task of bridging the gap between individuals and politics. Bringing interpersonal communication in again to enrich the public political communication would have several positive effects for the democratic culture of the societies of the European Union, especially concerning social integration and social cohesion. To come back to the initial leading questions,

(1) How can local authorities contribute to meeting the objectives of EU Regional Policy more effectively and more efficiently, i.e. (1) Convergence, (2) Regional Competitiveness and Employment, (3) European Territorial Co-operation and (4) Coherence?

(2) How can the involvement of local authorities into EU policies contribute to an increase in legitimacy of the EU and all national actors from member states involved?,

this research tried to present an approach that focuses on local actors in order to meet these two different objectives. Conclusion to that is, that the involvement of individuals and local authorities is crucial to both, being more sufficient and effective in carrying out programs and projects and to increase legitimacy by establishing close relationships again between individuals and politics. The Indian philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tadore said that only simple philosophy is good philosophy. Interpersonal communication is too much part of normal life, too simple to be perceived as useful answer for the complex and diverse problems of today. That's why we look for complex solutions. But in relation to Tagore's statement I propose to rely on the quiet simple answers this research gives and to

further discuss and developed them – also through empirical experimentation.

Unfortunately there is not enough time here to provide a comprehensive theoretical fundament to support the Mutual Communication Approach (MCA). In addition an empirical experiment in at least three different areas in the EU, covering each time a village, a town district and a city district would need to be carried out to verify or falsify the hypothesis. Maybe that would especially make sense in EU sceptical areas and in new member countries.

Abyway, I hope the thesis can contribute to the ongoing debate about how to best tackle the task to bring the people and politics together again and hope that maybe this specific approach will find its way into a broader public discussion.

5. Bibliography

Anderson, Mary B.: Do no Harm. How aid can support peace-or war. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers. 1999.

Beck, Klaus: Neue Medien – alte Probleme? Blogs aus medien- und kommunikationsethischer Sicht. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 1: Grundlagen und Methoden: Von der Gesellschaft zum Individuum. S.62-128. 2008.

Bräuer, Marco/ Seifert, Markus/ Wolling, Jens: Politische Kommunikation 2.0 – Grundlagen und empirische Ergebnisse zur Nutzung einer Partizipationsform im Internet. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 2: Strategien und Anwendungen: Perspektiven für Wirtschaft, Politik und Publizistik. S. 188-206. 2008.

Bross, Justus/ Sack, Harald/ Meinel, Christoph: Politische Partizipation durch Diskussion? Konzeption und Wirkungen des IT-Gifelblogs. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 2: Strategien und Anwendungen: Perspektiven für Wirtschaft, Politik und Publizistik. S. 265-282. 2008.

Burkart, Roland: Kommunikationswissenschaft. Grundlagen und Problemfelder. Umrisse einer interdisziplinären Sozialwissenschaft. 4., überarbeitete Auflage, Böhlau Verlag Wien, Köln, Weimar. 2002.

Burke Johnson R./ Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J.: Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. In: Educational Researcher, Vol. 33, No. 7, pp. 14–26. 2004.

Committee of the Regions: The White Paper on multi-level-governance. Brussels. 2009.

Dröge, Franz: Wissensvermittlung in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. S. 174-189. In: Aufermann, Jörg/ Bohrmann, Hans/ Sülzer, Rolf: Gesellschaftliche Kommunikation und Information. Band 1. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Athenäum Taschenbücher, 1973.

Earl, Sarah/ Carden, Fred/ Smutylo, Terry: Outcome Mapping. Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs, International Development Research Centre, 2001.

Eurich, Claus: Politische Meinungsführung. Theoretische Konzeptionen und empirische Analysen der Bedingungen persönlicher Einflußnahme im Kommunikationsprozeß, Schriftenreihe Kommunikation und Politik, Band 9, München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1976.

European Commission/EuropeAid Cooperation Office: Aid Delivery Method – Project Cycle Management Guidelines, 2004.

European Commission: White Paper on European Governance. 2001.

European Commission: Ex Post Evaluation of Cohesion Policy Programmes 2000-2006 financed by the European Regional Development Fund in Objective 1 and 2, Regions Synthesis Report. Brussels, 2010.

Fossum, John Erik/ Hans-Jörg Trenz: When the people come in: Constitution-making and the bleated politicization of the European Union. In: European Governance Papers (EUROGOV) No. C-06-03, http://www.connex-network.org/eurogov/pdf/egp-connex-C-06-03.pdf, 06.04.2006.

Fishkin, James S.: Deliberative polling. http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/docs/summary/ (06.05.2010; 17:19h)

Fishkin, James S. : A reaction for Notre Europe to Andrew Moravcsik's article, "What Can We Learn from the Collapse of the European Constitutional Project?", Politische Vierteljahrschrift 47:2, pp.219-24, 2006.

Fossum, John Erik/ Trenz, Hans-Jörg: When the people come in: Constitution-making and the belated politication of the European Union. In: Europe Governance Papers (EUROGOV) No. C-06-03, http://www.connex-network.org/eurogov/pdf/egp-connex-C-06-03.pdf. 2006

Gerhards Maria/ Klinger, Walter/ Trump, Thilo: Das Social Web aus Rezipientensicht: Motivation, Nutzung, Nutzertypen. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 1: Grundlagen und Methoden: Von der Gesellschaft zum Individuum. S.129-148. 2008.

Habermas, Jürgen: Theorie des kommunikative Handelns 1 + 2, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1981.

Habermas, Jürgen: Faktizität und Geltung. Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1992.

Habermas, Jürgen: Die Einbeziehung des Anderen. Studien zur politischen Theorie, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1996.

Harrer, Andreas/ Krämer Nicole/ Zeini, Sam/ Haferkamp Nina: Ergebnisse und Fragestellungen aus Psychologie und Informatik zur Analyse von Interaktionen in Online-Communities und Potenziale interdisziplinärer Forschung. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan:

Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 1: Grundlagen und Methoden: Von der Gesellschaft zum Individuum. S. 301-322. 2008.

Held, David: Models of democracy. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006.

Heywood, Andrew: Politics. Basingstoke, Hampshire [u.a.], Macmillan, 1997.

Lazarsfeld, Paul/ Menzel, Herbert: Massenmedien und persönlicher Einfluß. In: Schramm, Wilbur: Grundfragen der Kommunikationsforschung, München: Juventa Verlag. S. 117-140. 1964.

Luhmann, Niklas: Sinn als Grundbegriff der Soziologie. In: Habermas, Jürgen/ Luhmann, Niklas: Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie – Was leistet die Systemforschung. Frankfurt am Main, S. 25-100. 1971.

Mead, George Herbert: Geist, Identität und Gesellschaft. Aus der Sicht des Sozialbehaviorismus. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp. 1968.

Menéndez, Agustín José: The European Democratic Challenge. In: Arena. Center for European Studies, Working Paper No.4. 2008.

Moravcsik, Andrew: What Can We Learn from the Collapse of the European Constitutional Project?, In: Politische Vierteljahreszeitschrift 47:2, S. 219-241. 2006.

Pollak, Johannes/ Slominski, Peter: Das politische System der EU, WUV/UTB, Wien, 2006.

Ritzi, Claudia/ Schall Gary S.: Politische Führung in der Postdemokratie. In: APuZ (Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte): Hrsg. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, 2-3/2010. 11. Januar 2010, S. 9-15.

Schenk, Michael: Medienwirkungsforschung, Mohr , Tübingen. 1987.

Schenk, Michael: Soziale Netzwerke und Massenmedien. Untersuchungen zum Einfluß der persönlichen Kommunikation. Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). 1995.

Schlotthaus, Werner: Die pragmatischen Bedingungsfaktoren der Sprachverwendung. In: Aufermann, Jörg/ Bohrmann, Hans/ Sülzer, Rolf: Gesellschaftliche Kommunikation und Information. Band 1. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Athenäum Taschenbücher. S. 125-140. 1973.

Schmidt, Jan: Was ist neu im Social Web? Soziologische Und kommunikationswissenschaftliche Grundlagen. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 1: Grundlagen und Methoden: Von der Gesellschaft zum Individuum. S. 18-40. 2008.

Schramm, Wilbur: Grundfragen der Kommunikationsforschung, München: Juventa Verlag. 1964.

Stie, Anne Elizabeth: Assessing democratic legitimacy from a deliberative perspective. In: Arena. Center for European Studies, Working Paper No. 6. 2008.

Universität Siegen, Fachbereich Wirtschaftsinformatik und Neue Medien, Germany/ Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary/ empirica Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Technologieforschung GmbH, Germany/ Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, U.K./ University of Twente, Netherlands/ Work Research Centre (WRC), Ireland: Study on the Social Impact of ICT (CPP N°55A – SMART N°2007/ 0068), Final Report D7.1. 2010.

Wimmer, Jeffrey: Gegenöffentlichkeit 2.0: Formen, Nutzung und Wirkung kritischer Öffentlichkeiten im Social Web. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 2: Strategien und Anwendungen: Perspektiven für Wirtschaft, Politik und Publizistik. S. 210-264. 2008.

Witte, Barbara: Journalismus – Partizipation – Öffentlichkeit: Das Social Web in der Politikberichterstattung. In: Zerfaß, Ansger/ Welker, Martin/ Schmidt, Jan: Kommunikation, Partizipation und Wirkungen im Social Web, Band 2: Strategien und Anwendungen: Perspektiven für Wirtschaft, Politik und Publizistik. S. 97-113. 2008.