

DYNAMICS OF PERSONALITY: Social and political processes are shaped by self-interested individuals. From a neurobiological perspective self-interest can not be constrained to material self-interest. Self-interest encompasses all actions that aim at maximizing well-being - for example social recognition. Every strategy that makes it possible to maximise well-being should be understood as rational and as well as an expression of personality. Politics is the result of where and when specific personalities act within the political process.

GROUP DYNAMICS: Groups - per example the cabinet, commissions of parliament, bargaining commissions - made up the central unit of the political process. Groups also are the place of social emergence: group-cultures as the outcome of group dynamics form a filter for ideas, concepts and personalities – and therefore influence the development of political strategies.

3. HOW CAN POLITICS BECOME FIT FOR FUTURE?

The transdisciplinary answer to this questions sees politics that is fit for future as politics primarily aiming for sustaining potentialities. Politics that is fit for future has three guiding lines: Diversity aims at sustaining the potentialities of the cultural space, openness at sustaining the potentialities of the space of thoughts, sustainability at preserving the potentialities of the natural space.

Politics that is fit for future is based on a political ethic that emphasises a irresolvable connection of self change and political change: Therefore politics that is fit for future focus primarily on self-governance of the selfish individuals aiming at maximising their well-being. But only an individual that is mindful against others and the natural environment can maximise its well-being. Mindfulness therefore becomes a central component at any level of politics that is fit for future.

THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY – FURTHER INFORMATION

Publication of the results of the **THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY** project is planned for 2011.

Until then we will be pleased to present the results of the project by request in form of lectures, workshops or seminars.

Dr. Peter Döge will be glad to provide further information.

Dr. Peter Döge: political scientist, member of the executive board of the IAIZ; has worked for many years at the IAIZ as a political and organisational development consultant; he managed of numerous research projects and evaluation studies at the IAIZ; he was visiting lecturer at numerous universities and is author of numerous publications (mostly only available in German) on equality and anti-discrimination policies, sustainable research and technology policy, diversity management and work-life-balance.

Institute for Application-Oriented
Innovation- and Future Research
(Institut für anwendungsorientierte
Innovations- und Zukunftsforschung e.V.)
- IAIZ -
PO 41 02 16, D - 34064 Kassel
Tel.: +49(0)561 400 85 340
Fax: +49(0)561 400 85 343
E-mail: iaiz@iaiz.de
Web: www.iaiz.de



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THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY



WHY POLITICS IS AS IT IS AND HOW IT CAN BECOME FIT FOR FUTURE

A Transdisciplinary Answer

Main Results of the Research Project
THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY at the IAIZ

POLITICS AND POLITICAL THEORY TODAY: TRYING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY USING MODELS FROM THE 17TH CENTURY

Political theory, policy analysis and politics are not fit for future. In their attempts to find solutions to the pressing social and ecological problems of the 21st century, they still use models of society dating from the 17th century that have their origins in the paradigms of the dualistic universe of DESCARTES and the linear universe of NEWTON. The consequence is among others that

- ✓ social processes are conceived as unilinear and mechanistic and therefore are thought as to be shaped and controlled exactly in a top-down approach;
- ✓ society is de-humanised and therefore political science speaks about corporative actors, institutions or the state as lifeless objects without people;
- ✓ human nature is seen exclusively as a product of mankind's social environment and therefore, using the arguments of behaviourism, is conceived as malleable in any direction by politics;
- ✓ man is seen primarily as a cultural being in contrast to nature, which is considered to be a lifeless resource that could be exploited without limit.

However, the dualistic-linear view of the world has been in the process of change for many years. Thus, political theory and politics need to be reformulated in an appropriate way.

BEYOND DUALITY AND LINEARITY

The basic elements of the new non-linear and non-dualistic view of the world are above all:

- ✓ The unity of subject and object: Quantum physics – developed in the 1920s – points out that matter always has a double character: it is particle and wave at once. The observer decides what he is seeing: therefore truth and reality are not the same. The observation always affects the state of the system. Matter is also indeterminate and contingency is one of the basic principles of our world.
- ✓ The unity of emotion and reason: The results of neurobiology suggest that individuals are not able to separate emotion and reason when making decisions, that the individualistic architecture of the brain determines our individual perception of the world and that at birth we are by no means a “blank slate”.
- ✓ The unity of nature and culture: Evolutionary biology views man as a part of nature. Nature no longer is seen as a lifeless resource but as a self-organising system with emergent qualities. Man is a part of this system and shares his evolutionary history with all other living beings. Man is not “creation's crowning glory”; man is only a “cultural being by nature”, evolution did not stop with the appearance of man.

Within the project **THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY** these findings have been integrated in a non-dualistic, transdisciplinary approach of policy analysis and political theory.

THINKING POLITICS IN A NEW WAY

1. WHAT IS POLITICS?

The transdisciplinary answer to this question sees men as a living and a cultural being at once.

As a living being Homo Sapiens since its first appearance in evolution history is living in groups. Group-building is the central strategy of fitness-maximizing of human beings.

As a living being organised in groups man always is a political being. Politics is an integral element of group processes. Politics describes a social field where binding rules were generated, that define the access of the group members to resources - e.g. food, money, information.

This process is always symbolically embedded. In human groups concepts of reality and normality always are constructed in countless discourses that are competing with each other. Politics then could also be understood as a social field of materialising these discourses into binding rules. Therefore politics always has many places and actors.

2. WHY POLITICS IS AS IT IS?

The transdisciplinary answer to this questions sees politics as a dynamic process that is determined at all levels by three factors:

DYNAMICS OF ACTION: The materiality of the social and political system is the result of many actions of myriads of human individuals. All actions are related to each other. Just non-acting is an action. The effects of all these interactions never can be predicted, the social system is a complex, non-linear system. Therefore the capacity of political governance - is always limited.