European Landscapes: Heritage, Participation and Local Communities

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In the summer of 2005 the one year-old bear Bruno stirred up attention. He had sallied forth from his home in the Italian Alps over the border to the tourist region of Bavaria, killed sheep and plundered chicken coups. Bear trappers specially summoned from Norway failed to capture him. Bruno became a national media event in Germany and a local nuisance. Hunters, scientists, columnists, shepherds, politicians, a dairymaid, farmers, bear hunters, animal rights activists, zoologists, mayors and tourists had their say. A local hunter, who for his own safety remained anonymous, shot Bruno at last. An excited debate sprang up about how much natural heritage local communities can really bear.

Only a few years before it was the protests of the local population that brought the Bavarian Forest National Park into the news: bark-beetles had wreaked extensive damage on the forest, protected by conservationists who calmly let nature take her course and trusted, in retrospect rightly, in the regenerative power of the forest. How much global protection can a landscape bear that is so significantly linked to the identity of its inhabitants?

Yet not only the natural heritage stirs up potential conflict: in the summer of 2006 UNESCO threatened to revoke the World Heritage status of the Elbe river meadows near Dresden because the city planned to build a very long bridge over the landscape. How much change can a cultural landscape bear if it is still to be regarded as heritage? The same question was posed recently in Cologne, where a planned high-rise threatened to mar the view of the city's Cathedral and so likewise endangered its status as part of the World Heritage.

Heritage always brings conflict with it, as Lowenthal's countless examples demonstrate.[1] Heritage means inclusion and exclusion, a division into "us and them"; heritage is elitist and splits the world into above and below, into global and local. This is of course also true of protected landscapes, as Bender (1998) has so impressively shown in the example of Stonehenge: landscapes are never passive; they are inseparably bound up with the identity of the people that inhabit, shape and

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[1] See Lowenthal 1998.

administer them. Landscapes found identity at the local, national, and increasingly transnational levels (Bender, 1998, 25). For UNESCO landscapes are a heritage of mankind, and for the EU landscapes are a means of constructing a European identity through "unity in diversity"[2], beyond merely national interests. The subtitle of Bender's book on Stonehenge is "making space"; landscapes are space that is produced in each case under new conditions. These conditions are today stamped by concepts like environment, sustainability and biodiversity; the production of foodstuffs, by contrast, plays an ever slighter role.

Landscapes have become an end in themselves, as the EU Minister of Agriculture expressed this in a legendary dictum in the 1990s: "We have to produce more landscapes".[3] The implementation of this slogan has led to a new kind of conflict, at whose center are local communities. The EU has meanwhile responded to such conflicts, as may be gathered from the EU Landscape Convention[4] recently in circulation: it places the participation of local communities at its core and includes in its definition of landscapes their perspectival diversity. Landscapes are what the people who live in them perceive them as and take them for. This is a new element in the approaches to the planning and management of sustainable landscapes that in no way seems to lag behind the insights of the academic study of landscapes in recent decades.

The EU Landscape Convention is a good occasion to take another look at the diverse conflicts that are bound up with the production of landscapes, focusing particularly on the role of local communities and the concept of participation. In recent years research has concentrated increasingly on the inherent element of power in environmental and heritage policies. A multitude of studies have deconstructed concepts such as authenticity, origin, natural and cultural heritage, and revealed the inherent element of power therein. Environmental politics has long lost its innocence and disclosed itself to be, like all politics, power politics. Nevertheless environmental politics, as many environmental protectionists could eloquently and rightly demonstrate, is more necessary than ever. It is therefore all the more worthwhile to take a closer look at the nature of the conflicts, at the production of protected landscapes, and into the actual practice of the participation of local

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[2] See McDonald 1996
[3] *Die Zeit* (5.2.1998)
[4] This may be found at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm

communities. The question that poses itself today is how heritage is constructed. How do relations change between people and between people and things or non-human beings when a landscape is placed under protection? How can heritage be conceived as a process, and what can be learned from this about the participation of local communities?

In the following, I will pursue these question using two case studies from my own research: conflicts about a nature park in Portugal and a national park in Germany. Ethnographic examples have the advantage of tracing processes instead of instructing the actors. The point is rather the most exact possible description of heritage and concepts like "participation" and "local community" under the respective and various political, economic, ecological and social conditions – that is to say, at various places. I will refer to the productive elements in each conflict, and do so against the background of a few of the newer theoretical approaches that aim at understanding the politics of nature in a globalized world.

Politics of nature: new approaches

After a long period during which the environment was discovered as the loser in modernity, and to which engaged scientists and scholars contributed in making this subject a major concern, the wind has changed direction. Concepts and dichotomies like heritage, origin, authenticity and nature / culture have been increasingly deconstructed, and a politics which rests on such absolutes is in principle suspicious. Deconstruction does not mean, however, complete annihilation, but rather relativism and diversity of perspectives.[5] What remains are stones of a mosaic, which could be recomposed by including all the actors. Landscapes are just as little as local communities 'simply there', but are rather polysemantic, processive and relational. "Relational" and "relativism" have the same etymological root; the point is not arbitrariness but an arrangement of relations.

In a series of studies Bruno Latour has pointed out that the question today no longer concerns the alternative of constructed or non-constructed, but rather whether a construction is well or badly made.[6] In order to make this distinction, exact ethnographic observation is required of how protected or sustainable landscapes today are actually made, that is, designed, administered and also inhabited. It is not a question of abstract concepts like nature or culture, but rather of concrete things, of (as Latour

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[5] See for example Descola, P. and Pálsson, G. (1996).
[6] For an introduction to Latour's idea and his concepts, see Latour (2005) and Krauss (2006).

calls it) a realistic politics of nature[7] or, in a broader sense, a "politics of things"[8]. About what exactly are the conflicts, what is their object? What new events, things or actors come into play, and how do these new states-of-affairs change the established networks of those actors who shape and name a landscape or region? How do the existing assemblies change, what new assemblies emerge?

These are major questions in view of the new European Landscape Convention: how will it change the complicated arrangement between local communities, regions, the state, and the EU? How can global environmental discourse and local concerns be conceived together, and where and how can their linking take place?

Latour has extended the concept of actors to include "non-human actors". He adduces innumerable examples of how newly arising actors like bacteria, animals or polluted water, which are made "explicit" and suddenly play a role, change existing networks. Even more, these things or non-human actors become themselves a component of the networks through what are called "spokespersons", or representatives who speak up for them.

Networks in turn cannot be conceived of simply as connections between individual points, between an actor A and an actor B. It is rather a matter of making explicit the whole complexity of such individual connections, to "thicken" them through an exact narrative description. Only then can we take into account how the often surprising strategies of individual actors really take effect: a mayor who suddenly makes an about-face, a conservationist who suddenly makes common cause with his former opponents, or again migratory birds that seek new resting areas in view of climate change, and a rising water level that requires the enactment of new measures.

The circle of those who join the conversation under a regime of participation is thus extended to non-human actors. Actors shed their one-dimensionality and become recognizable in their complexity; they can unite different and often opposing perspectives in one and the same person. If it is hardly possible to introduce a new language, it is possible to reflect on dinned-in rhetoric and to re-think the relation of heritage, participation and local communities on these premises.

The social anthropologist Kim Fortun clarifies this idea with the example of the notorious concept of "stakeholder". In an administrative-technocratic context, talk of all stakeholders having to

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[7] Latour (2004)
[8] Latour / Weibel (2005)

sit around the table has become a commonplace. Yet what is a stakeholder? Does he really represent only a single interest, a single concern, a single goal? Fortun (2001, 11-14) has impressively shown that so-called stakeholders are often committed to several, not infrequently opposing, interests. She applies the concept of the "double-bind" to the situation of most stakeholders. The double-bind is not the exception, but the rule. Thus in my research mayors invariably played an important role, as I will later describe in detail. They are almost always in an intermediate position in which they enter into contracts with external parties (and mostly with "those on top") for which they must serve as the spokesman to "those below" in their local community. The same is true of NGOs like Greenpeace that stand up for preventing the pollution of the North Sea and protecting of wild geese, but shelf this position when it is a matter of advocating offshore wind power stations.

Fortun prefers therefore to call such actors "enunciatory groups" rather than stakeholders; enunciatory groups must often represent positions towards different entities, often enter into connections without sharing the goals of their coalition partners and their own goals are often contradictory and temporary. This concept takes actual reality much more into account than the static one of stakeholders.

Such an approach can afford a new look at heritage and environmental conflicts, and especially at the "frictions" between an environmental discourse that has long become global and the many contradictions in local practice. The concept of "friction" was introduced by Anna Tsing (2005) in her book of the same title so as to be able to link and describe global connections and local conflicts. Tsing (2005, 5-6) uses the word in its quite literal sense of a "rubbing together" that often brings about a necessary slowing down of processes and change. As I will show, the changes to which local communities are exposed in times of climate change, environmental destruction, neo-liberalism and the establishment of ecological regimes are so immense that they need to be harnessed to a process of adaptation. The conflict of local communities with heritage measures will thus appear in a new light, and participation will be seen as a complex and often contradictory practice.

The justification for heritage lies not in the latest scientific certainties, but rather in its participatory construction, which ought by all means to include the sciences as spokespersons.

Heritage is about something real: real actors who attempt to sort out urgent concerns. The following two case studies from my fieldwork in Portugal and in Northern Germany are about such real actors.

Case study 1: Portugal[9]

At the beginning of the 1990s I went to Portugal in order to study the social and cultural dimensions of environmental degradation in the Alentejo. I found there quite another environmental conflict than the one I had expected: in southwestern Alentejo a nature park had been created so as to protect the coast against the booming tourist industry and intensive farming. A graffito emblazoned on an old fisherman's hut became the title of my dissertation (Krauss 2001) on environmental conflicts, ecological discourse and sustainable development: "Hang the Greens!". This environmental conflict of another kind, between the local population and the environmental administration, captured my attention. I soon learned from my interviews that this coastal landscape, and what is understood as environment and nature, is anything but unambiguous. I followed the actions of the actors and became acquainted with the problems from all sides.

The Alentejo is a landscape that underwent in the last century a multiple change of significance. Under the regime of the dictator Salazar, the Alentejo was supposed to be transformed into the granary of the nation; the inhabitants served as cheap labor on the large estates of the great landowners. After the Carnation Revolution in 1974, the Alentejo became the scene of agricultural reform: the mainly landless migrant workers took possession of the land of their masters and built up hundreds of cooperatives. "*A terra a quem a trabalha*"[10] was the rallying cry, and the concept of "terra" bears within it the entire range of meaning of "land", from the land that is worked to the land in which identity is rooted.

This process came to a rather abrupt end with Portugal's entry into the European Union in 1986 and the advent of a neo-liberal economy under the then Prime Minister Cavaco Silva. The cooperatives were dissolved, *a terra* was ready to be sold, and the members of the cooperatives found themselves again on the free market. At the same time, in this corner of Europe forgotten by progress,

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[9] The following remarks draw on my work on the Alentejo, based on my research there in the 1990s and 2005. See Krauss (2001) and Krauss (2006).
[10] "The land to those who work it!"

a new regime established itself in order to save the coast from speculation and destruction: with the agreement of the local communities, a nature park came into being in several stages, with the goal of achieving sustainable development for the region. The strip of coast was now managed and defined according to ecological criteria. But what became of the *terra* in which the identity of the people of the region was rooted, and which was a major catchword in the rhetoric of local politicians?

The powerful president of the large administrative district of Odemira had agreed to the founding of the nature park, but became for all that subsequently one of the most powerful opponents of the nature park's administration, which was located in Odemira. Global ecological discourse and its conventions, upon which the nature park was largely founded, and a local politics that rested on its connection to *a nossa terra*, led to "frictions" in Tsing's sense of the word.

When a tanker disaster occurred in the neighboring harbor of Sines and an oil slick covered the coast of Odemira, the administration of the nature park spoke of an unpleasant, but finally unimportant, event. The long-term ecological harm was slight, and the responsibility for dealing with it was that of other ministries and administrations. The district president of Odemira saw in the accident not the administrative dimension, but instead seized upon the horror felt by the local inhabitants at the slimy flood and erected a monument in a coastal village to the engagement of the inhabitants and to the marines who rushed to their help. Every year the "Dia do Mar Limpo", the "Day of the Clean Sea", is commemorated with a demonstration on the beach. In a procession redolent of Catholic liturgical practices, and with a rhetoric evoking the will of the people and their bonds with their homeland, the coast is incorporated into the local discourse and made practically tangible as *a nossa terra* – not without a sideswipe at the inactivity of the nature park administration during the commemorated affair.

This local discourse was further reinforced by the enterprises of foreign agricultural entrepreneurs, which practiced the intensive cultivation of fruit and vegetables in the middle of the nature park. They were a thorn in the side of the park administration, but they had to been tolerated owing to, as it was politely formulated, 'higher-ranking interests'. For the administration and its director, a Lisbon architect, this was a very disagreeable situation: the administration, under-staffed and still being set up, saw itself at the mercy of traditionally more powerful ministries and interests.

Portugal, the new EU member, saw in these capital investments a chance for the urgently needed upswing. At the same time, the director saw himself confronted by a local community that had sought out his administration as the (negative) object for the construction of identity. How could it be that the nature park administration allowed foreign investors to build over large areas when it refused the small native farmer permission to build even a new barn?

The conservationists were, almost without exception, educated city people, members of elites who lived here in the provinces as if in exile. The law was on the side of the nature park, but the language and culture of the local communities remained strange and inaccessible to the conservationists. The NGOs, which worked closely together with the administration, had in the formative phase of the young Portuguese democracy decided against partisan action and in favor of "the system", as it was called in the language of the old Cold War. In this way they could make use of legislative resources and international connections for their concerns, while local politicians used (post-) communist rhetoric to draw attention to their neglect by the central government.

Not only the director of the nature park found himself in a double-bind. The agricultural enterprises also constituted a complex challenge for the district president. The conflict came to a head with one of these enterprises, that of the French investor Thierry Roussel, a world-famous playboy who was once married to Christina Onassis, the daughter of the Greek shipping magnate, and who was now the trustee of the fortune of the richest child in the world, their daughter. His business, bearing the locally-colored name "Odefruta", had the long-term goal of the industrial production of strawberries and other foodstuffs for the European market and, at the same time, of creating at the local level urgently needed jobs, at times up to 600 of them. This was an offer that the president of an impoverish district naturally greeted with open ears, even if he had been an advocate of the nature park. The balancing act between these irreconcilable positions was struck when Roussel proposed operating his production in the form of ecological farming, with a view to a future EU ecological label (which today, many years later, actually exists), and so to practice sustainable development amidst the nature park. The media in the meantime drew attention to the constant (and probably real) environmental degradation being wreaked by chemical agents, land utilization, green houses, etc.

The district president now found himself again in a highly complex situation: branded by the conservationists and the media as a traitor, and suspected by his communist party comrades as a neo-liberal revisionist, he staked everything on the Odefruta card and the business's bright ecological future.

The story became an international media event and ended a few years later with Roussel, who had obviously miscalculated in his speculations, fleeing the country under cover of night and never being seen again. He left behind an ecological disaster and several hundred workers with unpaid wages. What remained were other, evidently better-run agricultural businesses, and the feeling among the native population that there isn't much to the much-invoked idea of sustainable development.

It has not been only such iridescent personalities that have determined the fate of this now protected landscape; new and influential actors appeared, represented by the indefatigable environmental activists. The otter population of the southwestern coast played a pivotal role in another and, from the point of view of conservationists, much greater threat: the greedy appetite of the tourist industry and its investors. Since the founding of the nature sanctuary on this still largely undeveloped coast, plans for a tourist complex, with swimming pools and golf courses for several thousand guests, had lain in the drawers at the ministries. Needless to say, investors discovered nature conservation and integrated it into their proposals. Why not bundle hordes of tourists into centers with luxury apartments amidst the unspoiled nature of this "still virgin coast" and sell the whole thing as eco-tourism?

The native otters are an ecological rarity because they inhabit both sweet and salt water, and are protected under the Bern Convention. So as to use this resource in the fight against tourism, the conservationists initiated a study to prove the presence of these nocturnal and shy animals in the development area. To this purpose they implanted radar transmitters in a few of the animals, and mobilized the national media to report the study and about the potential danger to the coast. Access to the local population, on the other hand, remained barred to them. Full of abhorrence, one of the conservationists told me that the locals not only hunted the otters, but also even ate them. Fishermen, for their part, wondered what was conservationist about implanting technological devices in otters. Otter, otters everywhere – on the official negotiating table, in the grand projects, in the media, in cafés,

and even sometimes on the beach; the otter as resource in the rhetorical struggle over identity and membership.[11]

The absurdity into which such communications could drift is no exception, but a solid component of the politics of nature. There are irresolvable conflicts between economic and ecological interests; there is an often unbridgeable social and cultural gap between conservationists and locals; and all the actors fight simultaneously on various fronts: local politicians, conservationists, farmers, investors, national politicians, the EU, the threatened coast, plants and animals sit at the same negotiating table. How, in this context, protect the landscape and introduce sustainable development when the single real economic movements are, now as then, the drain on the rural population and the speculative grand projects? How develop identity when the landscape in which one lives is no longer recognizable in the words of those who administer it? How conduct a politics of nature when to the big investors in Portugal attaches, now as then, the odor of corruption? How work together with a population that traditionally draws its identity from oppression and discrimination? How make one's own concerns intelligible to an elitist conservationism?

All actors use the discursive and legal resources available to them; they respond contradictorily, tactically, and adjust their rhetoric to the given situation. Again and again, individual actors have pressed ahead and given the history of this landscape an unexpected turn, changed the existing networks and created new constellations. Through these frictions nature has become a constant variable in this landscape. The politics of nature has produced new arrangements of relations and assemblies that are more or less democratic and act towards an uncertain future. This politics does not take place beyond this world but in a young democracy in which, as in many places, environmental politics has assumed (or can assume) a pioneering position as far as the compliance with laws, rules and participation is concerned. Everyone is working for the same goal, even if everyone often understands it quite differently. It is often under the most difficult conditions, here at the edge of Europe, that the problems of the global village have to be solved. The southwestern coast of Portugal has thus become a *matter of concern*, if one that is constantly in danger of being neglected.

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[11] For or more detailed account of this conflict see Krauss (2006).

Case study 2: Wadden Sea[12]

The concept of constructivism is bone of contention among the academic community that splits it into various camps. Yet there are landscapes that can't be bothered with such subtleties. My second example concerns a landscape that has been constructed through and through. It is the stretch of the North Sea coast whose seaside half is commonly called "Wadden Sea" and is marked by a coastal landscape that has come into being through the interplay of man and nature. The flat coastal shelf of the Wadden Sea is the result of devastating storm tides that, with the exception of an island chain and individual "holms" (*Halligen*), made the mainland into sea. At the same time, the coastal landscape is the product of a centuries-old tradition of diking and the reclamation of land. No one can say where the boundary here runs between nature and culture. And precisely here an embittered conflict has raged for decades about what nature really is.

The Wadden Sea has been a national park for over two decades, whose goal is the protection of unspoiled natural development. The declaration that made the Wadden Sea protected nature was equivalent to a radical reinterpretation of this landscape: hitherto the maxim with respect to the coast had been reclamation and that with respect to coastal protection ever more diking. For centuries coastal inhabitants had settled behind newly erected dikes, drained the land, farmed it, maintained the dikes and waited until enough sediment had gathered before the dikes to reclaim new land. The struggle against natural forces and the sea, and its significance for the identity of the coastal inhabitants, came to expression in a protest poster against the national park that today still stands before the entrance to a small coastal town: "Eco-dictatorship, no thanks! God made the sea and the Frisians the coast".

It is not only the sediment of the sea floor that washes up before the dikes: in this rallying cry "sedimented pasts" (Bender, 1998, 25) also come to light. In the conflict with the national park and the conservationists, the image arose of a unitary and purportedly continuous identity of the coastal inhabitants that goes back to the Frisian migration. Frisians are, however, only a minority in this region, distinguished by its high mobility and its great dependence on external powers, on the respective authorities who finance the dikings.

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[12] The following remarks are based on my fieldwork in North Friesland between 2001 and 2004. See Krauss (2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b).

Since the founding of the national park the line of conflict has run parallel to the debate about nature and nature conservation, in the course of which debate the participating actors have re-positioned themselves. Yet this description of the conflict over the nature of the Wadden Sea and the coastal landscape does not tell the whole story. The confrontations are at the same time an example from which we can learn much about heritage, participation and local community. The often vociferous debates, conducted in the presence of the media, can easily deceive us about their productive contributions. The politics of nature, which plays an ever-growing role on the north German coast, and the related end of diking, demanded a redirection of the existing networks that shape and administer the region. In the following I will present a few tactics, strategies and practices with respect heritage, participation and local communities that show the creativity of the participating actors.

Participation 1

The establishment of the national park followed the hitherto biggest eco-research project in Germany, which in its concluding report represented the coast as a unique and conservation-worthy system from the biological, chemical, geological, physical and, to a certain degree, social points of view, and at the same time proposed potential protected zones, ranked according to various grades. This eco-system report was presented to the public in the form of hundreds of hearings before district and community councils, hunters and fishermen, and especially all interested citizens. In the course of these meetings it came to angry protests; sometimes they ended in tumult; demonstrations were organized; and when the then minister-president of the state of Schleswig-Holstein appeared, a scarecrow was burned, tomatoes and eggs hurled, and the police could control the situation only with difficulty.

The resistance was ignited on various points: in general the monopolizing of the landscape by conservationists, the restrictions on access to and availability of the Wadden Sea, and the unrecognizability of the landscape once it had been transformed into the language of science. In the course of these protests strong opposition groups were formed, particularly among hunters and fishermen. These made use of the "sedimented pasts" and invoked the image of an unbroken, centuries old tradition of Frisian culture so as to re-define the solidarity of the local community by drawing on ancient resources. As for the conservationists, they traveled for months from one hearing to the next, and many were happy when they came away from these confrontations with damage only to their

psyches and car tires. Their solidarity grew through their common experience as "guerilla fighters" in enemy country. Officially employees of an administration, bureaucrats, they re-discovered themselves as fighters for justice, for nature.

Participation 2

The zoning proposed by the eco-system report was negotiated for a long time at official political levels and adopted in a partly much toned-down form. Yet the administration of the national park responded to the resentment of the population, and its officials traveled to every single community that bordered directly on the park in order to negotiate with the mayors and citizens the local use of the Wadden Sea. For local communities within a distance of 1000 meters in the park, special regulations for each were decided upon. Mayors and national park officials together went into the Wadden Sea, discussed traditional uses and came into conversation. These negotiations were far more successful than the previous debates. Above all, the local mayors could appear before their mistrustful communities with their heads held high and announce successes.

In special cases work-groups were formed that furnished a regular meeting place for interest groups like NGOs, community representatives, users, mayors, residents and other persons concerned to discuss problems and find common solutions. The work-group in which I took part as an observer met at a traditional house on a holm. The gathering began always with coffee and cake; resolutions were adopted only unanimously on principle; and stress was laid on polite conduct towards each other. Here people met who had stood opposite each other in bitter and often hate-filled confrontations, and together sought compromises and solutions. When they found them, they raised flags at official celebrations: a local flag, one of the federal state, and the flag of the national park.

Participation 3

One consequence of the confrontations was the formation of what was known as the Board of Trustees of the National Park, which was attached to the park administration in an advisory capacity. Represented on the Board were interest groups ranging from mayors to representatives of the fishermen, the hunters, science, the NGOs (e.g., the WWF) and others; it was headed by the district administrators of the relevant areas. The Board was to agree upon general guidelines and developments, and make suggestions; and in directory affairs it had a vote.

Here too embittered opponents met at the same table, but now the national park officials were in the minority. In often drawn-out debates, and at every opportunity, fundamental questions were again discussed and already decided affairs re-opened; coalitions formed according to regions; the Board served representatives of particular interests and, often enough, populists as a mouthpiece. More than once the director of the national park would groan that this advisory body behaved itself like an anti-national park committee. At the same time, this forum provided the possibility of speaking out before a public of decision-makers – not only about decisions on the agenda but also to represent general positions: we island inhabitants, we coastal dwellers, we fishermen, we hunters, we from so-and-so a party.

At the end of such a meeting I noted down the following typical exchange: Under the rubric "Miscellaneous" the national park director had reported that a sign for the national park had been set up in a town along the dike. The mayor of the community called out: "Signs everywhere; wherever you look, you see nothing but signs for the national park. Is that really necessary?" General laughter and agreement. The national park director took an acerbic tone: "Mr. Mayor, I am obliged to point out to you that this is not a point of discussion; I am reporting on the execution of a legal directive". The mayor leaned back in his chair with a satisfied air: "I only wanted to hear that".

Local identity is created in opposition to the state, which is here represented in its long arm of the national park. Conversely, in many of my interviews the deprecatory attitude towards the locals of the conservationists, who described them as uneducated, coarse and unteachable, became plain. The conservationists also formed their identity in opposition, namely to the coastal inhabitants. As these rather marginal examples show, the Board of Trustees of the National Park fulfilled, in addition to its actual advisory function, a quite different purpose of a symbolic nature. In this public space actors who have fought many fights with and against each other meet together at regular intervals, and both keep alive the memory of those battles and keep open the possibility of reviving old coalitions or entering into new ones.

Of mayors and national park officials

The coastal districts are divided into a multitude of small communities, each of which has a mayor. The mayors fill the always necessary and complicated role of the mediator between the communities

and the higher-ranking powers upon whom the welfare of the communities depends. "Mayor" is an honorary position and at the same time a fulltime job. One of the people I interviewed was a member of the dike society, of the coastal protection, of a hunters club, of the district council, of a commission, of the Board of Trustees of the National Park, of an initiative for more coastal protection, of a work-group of the national park, and much more. Mayors can speak in various "languages": that of the people at celebrations, of geography and physics when the subject is sedimentary deposits, of coastal protection when it is a matter of dike security, of the populist in electoral campaigns, of the law or of economics. Files are piled high on their night tables, and at the same time they must keep the respect of their voters by managing successfully their farms or firms. Mayors stand in a constant tension between negotiations with external powers like the national park, where they obtain compromises, and their communities, where they must sell the compromises. This frequently requires an admirable balancing act; or else a despicable one, as many conservationists judge the perceived betrayal through daring interpretations of agreed-upon conditions. Mayors have continually to produce an inner unity, which can often be represented only as a common outward front; they and their communities are dependent upon the outside world and must position themselves with respect to it.

Mayors in turn also know quite well the dependencies in which, for example, the director of the national park finds himself. He must, before he can make an agreement with a community, first obtain approval from the Department of the Environment. National park administrations are woven into a dense, hierarchical net, with long chains of command, mountains of files and intrigues. Mayors also know how to play this scale. They are often hard and difficult negotiators, whom no one gets past easily in a democratic society, not even the state with its long tentacles, and no less national park directors. Both oppose one another often enough: "We've often enough faced one another with drawn swords", said one district administrator to a national park official at his parting, "but we've never attacked the other from behind". That too is a kind of participation.

Participation, conflict and new challenges

The construction of the North German coastal landscape will never be concluded; change is the only constant. The resistance of a large part of the population against the national park was followed two years ago by the outcry against the designation of the mainland side of the coast as an area subject to

the *Flora-Fauna-Habitat-Directive*, in consequence of the implementation of a EU decree. In addition, the recognition of the Wadden Sea as part of the UNESCO World Heritage has been under discussion for years now, but this status is to be granted, according to the express declaration of UNESCO, only with the agreement of the population. The district of North Friesland, where I conducted my fieldwork, has refused its assent to this day. Currently a fairly dramatic change is taking place on this coast: the coastal landscape is becoming an "energy landscape", which has placed not only nature and environmental protectionists before ideological and practical challenges. In the course of promoting wind power, the mainland side of the coast has been transformed into a gigantic wind park, and the first offshore wind parks have already been approved and provoked new conflicts. The networks and conflict culture of this region appear to be capable, as my previous examples show, of meeting new circumstances and challenges. Dynamic relations demand a participation that is redefined in each case according to the power arrangements of the network. All the actors are in movement, the human and the non-human, and from this movement emerge local communities and sustainable landscapes – as long as the actors can come to an agreement about them.

Conclusion

Both the Portuguese nature park and the German national park are examples of the envisioned "Europe of regions" under the banner of sustainability. They are also examples of the complex and tense relations among heritage, participation and local communities. The construction of sustainable landscapes, as is demanded by the EU Landscape Convention, does not take place in a vacuum; the space must always first be created in a world where everything already belongs to someone, where discourses and practices have already been established. These have all been shaped by their respective histories and have also always been changeable. In centralistic Portugal formal and informal practices of power are different from those of federally organized Germany; in both countries participatory networks already cover the two discussed regions; neither can exist without a close linkage with the outside – whether that be the state, the EU or global connections. Participation with respect to heritage means that networks are being altered even more in favor of a local perspective. Yet this local perspective also emerges only amidst the multiplicitous frictions of the interplay of inner and outer

forces; it is formed through "enunciatory communities" that often join forces for quite different reasons and only temporarily. This path is often difficult, yet it is also perhaps a guarantee that landscapes will remain in motion and compromises can be found, until the next actor appears and a new direction calls for the fresh action of all participating forces.

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