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SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN MÜNSTER, GERMANY

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INTRODUCTION

The context of welfare innovations in Münster is dominated by the overarching logic of competitiveness and investment (see City Report Münster, WP4). This discursive frame has been established in the 1990s, when a coalition involving stakeholders from local politics and administration, the university and local entrepreneurship joined forces to promote Münster as an attractive location for businesses. The main aims were an increase in market efficiency and economic growth. Even though this discourse stems from economic considerations, it has been applied to all political sectors and therefore has important implications for the field of social policies as well¹. Its logic is closely connected to the wider scientific and political discourse on the “third way” of welfare policy, the main elements of which shall be outlined in the following.

The main aim of the concept of the “third way”² is to recombine the paradigms of market efficiency and social justice in order to achieve equal opportunities. Through participation in the labour market, each individual shall be empowered to improve his/her own chances in life as well as contribute to the national economy (Jun 2000: 1514f.). The role of the state is confined to providing a framework in which market efficiency can be performed at its best and is close to neoliberal thinking in its priority for fiscal conservatism (Merkel 2000: 274). This leads to a micro-economic approach of increasing individual employability to further inclusion into the labour market instead of enhancing the number of available jobs through deficit spending. In this regard, the role of the state is that of a “social investment state” while personal responsibility and the meritocratic principle are emphasised (Merkel 2000: 277-279). This approach stands in contrast with the former “curing” or “caring” state.

At the same time, social policy in Münster is influenced by a strong catholic tradition, which leads to an emphasis on solidarity and subsidiarity and a connection to the concept of communitarianism (Vorländer 2001). Consequently, society has the duty to care for those who are unable to do so themselves. The smallest possible entity (the individual, the community etc.) should be responsible for this, in order to avoid unnecessary collectivisation (Leuninger 2002: 21-26). The foundation for this claim lies in the high value of personal autonomy in the catholic tradition (Focke 1978: 192; Leuninger 2002: 20f.). Thus, the state should enable everyone to contribute actively to society which stresses the social political focus on prevention and investments in human capital as a basis for competitiveness and participation (Leuninger 2002: 113-116, 121).

All of these aspects can be found in Münster’s welfare paradigm. Subsidiarity is promoted wherever possible, so that many public services are provided by private or third-sector organisations. During the last two decades, this trend has been reinforced by the need to decrease public spending. The labour market is considered the main promoter of social cohesion and participation, which is why (individual) employability shall be strengthened through welfare policies. As shown in WP4, the view prevails that prevention is a necessary and cost-effective approach for the welfare system.

This general frame of welfare has profound implications for social innovations, since they are not constructed at the drawing board. Instead, they are context-specific and

¹ The implications of this discourse for the field of social policy have been highlighted by several interview partners in individual interviews as well as the three focus groups.

² There are several conceptions of the third way which differ in certain points. The aim here is only to give a general overview of the main ideas without going into details. However, the concept as applied in Münster is rather close to the original British version of “New Labour”.

embedded into the wider social, economic and political context (Moulaert et al. 2005). Accordingly, the context opens windows of opportunity for social innovators and social entrepreneurs. It establishes the conditions social entrepreneurs encounter and thereby promote or inhibit new ideas. Regarding the role of municipal actors and their influence on these windows of opportunity, this can mean:

- a) a *laissez-faire* attitude, neither supporting nor obstructing an undertaking;
- b) steering attempts, either through (1) financing enterprises, (2) incorporating them (and possibly providing the goods/services themselves), or (3) selective intervention at neuralgic points (in order to achieve the maximum impact through minimal financial engagement);
- c) the obstruction of ideas, e.g. through legislation.

The following chapters will analyse different innovations undertaken in Münster regarding their organisation and implementation. The aim is to identify their reciprocal effects with the local welfare system in terms of local discourse and interaction of different local actors. The findings will be discussed in a final chapter. The discussion will also draw conclusions regarding the sustainability and possible diffusion of the innovations studied herein.

1. WELFARE INNOVATIONS IN THE THREE POLICY AREAS

1.1. MAMBA³

1.6.1. *Short description*

Although immigration rates in Germany have constantly been high for decades, many immigrants face problems with the integration into social and economic life. Especially refugees are confronted with a rather restrictive legislation regarding residence and working permissions. Without a residence permit it is hard to get a job and many employers do not want to hire refugees because of bureaucratic hurdles and uncertain future perspectives. On the other hand, for some groups there is no chance to obtain a long-term residence permit without proof of employment and independence of social assistance. Obviously, refugees need special support and consultancy for labour market integration.

As an inter-sectoral network, MAMBA addresses this issue with a “one-stop” concept: Its main tasks are to counsel and qualify immigrants as well as to find employers willing to offer them jobs. The network comprises five partners from the non-profit, for-profit and public sector. The concept for MAMBA was originally developed in 2008 by the local organisation Association for Refugee Relief (*GGUA, Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung Asylsuchender e.V.*), which is considered one of the most experienced organisations in this field in Germany. As of early 2012, MAMBA has provided work to more than 200 people and in addition to that, apprenticeships for young participants. In total, MAMBA had around 300 participants at the time. For the duration of the second allowance period (Nov. 2010 - Dec. 2013), the programme was expanded to include further towns in

³ “MAMBA“ is the abbreviation of the full title “Münsters Aktionsprogramm für MigrantInnen und Bleibeberechtigte zur Arbeitsmarktintegration in Münster und im Münsterland“ (Action programme of Münster for the labour market integration of migrants and persons with a right to stay in Münster and the Münsterland).

the region of *Münsterland* where the GGUA now offers advisory services once a week. Moreover, it serves as a blue print for several similar initiatives all over Germany.

1.6.2. *Conceptions of and ways of addressing users*

MAMBA is open to immigrants both with and without a permanent residence permit. One of the programme's main qualities is that the GGUA is widely known and well-reputed among the target group. Refugees are more comfortable addressing a local NGO to seek work than accessing a public institution such as the *Jobcenter*, as the interviews with MAMBA employees indicate. The counsellors speak several languages and have intercultural skills. Moreover, they are familiar with the special legal situation of refugees, which is rarely the case in public agencies. Therefore, MAMBA compensates for the deficits of public administration.

MAMBA follows a voluntary and empowering approach. All actors within the network (refugees, organizations, employers) are working together as partners. The network offers a wide range of services to its participants - even after they have found a job. Those who do not have sufficient language skills in German can participate in special language courses. Moreover, participants can join computer courses or other kinds of training programmes in order to improve their competences for the labour market.

Within the MAMBA project, refugees are considered as being able to contribute to the local labour market. During a first information session at the GGUA, they can indicate their preferences and qualifications concerning a potential employment. GGUA's coaches try to build on the special resources and competences of MAMBA participants in order to find the right job for each person. They furthermore help participants to cope with administrative procedures involving their residence and work permits. Subsequently, participants get in touch with one of the partner organisations that provide contacts to potential employers and offer vocational training. As the interviews indicate, employers are interested in the MAMBA project as they consider participants highly motivated for most kinds of jobs as well as for temporary work. This motivation does not only stem from financial reasons. In fact, employment can lead to improvements in their residence status. This applies especially to the group of several hundred Roma refugees from Kosovo, many of whom have been living in Münster for more than a decade without regular residence permit.

1.6.3. *Internal organisation and modes of working*

Currently, 14 employees of the five partner organisations are working for MAMBA (most of them 19-30 hours per week). While GGUA is an independent non-profit organisation, training and vocational education programmes are offered by the Society for Promotion and Education (*GEBA, Gesellschaft für Berufsförderung und Ausbildung*), a for-profit organisation, and the Centre for Youth Education (*JAZ, Jugendausbildungszentrum*), a non-profit enterprise belonging to the catholic charity organisation Caritas. Contacts to employers and job-related counselling are provided by the Educational Centre of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (*HBZ, Handwerkskammer-Bildungszentrum*) and the *Jobcenter*, a municipal public institution. The network efficiently links different competences: whereas the GGUA has good access to the target group, the other institutions are familiar with Münster's labour market and have contacts to local enterprises. A team meeting involving all concerned personnel within the organisations is scheduled once a month. In order to facilitate cooperation, all employees share the same computer software, which provides them with data concerning participants.

When the project started, the GGUA provided special training sessions for employees in the public administration offices in order to strengthen intercultural skills as well as

improve their knowledge concerning the legal situation of refugees in Germany. It may be considered a positive side effect that through MAMBA the local administration became more acquainted with immigration issues and acquired special knowledge as to how to deal with them. Through this development, at least a partial sustainability and legacy of MAMBA beyond the actual duration of the project has been established.

1.6.4. *Interaction with the local welfare system*

MAMBA receives multilevel funding from several institutions. The largest share is provided by the European Social Fund whereas the city of Münster has contributed few resources on an *ad hoc* basis according to requirements. However, funding by the EU and the federal government is limited to the end of the year 2013. As such, it is not assured that the network will subsist after 2013. Nevertheless, many local stakeholders see MAMBA as a big success and a flagship project. The success of the project in terms of the number of participants and the percentage placed in paid labour is established in internal evaluations of the project as well as those of the federal programme (Mirbach et al. 2012; Mirbach/Schobert 2011). MAMBA is in line with Münster's local discourse. Strengthening the employability of individuals follows the main paradigmatic lines of Münster's welfare system outlined in the introduction. Furthermore, it fits into the local welfare discourse and can be seen as one way of promoting the image of Münster as an integrative and liberal-minded city.

In Münster there is a broad consensus across all parties not to carry out controversies on refugee policy in public. Therefore, in 2009 a resolution was passed unanimously by the city council to stop deportations of Roma to Kosovo. However, there is still no political consensus on a general right of residence for this group on the level of federal and regional legislation, so labour market integration is crucial to reach a more permanent status. With respect to this situation, MAMBA's political dimension can be evaluated as extending far beyond an innovative approach in labour market integration.

MAMBA's modus operandi positively promotes the concept of public private partnerships, or inter-sectoral networks. According to a representative of the social department of the municipal administration, MAMBA also had an impact on Münster's 2010 decision to apply to be an "*Optionskommune*" (see below). This model provides the local level with additional responsibilities in local labour market policy, especially in regards to the long-term unemployed. The liberties of the city within this model to decide upon funding received by the federal level for labour market integration may both further the development of similar networks for other "difficult" groups on the labour market as well as help in sustaining the MAMBA network.

Concerning the question of diffusion, MAMBA is already applied in different cities in Germany. As long as funding is guaranteed and there is an interest of local stakeholders to promote labour market participation of refugees, the project can easily be transferred. It might also be transferred to other target groups (e.g. other immigrant groups or unemployed young people) if there are institutional structures (i.e. partner organisations already working with the intended target groups) to which the project can be connected.

1.2. **OPTIONSKOMMUNE**

1.6.5. *Short description*

Traditionally, labour market and social policies are organised and allocated separately in Germany. While labour market related issues are taken care of by local branches of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*), communities have always been in charge of the provision of social services and welfare-related financial support. Most recently, this division has partly been abolished and combining different policy fields is the innovative aspect of this new development: the Federal Government institutionalised the possibility to hand over the provision of social assistance (welfare support) and assistance related to unemployment (in particular benefits granted for long-term unemployed) to the municipalities. This new approach permits the allocation of responsibility for labour market and social policy issues to local governments and is called “*Optionskommune*”. However, *not* being an *Optionskommune* means that the Federal Employment Agency remains the leading institution coordinating the supply of social benefits. It relies on cooperation with the local administrations. Either way, both models contain a legal obligation to establish joint institutions called *Jobcenters*.

In order to become an *Optionskommune* local governments had to file an individual application to the State Ministry for Labour, Integration and Social Affairs. They had to show that they are capable of successfully taking over the tasks and duties of the *Jobcenter*. Since the programme departs from the traditional German approach regarding social and labour market policies, this has been a competitive process. At the moment there are around 110 *Optionskommunen* all over Germany. In 2012, Münster was chosen to become one of them, whereas several rural districts in the surrounding *Münsterland* have already established the model since 2004. This allows a coherent and integrated regional approach with respect to labour market initiatives, particularly for those groups and constituencies that face significant difficulties in finding a job. Indeed, the City of Münster hopes to significantly improve job placement processes and other services offered to citizens and local companies. The change towards the *Optionskommune* involves an adaptation of the structures of labour market policy and is therefore a quasi-permanent innovation.

1.6.6. *Conceptions of and ways of addressing users*

Being an *Optionskommune* is an innovative approach as it allows a different perspective on unemployed people: unemployment is not seen as individual failure, it mainly considers unemployment a structural problem. Therefore, the development towards an *Optionskommune* can be seen as an answer to these structural problems as it brings social policy and labour market together.

Essentially this model follows a decentralized approach: it is assumed that the *Jobcenter* as a local institution is better situated to take care of unemployed people than the Federal Employment Agency, since it can rely on local expertise and networks. In this way it is possible to establish more individualised ways of addressing users and finally place more people in paid labour. In this the *Optionskommune* follows an empowering approach, as the head of the Social Department explains. As it is not possible to appoint more staff to support the unemployed, existing staff changed their ways of working. They are now using another consulting approach “away from taking care of the unemployed on the basis of software tools towards the individual and his/her history”⁴. He further states that the *Jobcenter* in general has taken on another perspective on unemployed people: from now on it considers them more as potential contributors to the local economy than as “problematic cases”.

⁴ „Sie nutzen nun einen anderen Beratungsansatz, der darauf beruht, einen Fall nicht mehr nur auf Basis von Software zu bearbeiten, sondern das Individuum mit ihrer oder seiner Geschichte anzuerkennen.“ (Interview with the head of the Social Department).

Subsequently this approach is based on

“another perspective on the issue of unemployment. It is another way of working with the people that come to us. The consulting process [...], the way of how measures of integration are being conceptualised and implemented have changed. [...] Not everyone has to participate in an application training, not everyone has to participate in this and that...rather the focus is placed on the costumer and its chances and strengths. Based on that integration measures are conceptualised. This offers an entirely modified approach...”⁵

Moreover, local authority tries to decrease bureaucracy in the *Jobcenter*. This decision has positive consequences for the unemployed since it improves the focus on the individual and his/her specific situation. It also supports the idea of giving the case workers enough scope for independent decisions that favour the individual unemployed. Altogether, the *Optionskommune* offers more room for other, more flexible and sustainable instruments in addressing users than the former model did.

1.6.7. *Internal organisation and modes of working*

At the moment it is quite difficult to evaluate the status quo of the implementation of the *Optionskommune* and its modes of working, because the new instruments have not been set up in detail yet. However, an advisory board which is required by law has been given additional weight in Münster: consisting of 16 regional representatives from the field of labour market policy from the administration, civil society and political parties, this board is becoming increasingly involved in the development of local labour market strategies in order to develop innovative approaches for the integration into the job market.⁶

At the moment, involved parties (administration, civil society and political parties) are working on an approach as to how to effectuate and modify local structures that were implemented with the *Optionskommune*. Since this is an on-going process the first step has been developing strategic principles for the future social- and labour market-political organisation of the *Optionskommune*. Therefore, tangible outcomes are not available yet (cf. focus group interview II and IV).

1.6.8. *Interaction with the local welfare system*

⁵ „Das ist eine andere Sichtweise auf das Thema. Es ist eine ganz andere Arbeit mit den Menschen, die zu uns kommen. Der Beratungsprozess [...] die Art, wie Eingliederungsmaßnahmen konzipiert und umgesetzt werden verändert sich [...]. Nicht jeder muss ein Bewerbertraining machen, nicht jeder muss dies und das machen, sondern je nachdem, wie Kunden so sind und wo ihre Chancen und Stärken liegen, so werden auch die Eingliederungsmaßnahmen konzipiert. Das ist ein völlig veränderter Ansatz...” (Focus group interview IV, head of the Social Department).

⁶ „Es gibt ja von Gesetzes wegen die Verpflichtung einen sogenannten Beirat zu wählen. Der Beirat ist ja ein Institut aus regionalen Vertretern des Arbeitsmarktes hier. 16 Vertreter haben wir im Beirat bei uns im Jobcenter und wir haben gerade im letzten Jahr einen ganz interessanten Ansatz gewählt und den werden wir auch weiterverfolgen. Wir sind nämlich hingegangen und haben gesagt: nicht wir setzen uns jetzt hin und machen jetzt mal ein Arbeitsmarktprogramm, weil wir das ja alles genau wissen, was uns fehlt, sondern wir fragen mal die Akteure. Und haben alle Akteure aus dem Beirat eingeladen an sogenannten Zielgruppen-Workshops teilzunehmen.“ (Focus group interview IV, Head of the Jobcenter).

The *Optionskommune* follows the concept of subsidiarity, stating that matters should be handled by the least centralised authority. Thereby, this concept fits into the overarching structure of the German welfare state and Münster's main paradigms. In this way the *Optionskommune* is an example for a general German trend that started a couple of years ago and has brought immense changes for the local welfare system, particularly financially: a transfer of competences from the federal state or the *Länder* towards the local level.

Particularly concerning the provision of labour, the opting-model follows the assumption that the local authority is more appropriate than the state in providing jobs. Local authority in Münster can draw on good contacts to entrepreneurs and networks within the local economy. Thus, the *Jobcenter* knows the local job market and can help job seekers on their way to getting in touch with future employers. Therefore, the *Optionskommune* can be considered as an innovative "lighthouse project". It is not only beneficial to the local authority of Münster, but to the entire *Münsterland* region.

Even though this innovation is an instrument situated on a meta level it provides the context and structural framework for strategic and sustainable social innovations within the local welfare system: it can be considered a basic precondition to pursue an integrated local social policy that enables the administration to include labour market policy into their local governance approach. By integrating various actors into inter-sectoral networks and trying to include local entrepreneurship as partners, a "city of well-being" can be created. The most challenging, but finally successful process, was bringing together different actors:

"We spoke different languages. The people of the social policy and the labour market area - they used the same words but told different stories. That was not possible in the past, working together on labour market policy focussing on the various target groups. [...] Being tied together because of the opting-model is very valuable."⁷

Therefore, the most innovative aspect of the *Optionskommune* is the "chance of social policy and labour market policy in a city melting into unity"⁸. The *Optionskommune* opens up a potentially multi-purpose scope for integrated approaches addressing social problems (cf. MAMBA). Splitting funding between several social actors is another positive outcome and a reason why the model seems to be a win-win situation for both the administration and social service providers.

In terms of potential diffusion of the model, it must be noted that the *Optionskommune* is a specifically German model which draws heavily on the German federal structure and the traditions of local self-government. Thus, it might be difficult to transfer it to other, more centralised states where municipalities lack the administrative capacities and experience. It would at least require stronger re-structuring and re-deployment of resources than was the case in Münster. In addition, the expected success of the

⁷ „Man hat verschiedene Sprachen gesprochen. Die Sozial- und die Arbeitsmarktmenschen. Die haben dieselben Worte genutzt aber was anderes erzählt. Das gab es früher nicht. Dass man zielgruppenorientiert an der Arbeitsmarktpolitik [gearbeitet hat, C.R.]. [...] Da sind dann auch alle Beteiligten durch die Option organisatorisch gebunden an einem Tisch. Und das ist sehr wertvoll.“ (Focus group interview IV, Chief executive of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband)

⁸ „Die Chance ist eigentlich das Innovative [...]. Dass in einer Stadt Sozialpolitik und Arbeitsmarktpolitik zu einer Einheit verschmilzt.“ (Focus group IV, Chief executive of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband)

Optionskommune in providing jobs more efficiently depends heavily on the availability of local networks between the administration and the local labour market.

1.3. PREVENTION VISITS

1.3.1. Short description

The concept of prevention visits was implemented by the Youth Office⁹. The intention is to visit all parents in Münster with a newly born child. The prevention team, responsible for coordinating and realising these visits, started its work in August 2008¹⁰. From a practical point of view, these prevention visits aim to assist parents with their children's upbringing. From a political point of view, these visits serve as an operative instrument to improve local child protection, based on intensive and early family contact.

In particular, the responsible local authorities hope to improve the relationship between families and the Youth Office as well as to prevent worst-case scenarios like abuse or neglect of children or even infanticide (cf. the local media coverage from June 2008). The implementation of these prevention visits was an initiative of the Youth Office itself, particularly from the head of the office. The concept of these visits follows the so-called 'Dormagener model'¹¹ of prevention visits, developed in 2006. The Youth Office adapted the concept to the situation in Münster. A specific aspect of this "Münster model" is that all families are visited, not only socially disadvantaged ones from poorer areas as is done in other cities.

1.3.2. Conceptions of and ways of addressing users

The participation in the family visits is voluntary for all parents. First of all, each family with a newly born child (these are about 2400 per year in Münster) gets a letter of inquiry by the Youth Office. If they do not object, they receive a second letter in which the prevention team suggests an appointment. The concept offers different services. First of all, the prevention team informs the parents in an individual way about different issues relevant to parents: parental benefits, child care facilities and preventative health care offers. In this context, families receive information leaflets in line with the respective nationality of their child and the district of the parents' home. If desired by parents a midwife accompanies the visits.

Furthermore, the first parent letter (*Elternbriefe*) is handed over to the families personally. These letters offer a total of 46 educational assistances (i.e. advice on the

⁹ The Youth Office is responsible for child protection (§1 Abs. 3 S.3 SGB VIII). For this aim, the office can intervene in families where the wellbeing of the children is threatened and can, as last resort, decide to take children out of their families. Due to this, the Youth Office has a negative reputation in Germany, which is aggravated by the role of the Youth Office during the Third Reich and in the German Democratic Republic. With its staff of around 1,400 employees, the Youth Office in Münster is the largest administrative unit within the municipality (Source: Youth Office Münster 2012: 163).

¹⁰ All facts about the family visits in the following subchapters without any designated sources based on the newspaper article "Jugendamt will jedes Baby besuchen" (WN 05/06/2008) as well as on the website of the Youth Office.

¹¹ The so called 'Dormagener Modell' is the title of a local program which aimed to develop instruments for preventing child abuse and intrafamilial violence. This pilot project was developed in the German municipality Dormagen in 2006. Many other municipalities were convinced of this new concept and adapted this model. Source: Website of Dormagen.

issues breastfeeding or protective vaccination). Dispatch to families is staggered over the period from the first month of life up to the 8th birthday of the child.¹² These parent letters are conceptualised by the working group *Neue Erziehung e.V.*, a nationally organised NGO¹³. They are also available in many other municipalities, but not every Youth Office sends them to families for such an extended period. “This staggered dispatch is very expensive. But it is a very early help”¹⁴, explained an employee of the Family Office¹⁵.

One of the main goals of these prevention visits is to ameliorate the negative image of the Youth Office, amplified by the supra-regional media.¹⁶ To underline this aim, every child gets a welcome gift from the Youth Office. This toy symbolises that the prevention team does not want to take the children away from their parents but it wants all families to benefit. Parents should get the impression that the Youth Office might be useful for every family member and in every (difficult) situation. Families should realise that they can rely on the Youth Office as a service provider. Ergo, prevention visits are seen as a sort of “door opener” by the employees of the Youth Office.

“About ten years ago (...), the Youth Office had the image of a supervisory authority. If its employees detected any irregularities, they might take the children from their families. We have to get away from this image because we are service providers. Our job is to assist parents in educating and developing their children to happy and capable human beings (...). If you talk about these questions in a situation with positive connotations, parents will find it easy to remember even in stressful times (...). This is a door opener.”¹⁷

1.3.3. Internal organisation and modes of working

The prevention team is composed of six qualified employees working part time. As members of the prevention team they are employees of the Youth Office. This underlines the main purpose of the prevention team that it should serve as ambassadors for the office. Volunteers, as in other German municipalities, would not have direct access to the services of the Youth Office, the head of the office explained. This is one of the reasons why the Youth Office decided to integrate the visits into the office itself. Through funding the visits as part of the annual budget, they were institutionalised in a financially sustainable way.

¹² The description of the parents’ letters is based on the website of the Youth Office.

¹³ The working group “Neue Erziehung e.V.” was founded in 1946 by teachers in Berlin. After the period of inhuman National Socialist and fascist tyranny, the members of this NGO aim to develop a new conversational understanding of education. Source: Website of Arbeitskreis Neue Erziehung.

¹⁴ „Viele Kommunen verschicken diese Elternbriefe entweder gar nicht oder aber komplett als Mappe zur Geburt, weil das eine teure Geschichte ist, dieser gestaffelte Versand. Und wir sagen, es ist eine ganz, ganz frühe Hilfe.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

¹⁵ For the structure and aims of the Family Office see chapter 2.4 below.

¹⁶ Source: Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

¹⁷ „Jugendamt hat in Deutschland bis vor zehn Jahren (...) immer so das Image gehabt (...), die kommen kontrollieren und wenn die sehen, dass was nicht gut läuft, dann nehmen die einem die Kinder weg. Von diesem Image müssen wir einfach weg, weil wir sind Dienstleister. Wir sind dazu da, Eltern in ihrer Aufgabe zu unterstützen, ihre Kinder zu glücklichen, lebensfähigen Menschen zu machen (...). Wenn man in einer positiv besetzten Situation über solche Fragen spricht, dann fällt es Eltern sehr leicht, in einer stressbeladenen Situation sich zu erinnern (...). Das ist ein Türöffner.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

Each of the six employees should care for about 400 newly born children per year. They coordinate all appointments and visits. The Social Democrats criticised this ratio. They argue it would be impossible for six employees working part-time to care for 400 children.¹⁸ During the year 2009, 2,069 families were visited, almost as many visits as were expected. Figures for the first year of implementation (2008) are not available.¹⁹ Already in the development phase, there were difficulties to find political majorities for the programme. Many politicians did not want the prevention team to visit families living in wealthy social environments as well. The head of the Youth Office explained: “Then I said, either all or none (...) child protection issues affect everyone (...) it is a visitation service, not an inspection service.”²⁰ Today, the Youth Office is very satisfied with this program. “That’s the best program we have been carrying out in three years.”²¹

The local media praises the program as “a good step”²². For evaluation, Münster takes part in an empirical study about German municipalities which have introduced the instrument of prevention visits²³. With reference to the first results of the participating municipalities as well as the high demand of this instrument by municipalities in North-Rhine Westphalia, the empirical study evaluates the instrument of prevention visits positively and sees it on the path towards a “regular offer” (*Regelangebot*) (Frese/Günther 2012: 251). According to the Youth Office, many families did not know about the provided services until the prevention team informed them about the different offers. Others call the Youth Office in order to ask when the prevention team will visit them.²⁴ These experiences encourage the Youth Office to continue these prevention visits. With their fixed budget, they can be seen as an integral part of their prevention programme.

1.3.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

This social innovation supports the core value of prevention and especially the prevention programme of the Youth Office. “We have to begin with prevention and must be careful not to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted. This is our standard”²⁵. The office aims to achieve public consensus by arguing to be preventing worst-case scenarios picked up by media, politics and society. At the same time they had to convince local politicians that they do not want to control families. This process shows an innovative aspect: it was the Youth Office itself who started the initiative and implemented it against political resistance. Neither civil society, nor local politics had an active role in this process.

¹⁸ Source: “Jugendamt will jedes Baby besuchen” (WN 05/06/2008).

¹⁹ Source : Youth Office Münster 2012: 154.

²⁰ „Dann habe gesagt, entweder alle oder keiner und Kinderschutzthemen berühren hier alle in der Stadt, da kann ich Ihnen die Zahlen geben und das ist ja auch ein netter Besuchsdienst und nicht hier ein Kontrolldienst.“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

²¹ „Das ist überhaupt das Beste, was wir (...) seit drei Jahren machen“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

²² „Reicht ein Besuch?“ a comment of the local journalist Karin Völker in WN 05/06/08.

²³ The study of the Institute for Social Work has the title “Visiting parents - objective targets, concepts and impacts“(Aufsuchende Elternkontakte - Zielsetzungen, Konzepte, Wirkungen). Source: *Youth Office Münster 2012: 86.*

²⁴ „teilweise rufen die hier schon an, wann kommen Sie denn.“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

²⁵ „Das ist auch unser Standard: Mit Prävention anfangen, noch bevor das Kind in den Brunnen gefallen ist.“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

According to this aspect and the second goal of the prevention visits (improvement of the Youth Office's image), one can infer signs of a change in welfare governance: public administration increasingly acts as a partner for civil society (families), not as a hierarchical instance. Negative reactions in the beginning show that local politics and civil society perceived the Youth Office as an intervention authority (*Ordnungs-/ Eingriffsinstanz*). The increasing number of prevention visits carried out over the last years (2009: 2,069, 2010: 2,314, 2011: 2,080)²⁶ shows the high demand of prevention visits by families. In a quarter of those prevention visits in 2010 (497), the Youth Office identified a high demand for advice, information as well as support. In more than 1,000 cases, the prevention team informed parents about the offers of local services focussing on childcare (Youth Office Münster 2012: 87). This way, prevention visits have contributed to the intended image change of the Youth Office away from a control instance to a service provider. In addition to this, the evaluation of prevention visits in different cities underlines the positive effects of the specific *Münster Modell*: parents participating in the study emphasise the positive effects of both working with employees of the Youth Office as well as visiting all parents in the city (Frese/Günther 2012).

Since its implementation four years ago, the instrument of the prevention visits has become firmly institutionalised within the field of local welfare politics in Münster. This is apparent in the merger of prenatal advice and the prevention team in 2010. In June 2011, the unit "Prenatal advice, prevention services and family visits" was founded. This step enables better networking between early years services and the expansion of existing cooperative governance structures (Youth Office Münster 2012: 85).

1.4. Family Office

1.4.1. Short description

Each family is different and has different needs, problems and concepts of their individual family life (for example concerning child care facilities or the reconciliation of family and job). In everyday life, it is sometimes not easy for parents to find a suitable contact person for their individual concerns and needs. "Surely it cannot be that everyone calls up and down the office in order to get a childcare facility"²⁷, explained the head of the Youth Office. In 2003, the office for children, youth and families set up a Family Office, which forms part of the Youth Office. Its primary goal is providing advice with respect to family related issues. The office understands itself as a kind of signpost through the jungle of German bureaucracy. Concurrently, the office is supposed to serve as a kind of "ambassador for the Youth Office"²⁸, fighting against the negative image of the Office. It is located in the same building. With its own outside entrance, the Family Office invites parents to enter:

"You don't need an appointment. You can leave the office without giving any personal data. That is the particular feature of the Family Office the clients appreciate."²⁹

²⁶ Source: Youth Office Münster 2012: 175. The decrease by ten percent from 2010 to 2011 is explained by the Youth Office with a job vacancy within the prevention team for five months (Youth Office Münster 2012: 89).

²⁷ „Es kann ja wohl nicht sein, dass jeder kreuz und quer durch die Verwaltung uns immer anruft und sagt, ich will einen Kitaplatz, ich will dies, ich will das (...).“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

²⁸ Source: Interview with the head of the Youth Office.

²⁹ „Aber dieses Niedrigschwellige, dass man keinen Termin vereinbaren muss, dass man auch hier weggehen kann, ohne Sorge haben zu müssen, meine Dinge werden

1.4.2. *Conceptions of and ways of addressing users*

The employees of the Family Office understand themselves as service providers. “We are the ‘citizens’ advice office for parents and families”³⁰. During daily consultation-hours and via telephone they support people in difficult situations by putting them into contact with specialised social service institutions. Their clients range from the pregnant women who needs advice about financial assistance, over grandparents who are concerned about their grandchild or the uncle who asks about playgrounds in the city to the mother who is concerned about her 16 year-old son skipping school.³¹

In addition, the Family Office enables flexible access to childcare facilities and baby minders. Furthermore, a representative of the local *Jobcenter* is integrated in the facility, providing advice in respect to employment issues.

The Family Office is highly frequented. Contacts with clients range between 5.000 and 6.000 per annum, of which 60 per cent are related to topics of child care, and 40 per cent to a wide range of topics, amongst those labour market topics or family crises (Youth Office Münster 2011). The Family Office plays a particularly important role for socially disadvantaged families in Münster. It wants to be perceived as a kind of “admission ticket” for any further contacts with the Youth Office, as a representative of the Family Office explains.

1.4.3. *Internal organisation and modes of working*

The team of the Family Office is composed of two pedagogues. Due to their educational background, they are well positioned to detect the underlying problems of their clients. “Often parents feel that something goes wrong, but they are not able to localize the real problem.”³² That is why the Family Office does not employ administrative staff who primarily hand over address lists. The employees of the Family Office see their function as a signpost for clients. Their job is to put the clients in touch with the right person in the right institution for solving their problems. This is to be achieved within a maximum of two contacts (by phone or personally) between client and Family Office. Staff also supports clients by establishing contact to the specific institutions (e.g. counselling or childcare facilities).

Both employees consider networking a very important aspect of their work. Consequently, they cooperate with local politicians as well as with service providers (advice centres, family educational institutions etc.).³³ Due to existing networks and word-of-mouth-recommendation the office is also well known outside the municipality.

1.4.4. *Interaction with the local welfare system*

weitergegeben oder die ruft sofort die nächste Stelle an und vermittelt das weiter, das ist das Besondere am Familienbüro, was die Ratsuchenden sehr schätzen.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

³⁰ „Wir sind sowas wie die Bürgerberatungsstelle für Eltern und Familien.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

³¹ Source: Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

³² „(...) manchmal ist es auch so, dass das Problem sehr diffuse im Kopf ist, die Familie spürt, bei uns läuft irgendetwas nicht richtig, aber man kann es jetzt nicht eingrenzen, es liegt daran oder daran oder daran“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

³³ Source: Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

The Family Office is the flagship of the Youth Office, presenting it as service provider. It can be seen as the starting point in this process of image change. Both Family Office and the prevention visits have very similar goals: improving the image of the Youth Office; more “customer focus”; and expanding the prevention policy as a central pillar in local welfare policy. This new understanding as signpost is based on an increasing differentiation of social services on all political levels over the past decades. The Family Office underlines its new role as service provider and partner by the fact that its employees are pedagogues, not administrative staff, and that they maintain close relationships to other local actors (from local politics and civil society). Local welfare policy seems to work more and more in networks as opposed to operating in a hierarchical process. This is also underlined by the establishment process, which was led by the highly embedded and active head of the Youth Office.

Unlike the prevention visits, the Family Office serves as a flagship for the whole municipality in presenting the city as a family-oriented city. In 2011, the Family Office received 6,641 enquiries (5,000 was the aspired number for 2011). All in all, the number of requests is rising continuously (from 5,421 in 2009 to 6,641 in 2011; Youth Office Münster 2012: 97). Implementing prevention policy is only one part of the daily work. Most requests concern childcare facilities and the issue of reconciliation of work and private life. The Family Office has turned into an important institution in the field of childcare politics. It is a kind of lighthouse that adds to the city’s reputation even beyond the municipality. Only nine per cent of the municipalities in North-Rhine Westphalia have a Family Office, at federal level only about three per cent.³⁴ “Münster has taken up the cause of the reconciliation of work and private life. This is the topic of the future per se”³⁵, a representative of the Family Office explains in an interview. This indicates the importance generally ascribed to the labour market in Münster.

The evaluation of the prevention visits, interviews with employees of the Youth Office as well as local media coverage regarding the innovations indicate the success of both measures in changing the image of the Youth Office and establishing better connections to families. This can ensure a more effective protection of children as well as serve the different needs of families while strengthening Münster’s image as a family-friendly city at the same time.

1.5. OSTHUESHEIDE

1.6.9. 1.5.1. Short description

Osthuesheide is a neighbourhood consisting of several apartment blocks with about 800 inhabitants. They were built in 1963 by a private company and have since been used by the British army. Step by step the apartments have been sold to private investors or individual owner-occupiers since the late 1970s. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s a “circular and cumulative process of degradation”³⁶ was observed: the low standard attracted mainly tenants and owners with little resources and necessary investments were omitted. As a consequence, several apartments became uninhabitable and as a result poverty and a high fluctuation of residents have become symptomatic of this area.

³⁴ In NRW verfügen neun Prozent der Kommunen über Familienbüros, bundesweit sind es nur ca. drei Prozent (Possinger 2010).

³⁵ „Münster hat sich ganz groß auf die Fahnen geschrieben, die Vereinbarkeit von Familien und Beruf. Das ist das Thema der Zukunft schlechthin.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

³⁶ “Der zirkuläre und kumulative Degradationsprozess” (V/0686/2005).

In a report concerning the preparation of a renovation programme following the declaration as an area with special need for renovation (*Sanierungsgebiet*) by the city council in 2005, the fragmented ownership structure and lacking financial capacities of many owners were identified as the main obstacles for private investment. Legally, only owners' associations (*Eigentümergeinschaften*, *WEG*³⁷) were able to make decisions on major investments. Two of these decided in favour of investments while a positive decision in the third and biggest (128 units) lacked majority.

Therefore, a public company was formed in 2006, *Wohnungsgesellschaft Große Lodden* (WGL). The company was commissioned to buy flats until those willing to invest had a majority in the respective owners' association. In 2010, the third owners' association opted - with WGL representing almost 50% of the units - for substantial investments.

1.5.2. Conceptions of and ways of addressing users

In a first approach, the municipality tried to counteract the negative housing situation and reputation of *Osthuesheide* by means of social work and social services. This, however, only resulted in very limited success: it did not further the identification of inhabitants with the neighbourhood and failed to promote significant improvements.

Consequently - based on the problem analysis - the owners were identified as the main addressees of public efforts: (a) financial investors should be either forced to invest by majority decision or driven to sell their flats; whereas (b) individual owner-occupiers should be convinced of joining the pro-renovation fraction and be enabled to carry the financial burden.

In *WEG I* and *II*, with a high share of owner-occupiers, the municipality initiated a moderated process. The general aim was to foster decisions for renovation without further financial engagement of the municipality. The owners were assisted - following an empowerment approach - in developing realistic investment and modernisation plans. Regarding *WEG III*, some owners considered the net costs³⁸ of the renovation a financial problem. Therefore, for the first four years a subsidy of 100€ per month was offered by WGL. As an alternative option, owners could sell their flat to WGL at 4.000€ above market value³⁹. The third option - reducing the monthly payment by work contribution during the renovation process - was not chosen by any tenant.

The aim of the renovation was not only to improve the living situation for existing tenants but also to attract new and well-to-do inhabitants to the area.⁴⁰ The common catchphrase for this is "to create a (healthy) social mix"⁴¹. The underlying assumption is that those in a worse socio-economic situation will indirectly benefit from this mixing process. It can be

³⁷ *Wohnungseigentümergeinschaften* are associations of all owners of an apartment building or a housing estate. In yearly assemblies, they decide upon e.g. renovation/modernization measures, contributions to a maintenance reserve fund etc.

³⁸ Each owner-occupier has to pay app. 230€ per month to amortize the collective loan for the renovation, saving about 30€ in energy costs, resulting in a net burden of 200€ per month.

³⁹ WGL offered to pay 19,000€ instead of an estimated market value of 15,000€ per unit in *WEG III*.

⁴⁰ „Siedlung Osthuesheide/Bonnenkamp: Nachfrage ist da“ (WN 14/7/2012).

⁴¹ This phrase was found with some variations in several council debates, some party programs and a number of WILCO-related interviews.

argued, however, that this concept does not strike at the core problem of poverty/ inequality but merely changes the settings in which it exists.

1.5.3. Internal organisation and modes of working

The direct intervention of the municipality was limited to a few measures improving the quality of the surroundings as well as a change of name of the neighbourhood, in order to improve its reputation.⁴² An involvement of the city in purchasing units - as initially intended - was soon considered inappropriate. The influence obtained through the acquisition of a low number of flats was remote and there were concerns that the municipality would be in danger of being legally liable in the event that the owners' associations were unable to repay their debts.

In order to avoid this, the separate company (WGL) was founded as a subsidiary of the communally owned *Wohn+Stadtbau*. This company was supposed to gain a majority share in *WEG III*, where both the need for investment and the number of flats owned by corporations were highest. The close connection between the established public housing company and the new WGL allowed for the obtainment of a substantial loan for the renovations, since *Wohn+Stadtbau* offered other houses as guarantees. In the short term, the WGL needed to invest a high amount of money in order to buy and renovate the flats.⁴³ In the long run, however, these investments are expected to be profitable in terms of a sustainable income (rents) or through a resale.

According to the complex statutes of the owners' associations and housing ownership laws (*Wohneigentumsrecht*), one single decision for the whole area of *WEG III* (128 flats) had to be taken. As a public support programme for renovations was due to be discontinued, a decision was taken quickly by simple majority. Court cases - arguing that a qualified majority would have been necessary - are still on-going, but have been rejected at first instance.⁴⁴

1.5.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

Both the moderated process in *WEG I* and *II* and the renovation in *WEG III* represent a governance innovation in Münster and probably even in Germany⁴⁵. Interventions in the ownership structure of neglected neighbourhoods have not been executed before, especially not to such a high degree in terms of financial volume. However, both the representatives of the WGL and of the Municipal Office for Housing do not observe a paradigmatic change in housing policy. According to the representative of the Municipal Office for Housing, a long-term re-communalisation of housing stock is not necessary. It would suffice to take up an intermediary role, for example by buying neglected blocks and reselling them to private owners based on a contract including obligations regarding the future development of the neighbourhoods.⁴⁶ This underlines the predominance of market mechanisms in combination with a certain level of municipal control.

⁴² „Angelmodde: Osthuesheide: Kein neuer Name ohne Renovierung.“ (WN 17/09/2010).

⁴³ 5.8million€; 46,000€ per unit contrasting with 15,000€ current market value per unit in *WEG III*.

⁴⁴ „Klagen abgewiesen: Osthuesheide wird saniert.“ (MZ 25.11.2010).

⁴⁵ Regarding the moderated process, one single blueprint reference example can be found in the small city of Stade. This however was a model project funded by the *Bundesland Niedersachsen*, while in Münster it was carried out without external funding.

⁴⁶ For example, in the case of *Kinderhaus-Brüningheide*, a larger housing complex in the north of Münster, the city prepares for a possible engagement and has already bought one of the most neglected blocks.

This reliance on market mechanisms was only broken up in the case of *Osthuesheide*⁴⁷ due to the state and reputation of the neighbourhood threatening the overarching image of Münster as an attractive location for private investments. This perception activated a broad number of actors and led to the acceptance of public intervention.

Additionally, consciousness has been growing for the interaction between public transfer payments and the lack of private investment. The representative of the municipal office for housing issues calls this process “capitalisation of social rent”⁴⁸. He explains that if the rents for recipients of transfer payments are paid regardless of the state of the flats, this can pose a disincentive to investment. Some financial investors owning neglected flats are even actively seeking for such tenants. Especially if the payments are made directly to the owners, reducing payments in case of seriously neglected apartments could be used to press for investments and renovations, which would offer another form of indirect influence on the housing market.

Most stakeholders consider the *Osthuesheide* renovation programme highly successful and a sustainable solution to the underlying problems. According to the municipal representative, a number of other communities facing similar problems⁴⁹ are greatly interested, especially in the moderated process in *WEG I* and *II*. An organised transfer of knowledge might be a starting point for diffusion processes. The process in these units was ruled by only a small number of preconditions: the owners were able to shoulder the lion’s share of the costs themselves, a majority for the renovations was rather easily obtained, and the involvement of the community remained low.

The process in *WEG III* was a lot more demanding, however, and as such will be more difficult to reproduce. The possibility to obtain credits at low interest rates depended both on the declaration as *Sanierungsgebiet* and on the ability of the *Wohn+Stadtbau* to offer its existing stock as guarantee. The willingness of existing owners to either renovate or sell their flats was another prerequisite. Finally, the point in time was crucial: at that time, a renovation was still possible, while other seriously neglected housing might already be in a condition that only allows for its destruction.

1.6. HAFENFORUM

1.6.1. Short description

The *Hafenforum* was a broad moderated citizen participation process carried out in 2010 and 2011, concerning a plan to reshape Münster’s harbour area and the surrounding densely populated *Hansaviertel*. The *Hafenforum* and its repercussions represent a new episode in the swelling conflict in terms of urban development projects within the city of Münster. It could be an innovative form of public dispute management to establish early stakeholder involvement (of residents, local merchants etc.) to prevent possible resistance.

⁴⁷ The municipality is also intervening in other city areas which are already run down or threaten to deteriorate further in the near future. All of these seem to underly the same logic to intervene in order to maintain the image of Münster.

⁴⁸ „Kapitalisierung der Sozialmiete” (phone interview with the representative of the municipal office for housing issues).

⁴⁹ The degradation of the housing stock of housing associations and large private investors is a common problem in several German cities.

The process is situated in the context of a strong pro-growth coalition focusing on large-scale prestige projects on the one hand and dwindling public resources on the other. Therefore, the need to attract private investors is constantly increasing. At the same time, citizens' awareness levels concerning the effects of property led urban planning - which are clearly visible in the city - seem to be on the rise, as indicated by an increase in public conflicts around such topics. This awareness surfaced in the opposition of local merchants and residents towards the plans of two private (main) investors, backed by the local administration, to transform old industrial compounds in the harbour area into high-end housing facilities. Another point of contention was the induction of a shopping centre as well as big car parks into the surrounding areas.

Left-wing parties picked up on the local peoples' apprehensions and reached a decision in the city council⁵⁰, calling for the *Hafenforum* to precede any further formal decision-making processes about the area. This call for a public consultation process on the neighbourhood's future resulted from the fact that neither the city council nor the administration had full disposal rights to the areas affected by the investors' plans.

The *Hafenforum* attracted hundreds of participants in a number of open sessions and workgroups. The administration engaged the local public relations agency *bürofrauns* to organise, moderate and document the process. It was furthermore agreed that the Committee on Urban Development, Urban Planning, Traffic and Economy (ASSVW, *Ausschuss für Stadtentwicklung, Stadtplanung, Verkehr und Wirtschaft*) should decide upon the projects after the end of the process. Through this, the existing *Masterplan Stadthäfen*, which outlines the long-term development concept for the wider harbour area (approved by the city council in 2004) should be modified.

1.6.1. Conceptions of and ways of addressing users

In many cases hearings and counselling processes are obligatory in urban planning processes. However, the *Hafenforum* is a new way of addressing a public conflict in the city of Münster, since it extends the mandatory citizen involvement substantially and tries to create an opportunity for a meeting between developers, neighbours and other stakeholders prior to formal decision-making.

Once the resolution was taken to hold the *Hafenforum*, the main political actors in the ongoing development process - namely the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Party - wanted to include critical stakeholders as quickly as possible. This seemed to be a measure to avoid a potential referendum on the plans⁵¹. The Green Party, on the other hand, has a stronghold in the concerned area and saw itself as a resident advocate. In addition, they wanted to posit their opposition to the current logic of urban development carried out by local legislators and administrators.

Three open forums were held with 200 to 400 participants each. Information about investors' plans was provided, questions could be asked and ideas communicated. In addition, working groups on specific topics (set by the administration) were held, in which a small number of 30 participants each could participate. Nominally, the participants of the *Hafenforum* should discuss perspectives for the harbour area, concluding in an update to the city's *Masterplan Stadthäfen*. But given the actual situation - with an investor plan

⁵⁰ The Green Party (*Die Grünen/GAL*) and smaller parties achieved consent of the Social Democratic Party and thereby reached a majority decision in the council against the votes of the Liberal and Christian Democratic Party.

⁵¹ It should be mentioned that both parties suffered an emphatic defeat in a referendum, following an extensive open conflict about a planned city music hall just two years prior.

on the agenda - it was obvious that the *Hafenforum* would mainly focus on opposition towards and alternatives to this plan.

This ambiguity resulted in diverging expectations which makes the evaluation of the success of the *Hafenforum* difficult. While some citizens expected to be able to contribute to factual decisions and be integrated in actual planning processes, other residents and investors expected a mere information event. Meanwhile, political actors never wanted or could not relay any legislative power, but saw a great chance to “get in contact ” with the citizens in the forum.

1.6.2. Internal organisation and modes of working

Even though it is not uncommon to call upon the services of private enterprises in participatory processes, the engagement of *bürofrauns*, an agency for “communication, planning and marketing” in this highly controversial political discussion process is crucial. Its role as well as the entire process was discussed publicly in a highly controversial manner. While some praised the participatory quality and openness of the forum, others criticised the same procedure as too dominated by certain actors. In addition to this, administration representatives rejected some individual suggestions as impossible for technical or financial reasons.

In the eyes of some critical participants, the process thus had strong top-down and paternalistic traits. Representatives of different associations criticised: “We were told what is possible and what isn’t, but not why”⁵², and “I’ve got the impression that the plans presented in the beginning were only slightly modified and shall now be pushed through”⁵³. These statements, uniting a spectrum of quite different stakeholders, illustrate a widely shared impression of a pseudo-participatory character of the forum.

As a reaction to these controversies, all parties agreed to hold talks as a follow-up to the process, involving the forum’s directing committee, the administration, investors and critics of the *Hafenforum*. However, judgments on the quality and success of the process continue to diverge. Despite this the ASSVW passed the plans of the investors with some gradual changes - the shopping centre was downsized and the housing project approved with the obligation to include 30 per cent of social housing. The *Masterplan Stadthäfen* was changed in several minor aspects. The proposal was passed by a broad majority of Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats and Social Democrats. In contrast, some representatives of the Green Party and the five participating associations expressed massive critique regarding both the way in which the *Hafenforum* sessions were conducted and documented by *bürofrauns*, as well as the ultimate decision of the committee, as it would not in any manner reflect the actual discussions.⁵⁴ Furthermore, even though the Social Democratic representative in the committee commented positively on the

⁵² „Uns wurde mitgeteilt, was geht und was nicht, aber nicht, warum das so ist“ (Rainer Bode, Initiative ZukunftHafen, in WN 26/10/2011).

⁵³ „Ich habe den Eindruck, dass die Pläne, die zu Beginn vorlagen, nur leicht abgeändert wurden und nun durchgezogen werden sollen.“ (Norbert Fiedler, Das Nieberding e.V., in WN 26/10/2011).

⁵⁴ It is necessary to underline that data collection only encompasses the time frame until the beginning of 2012. In the meantime, the controversial debate about the development of the harbor area continued, where the results of the *Hafenforum* and the political independence are used strategically as arguments.

Hafenforum, his counterpart of the Green Party is quoted as saying that the administration “willingly falsified the results”⁵⁵.

1.6.3. *Interaction with the local welfare system*

The *Hafenforum* is an outcome of growing demands for participation on the local level and growing frustration about the one-dimensional doctrines of local decision making. However, as several politicians stated, the given means of participation - mainly allowing for resistance against proposed ventures - make it difficult to realize projects. Therefore it appears necessary to involve stakeholders, including radical opponents, at an early stage of planning, as the “political price” (and probably also the monetary) of failure through a referendum is high. Therefore, the municipality attempts to involve citizens early if resistance against a project is anticipated. The *Hafenforum* was a special case however, due to the number of citizens involved as well as the prolonged time frame of the participation process.

Conflicts are likely to arise, especially in cases of urban planning and the field of basic public supplies. However, they may also occur in social policy in a narrower sense. Nonetheless, the heavy and on-going controversies regarding the *Hafenforum* point to the fact that if a topic is as controversial as this, even involving stakeholders in a moderated process may not solve or calm the conflict. This holds especially true if, as in this case, matters seem predetermined or are presented without a viable alternative. This lack of openness regarding the results might have been the biggest flaw in this case because expectations of politicians, investors and citizens diverged significantly. The lack of neutrality of the administration and the assigned agency *bürofrauns* was another point of contention. This suggests that while opposition seems to be rather easily organised, the development of concrete alternative plans for urban development is a lot harder to achieve by participatory processes.

It can be concluded that the aims of such a participation process should be made as clear as possible in order to avoid discontent and frustration. This holds especially true for processes where the level of emotional involvement is high. A clearer legal framework might be helpful despite its potentially limiting effect as regards the flexibility of the methods.

The *Hafenforum* affected the political local landscape in so far as it split opponents of the project into more radical groups and those willing to compromise towards a modified concept. In fact, the formal decision in December 2011 reflected one of the main aims of the local social democratic housing policy: increasing social housing, especially in areas close to the city. It was obviously a negotiated compromise between the administration, investors and Christian Democratic, Liberal Democratic and Social Democratic Parties, opposed by the Green Party.

It is hardly predictable what consequences the experience of the *Hafenforum* will have on local politics in the future. Obviously it could not solve the strategic dilemma between large-scale urban planning with regard to the whole city on the one side and resistance against them by citizens from the affected neighbourhoods on the other.

⁵⁵ “die Ergebnisse des Hafenforums bewusst verfälscht” (Helga Bennink, Green Party, in WN 13/12/2011).

1.7. GENERAL TRENDS

Some general trends linking the innovations studied herein can be observed. The innovations point to a different understanding of the role of public administration. It is increasingly seen as a service provider with a strong focus on its clients. Therefore, one of its increasingly important functions is the empowerment of citizens. Contemporaneous with this change the role of NPOs in the local interplay of actors is undergoing a transformation as well - i.e. they are gradually focusing on networking with different kinds of actors from all sectors of society.

CONCLUSIONS

The innovations presented above are not only local examples for innovative projects and undertakings in Münster, but rather contain lessons for innovators and social entrepreneurs in other contexts. Those lessons will be analysed in the following sections: first, the general context or window of opportunity for innovations in Münster will be used to generate a categorical framework with which the role of public actors can be typified. Afterwards, the lessons to be learned from Münster regarding the sustainability and diffusion of innovations will be expounded.

Windows of opportunities for innovations

The above description and analysis of innovations undertaken conveys important insights into the available windows of opportunity for social innovations and social entrepreneurs in Münster. It demonstrated that the coalition formed around the initial innovation - establishing the competitiveness and investment frame in the 1990s - still exerts important influence on social policy today. It is wielded through the dominance of the main paradigm as well as through the broad networks of political, administrative and private actors.

Municipal actors - politicians as well as members of the local administration - are acting as a facilitator for social innovations if they can be connected to the overarching frame. Nonetheless, it seems that in most cases the municipality was not willing or able to provide funding or give other active support. Instead, they are trying to secure funding from other institutions or political levels (as in the case of MAMBA, *Optionskommune* or the private investments in the harbour area). Generally speaking this cannot be seen as a *laissez-faire* style of politics as the municipality is a very active player in the field of local welfare policy. In the case of *Osthuesheide*, the communally owned *Wohn+Stadtbau* even intervened financially on a comparatively high level in order to achieve the renovation of the neighbourhood, despite this being a measure of last resort. The active intervention in this case seems to have been derived from the fact that urban development is one of the key issues for the municipality in accordance with the overarching discursive frame. The two innovations in the field of family policy (the Family Office and the prevention visits to families) were financed by redeploying resources within the annual budget.

Therefore, the intervention style of communal actors mainly seems to be one of selective intervention: subsidiarity is preferred wherever possible, while the core values of the coalition are pursued by active engagement, if necessary. The Youth Office, for example, did not attempt to municipalise the different services in order to achieve clearer structures. Instead, the different institutions maintain their respective spheres of influence, while the Youth Office acts as a signpost for citizens. The *Hafenforum* follows the same logic, since the plans of investors are supported by most communal actors. As resistance by other stakeholders was to be expected, they sought to prevent a failure of the plans through a moderated process while keeping their own engagement low.

Regarding their effect on the local welfare system, the innovations studied herein serve two main functions. On the one hand, some innovations (e.g. the Family Office, prevention visits, MAMBA, and, in parts, the *Optionskommune*) aid in viewing clients in a more comprehensive way. Their different problems are attempted to be addressed by competent and locally embedded actors and organisations. On the other hand, the participation in and access of citizens to municipal processes shall be strengthened (*Hafenforum*, *Osthuesheide*). Through both functions, the strengths and assets of citizens and small-scale communities shall be fortified and utilised for local welfare policy.

From these insights follows a view of the community as a “spider in its web” which exerts influence in selecting innovations and undertakings for support. Within the community, the role of the original discursive coalition remains important. The maintenance of the dominant frame and the main actors in the coalition ensure continuity. On the other hand, this leads to a certain saturation and rigidity of the network, which until now seems to remain largely unnoticed by the coalition. In the future, this might hamper the adaptive capacity and innovativeness of the local system regarding newly emerging challenges.

Sustainability and potential for diffusion

The innovations studied in Münster also demonstrate some relevant factors in regards to the sustainability of innovations that can be applied to other settings and innovators. In the following, those general lessons are outlined.

One of the most important aspects is *sustainable funding*. Some of the innovations in Münster (e.g. the Family Office, the prevention visits and the renovation process in *Osthuesheide*⁵⁶) have been issued with sustainable resources, either from the municipality itself or through guarantees by communal enterprises. The *Optionskommune* is a special case, since funding is granted by federal level according to specific regulations.⁵⁷

On the other side are innovations funded on a project basis, such as MAMBA. Its existence largely depends on acquiring follow-up financing after the end of the grant from the European Social Fund (ESF)⁵⁸. Hitherto, even though the project is considered a success in Münster, no local actor has signalled the intention to provide funding from 2014 onwards. Apart from the need to cut public expenditure this might be associated with the fact that aid for refugees is not a core aim of the dominant coalition (i.e. competitiveness).

This assumption leads to another factor for sustainability: continued *support by local stakeholders*. The broader the network supporting an innovation the easier its maintenance will be. This can be observed in innovations in the field of family policy,

⁵⁶ The *Osthuesheide* is special, in that an income - either through rents or through a resale of the procured apartments - can be expected in the long run. However, in the short term it required a substantial financial engagement by the communal WGL.

⁵⁷ Basically, federal funding for labour market integration measures is allocated by the same formula to all municipalities. It is based on the number of jobseekers within the responsibility of the local Jobcenter, weighted by the overall share of population receiving basic social security benefits (*Grundsicherung*). Thereby, municipalities with a high percentage of the latter receive a higher sum per jobseeker. In an *Optionskommune*, expenses are directly granted by and booked into the federal state's budget, and not co-administered by the Federal Labour Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*). Sources: <http://www.o-ton-arbeitsmarkt.de/o-ton-lexikon/eingliederungsmittel>; http://www.kreise.de/__cms1/images/stories/pdf/sgb%20ii%20gute%20grnde%20option.pdf

⁵⁸ It is noteworthy that even in a rather well-off city such as Münster the ESF plays a role in the funding of social innovations.

which have been installed by a broad coalition of supporters and which are solidly established as permanent institutions. The process of the *Hafenforum*, in contrast, has been widely criticised and has not resulted in a broad consensus about the future of the harbour area. On-going debates about the development of the neighbourhood can be expected. Results of the consultation process will not be a reliable outcome on which to build future policies. Instead, it can serve as an example from which to learn for future consultation processes. Regarding MAMBA, the broad alliance for refugees in Münster points to the possibility that a long-term solution for the project might be found. A potential connection point might be the *Optionskommune*, which offers the possibility to integrate MAMBA into the broader framework of labour market integration.

Diffusion

One aim of the WILCO project is to investigate the potential diffusion of innovations. This encompasses both the transfer to other cities and regions as well as the application of an innovation to other target groups. Drawing on the experience of innovations in Münster which factors need to be considered in the transmission of innovations to other contexts and/or target groups?

Probably the most important result of the research in Münster is that possible innovators need to assess the *local discourse coalitions* in their respective context and try to find linkages to the main frames and prevailing problem perceptions. This can help with the creation of a network of supporters and might even help to secure funding for an undertaking. If the innovation cannot be connected to the particular dominant frames and goals, it will at least be a lot more difficult to establish support structures. In the case of a strong, closed coalition, a lack of consideration for the discursive frames can even obstruct an undertaking altogether.

Pleading the case of social innovations and enterprises requires active and *persuasive social entrepreneurs* or supporters fulfilling this function, who can present their ideas in the prevailing local discursive context and as a possibility to further the main goals of important local stakeholders. They are even more assertive if they have good connections to different societal sectors (politics, civil society, administration). For example, the innovations in Münster regarding family policy were implemented by the head of the Youth Office who is well connected in the city. The political resistance in the conceptualisation phase of the prevention visits against the inclusion of all families into the scheme was overcome by the *persistence* of the main promoter and her discursive justification of the project. This underlines the general necessity for perseverance and networking.

Another obvious common factor regarding the diffusion of an innovation is that there is a need for *funding*. As mentioned above, connecting to the local discourse and gaining access to local networks can facilitate access to funding. Another possibility (as the case of MAMBA shows in Münster), is to approach external stakeholders - i.e. other political levels or philanthropic institutions - for funding.

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Department of Justice, Social Affairs, Integration, Health, Environmental and Consumer Protection (Dezernat für Recht, Soziales, Integration, Gesundheit, Umwelt- und Verbraucherschutz): Municipal Councillor/Head of Department.

Family Office: Representatives of the Office.

Focus group interview I.
Focus group interview II.
Focus group interview III.
Focus group interview IV.
GGUA: Project Coordinator of the GGUA.
GGUA: Member of staff.
Educational Centre of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Handwerkskammer
Bildungszentrum): Member of staff.
MAMBA: Project Coordinator.
MAMBA: Project participant.
Municipal office for housing issues (Amt für Wohnungswesen): Project Developer, phone
interview.
Social Democratic Party (SPD) fraction in the city council: Fraction chairman.
Social Democratic Party (SPD) fraction in the city council: Fraction member.
WGL (Wohnungsgesellschaft Große Loden): Chief Executive Officer.
Youth Office (Amt für Kinder, Jugendliche und Familien): Head of Office.