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**Democratic Parameters
for Regional Sustainable
Development:**

*The need for a new demos with a new
rationality*

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ABSTRACT

Assuming “regional sustainable development” (RSD) to be an acknowledged goal within the European Union, the paper argues that such a goal presupposes two aspects of change:

- The notion of “region” implies new understandings of community identity and citizenship
- Development which is “sustainable” requires a form of rational public choice which is different from the rationality underpinning non-sustainable development

Assuming further that sustainable development is best pursued (both morally and pragmatically) through democratic decision-making, the argument then points out that the presumed requirements for regional sustainable development correspond directly with what Carl Cohen (1971) has identified as the “logical presuppositions” for democracy: *community* and *rationality*. The conclusion then becomes that regional sustainable development requires a fundamental re-working of the basic premises for democracy: form must be revised to follow function.

The second part of the paper then goes on to identify six dimensions of potential conflict between notions of community and rationality inherent in the dominant mode of “liberal-pluralist” or “competitive” democracy, and alternative notions related to “ecological democracy” for regional sustainable development. Each of these dimensions is then reviewed with an eye towards possible reforms and democratic instruments: means of change which give promise of achieving the goals of regional sustainable development, without violating essentialist standards for democratic decision-making.

CONTENTS:

ABSTRACT	3
CONTENTS:	5
1 INTRODUCTION: REGION AND COMMUNITY.....	7
2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE RATIONALITY OF CHANGE	9
3 REVISING DEMOCRACY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	11
3.1 DEMOCRACY AS A FUNCTIONAL ADJUNCT OF COMMUNITY PURPOSE	11
3.2 PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR DEMOCRACY	12
4 ECOLOGICAL RATIONALITY	15
5 THE NEED FOR A NEW COMMUNITY	17
5.1 IDENTITY AND SPACE	17
5.2 REPRESENTATION AND INTERESTS	18
6 THE NEED FOR A NEW RATIONALITY	21
6.1 REALLOCATING RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY	21
6.2 LEGITIMATE SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITY	22
6.3 HOLISM AND EMERGENT PROPERTIES.....	23
6.4 DECISIVE AND EFFECTIVE ACTION.....	24
7 CONCLUSIONS.....	27
APPENDIX.....	33
OFFICIAL CRITERIA FOR LOCAL AGENDA 21 IN NORWAY.....	33
I. A NEW DIALOGUE	33
II. A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY	34
III. SECTORAL INTEGRATION.....	34
IV. GLOBAL ORIENTATION	34
V. CONSTRUCTIVE EVALUATION AND REVISION.....	35
REFERENCES	37

1 INTRODUCTION: REGION AND COMMUNITY

The notion of “region” within the discourse on European integration and governance usually refers to a geographical area which somehow transcends or otherwise deviates from existing administrative boundaries, whether for countries, provinces, states, counties, municipalities or other designated sub-national units. The “European Community” (“European Union”) is referred to as a “region” in a global context, and regions within Europe are usually identified as distinct geographical areas which, for different reasons, have an identity that does not correspond to existing administrative and political boundaries. There is, in short, an aspect of “region” that implies a certain ambiguity as to the collective identity of the population occupying the regional area. One is a “citizen” of a country, a province, a state, a municipality or other constitutionally ordained collective, but very seldom of a “region”. Whereas the boundaries of administratively defined communities are cartographic conventions for the purpose of delimiting various degrees of “sovereignty”, the boundaries of regions usually evolve through an interplay between nature and history.

The essence of the differentiation is manifest in the apposite aims of the European Union where the goal is, on the one hand, to internally substantiate the idea of “European citizenship”, while, on the other, to strengthen the exclusionary provisions of the Schengen Treaty. “Europe of the Citizens” and “Fortress Europe” are symbolic sides of the same regional coin. A new community presupposes a new collective identity, whereby images of extra-communal threat and competition can be complemented by images of intra-communal commonality.

In the parlance of modern democratic theory, this aspect of regional development falls under the problematic of determining the nature of the “demos”: Who is “in”, and who is “out” of the regional collective?¹ As pointed out by Robert Dahl (1986), this is an aspect of the democratic discourse that has received little attention from either analytic or normative theorists. The core idea of the “demos” as the group basis for political life is as old as the Greek city-state, but there have been very few specific treatments of the idea throughout the history of political theory. We know that “citizenship” connotes membership and entitlement within the demos, but we have few guidelines for either allocating or appraising the status. In Dahl’s view, we are confronted with a classic normative-pragmatic problem, where allocation of the advantages of citizenship has been intricately associated with the changing purposes of different collective projects. There is no single ideal solution to the composition of the demos. We are forced to rely on judicial argument and assessment in relation to particular collectivities in specific historical-material contexts. “Form follows function”: the allocation of citizenship will be resolved in relation to the declared goals and tasks of the “in-group”

In general, the overall trend in the Western World has been an expansion in the scope of citizen entitlement as a direct reflection of increased functional differentiation in the service of

1 Interestingly enough, the classic Greek understanding of the “demos” had a regional aspect. The “deme” was the “tribe” or “clan” that one was born into, with each “deme” having an original regional attachment. One exercised “demos” rights within the regional and procedural confines of the clan area. When treated by Aristotle as one of several modes of governance, the “demos” became a general symbol of rule by the broadest available collective identity, i.e. “demo-kratein”, rule by all entitled members of the clan, “democracy”. See the discussion in Sabine (1961, Chapter 1).

ever more complex socio-economic tasks. But there have also been cases of contraction, where the scope of entitlement has been reduced, largely for ideological reasons, but also for other reasons of community self-interest.² In considering the community basis for regional development – and eventually democratic decision-making – we are confronted with the problem of determining the composition of the demos in a regional context. In Western Europe, this implies clear problems as to both the delimitation of regional boundaries for inclusion (where trans-boundary regions start and stop), as well as the standardization of entitlements and rules related to regionally relevant citizenship. Presuming, in other words, that there are good reasons for carrying out tasks on a regional basis, and, further, that there are good reasons for wanting to carry out such tasks democratically, the task becomes one of: first, defining the new boundaries for including populations in the regional demos; second, determining which type of entitlements are necessary to achieve the regional collective task; and, third, reconciling variations in, and trade-offs between, existing citizen entitlements and the new regional entitlements.

These tasks are generic to the democratisation of regional development in general, and, if the goal were simply to create new regional political entities, this would be a discourse unto itself. In the present case, however (and in nearly all existing discussions of greater regional coherence and decision-making), the regional aspect is more instrumentally tied to specific regional goals and tasks. Once again, “form follows function” – and in the present case we are talking about the function of *regional sustainable development*. Whereas the notion of a region forces to reconsider the nature of community, the notion of sustainable development forces us to consider the rationality of regional development. We are not talking about *any* development within a regional context – but development that is “sustainable”. Region is the unit of interest; development is the process of change under consideration; and sustainability is the condition for guiding and assessing the process (Lafferty and Langhelle, 1999).

² Both fascist and communist regimes have altered citizenship rules to the detriment of specific minorities, and re-emergent nations in, for example, Eastern Europe have reduced the citizen rights of the previously dominant Russian population. Long-standing liberal-pluralist regimes can in general point to expanding citizenries, but differences in different types of entitlements can still be relatively large across the pool of liberal-pluralist states.

2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE RATIONALITY OF CHANGE

As first enunciated in the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987: 43), the core definition of “sustainable development” (SD) is as follows:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of “needs”, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.

As pointed out elsewhere (Lafferty and Langhelle, 1999), it has become somewhat of a convention to only cite the first part of this definition (i.e. to drop the two “key concepts”), a practice that has clear implications for any further understanding or application of the idea. In our view, the WCED statement of sustainable development involves three essential and interdependent ideas: (1) “physical sustainability” (building on ecological principles and focusing on the “limits of nature”); (2) inter-generational equity with respect to the satisfaction of basic needs *within* given eco-systems; and (3) global equity with respect to the satisfaction of basic needs *across* eco-systems. Any attempt to disconnect these three elements so as to go further with isolated aspects of either “sustainability”, “generational equity”, or “global equity”, can, of course, lead to interesting problematics and perspectives, but one will not thereby be following up the conceptual-political line laid down by the WCED; developed programmatically through UNCED and the Rio accords; and subsequently developed and applied by the UNCSD, UNEP, the OECD and other international bodies. In short, the issue of “development” can be approached without considering “sustainability”; and the general idea of “sustainability” can be (and most often is) discussed without taking into consideration equitable “development”; but to do either is to deviate from the conceptual context and political programme of the WCED.

For the sake of the argument here, I will initially focus on the first aspect of the SD concept – “physical sustainability” – so as to highlight what I perceive to be the core logic of the idea. This reflects a conviction that it is the “ecological” underpinning of sustainable development which distinguishes it most from the currently dominant mode of development: the satisfaction of “needs” (and “wants”) through free-market competition. Whereas global equity can be clearly delineated (normatively) within social-liberalism, and generational equity only somewhat less so; the ecological basis of physical sustainability requires, I believe, a different set of presuppositions and principles. Sustainable development requires, in other words, an alternative rationality for programming and guiding change with respect to development that is “non-sustainable”.

3 REVISING DEMOCRACY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Given the premise that working with regions requires a clearer specification of the *community* basis of regions; and further, that working towards sustainable development requires a new *rationality* for development; it can be further argued that working with the concept of “regional sustainable development” poses a fundamental challenge for democratic theory. This challenge can be approached from two perspectives: one historical, and one theoretical.

3.1 Democracy as a functional adjunct of community purpose

Students of contemporary democracy have consistently argued for a historically contingent and functionally interdependent understanding of the Western model. Authors as diverse as Robert Dahl (1966, 1971), C. B. Macpherson (1962, 1966, 1977), Giovanni Sartori (1987) and David Held (1987), have all pointed out the strong relationship between existing democratic institutions, values and procedures, and the functional needs of liberal-capitalist nation-states. The Western model has indeed been defined as one of “competitive democracy”, with numerous analogies between the institutions and values of the free market on the one hand, and competitive electoral and representational politics on the other. More recently, the Clinton administration has made “market democracy” a keystone of its policy for progressive change and global development.

There is thus a clear dependency between the Western model of democracy and the integrated growth of nationalism, liberalism and free-market economies. This dependency is more than 200 years old, and we stand today confronted by its imminence in the form of dominant values and presuppositions as to how the business of governance is to be carried out. The “market democracies” of Western (and soon all “Northern”) country-states are steeped in political-cultural tradition and normative bindings. Any attempt to change the underlying premises of the Western model – such as that implied by the WCED notion of sustainable development – thus implies a need for a new functional interdependency between economy, society and culture on the one hand, and politics on the other. The existing Western model of governance, as essentially a form of “competitive democracy”, must surely require adjustment if it is to functionally serve a development sensitive to ecological interdependency and the “limits of nature”.³ Democracy as a form has consistently adapted to the types of community function underlying democratic aspirations. We have experienced in the West a gradual transition from “local democracy”, through “national democracy”, “industrial democracy”, “economic democracy” and “market democracy”. At each juncture, it has been necessary to adapt the demands of collective purpose to the

³ There has, of course, been considerable debate as to whether the WCED idea of sustainable development actually does represent a significant break with market liberalism. This comes from the fact that the Brundtland Report takes a clear stand on the need for continued economic growth as a prerequisite for developing the surplus that is necessary to guarantee global equity vis à vis basic needs. For arguments as to why SD (in the Brundtland mode) represents a qualitatively different path of development, see Lafferty and Langhelle (1999, Chs. 1 and 12), Langhelle (2000) and Lafferty and Meadowcroft (2000, Chapter 13).

normative conceptual “space” of the democratic idea. With an international focus on sustainable development, we have come to a phase where the dominant form of “market democracy” must be transformed in the direction of “ecological democracy” (Figure 2).

3.2 Presuppositions for democracy

In addition to arguing for a revision of democracy as a functional prerequisite for sustainable development, we can also argue for such a revision as a *logical* prerequisite for change. In one of the most comprehensive attempts ever conducted to establish the essential semantic structure of “democracy”, Carl Cohen (1971) has provided us with core elements for a conceptual model (Figure 1). As reconstructed from Cohen’s work, we can distinguish between: (1) an essentialist definition; (2) logical presuppositions; (3) instruments; (4) qualifying conditions; and (5) outputs.

As an essentialist definition (building on a combination of etymological and historical analysis), Cohen defines democracy as: “... that system of community government in which, by and large, the members of a community participate, or may participate, in the making of decisions which affect them all”. (1971: 7)

There are four aspects of this definition which recommend its use in conceptual work:

- a focus on government as a “system”

- a focus on “community” in general – with no specification of administrative unit

- a focus on the “participation” of “members”

- a focus on “decision-making” as the goal of participation

Without going into detail here, it can be said that each one of these points reflects potential lines of conflict with respect to alternative theories of democracy. One can, throughout history, identify influential theories of democracy that either do not include the points emphasized here, or directly oppose them. What is important in the present context, however, is that the emphasized aspects provide a generic understanding of democracy that is particularly well-suited to an application of democratic norms to a new type of goal-related activity.

Equally important in the present context, is Cohen’s differentiation between the “presuppositions” and the “conditions” of democracy. While the former are deemed to be *logical* necessities, the latter are defined as *empirical conditioners*. Democracy is, in other words, inconceivable without the preconditions: it cannot function as democracy without them. Once identified in any given form, however, it is the conditions which influence the quality of the contingent form. A closer look at this differentiation reveals, however, that the actualization of the preconditions also can exert considerable influence on how any given democratic system will function in practice.

Interestingly enough for the present problematic, the preconditions of democracy are identified as *community* and *rationality*. By “community”, Cohen means that democracy presupposes a collectivity which has developed enough of a group self-consciousness to allow for a common identity in the pursuit of common aims. Without such commonality, there is no way that the group will feel itself bound to develop and respect a form of collective governance. Given the fact that modes and degrees of community identity and purpose will

clearly vary across an unlimited spectrum of possibilities, this implies that the nature of the community in question – whether there are strong and long-lasting ties of identity, or simply a commonality arising from a temporary challenge to a collectivity with no previous communal bonds – will exert a strong conditioning effect on the system of democratic governance.

A similar aspect attaches to the presupposition of rationality. For Cohen, the essence of rationality as presupposition is that the community shares a meta-understanding whereby language and procedures can be derived for converting discourses on goals with discourses on means. Since the notion of “self-governance” is in itself a paradox, the community must be possessed of the communicative means whereby the creative and transcendental nature of language and dialogue (“world-openness”) can be converted to plans, proscriptions and self-governing routines. This requires some form of basic rationality; logical rules and a common meta-system for co-ordination and enactment, without which decision-making by the members of the community will not be convertible to practice.

Also here, however, we are confronted with a vital nuance on Cohen’s presupposition. “Rationality” is not a simple, unimodal, concept. Max Weber’s distinction between “formal” and “substantive” rationality (Parsons, 1964) is standard introductory fare for social theory, and the work of numerous contemporary social theorists (Winch, Habermas, March and Simon, Taylor, Bernstein) have conclusively shown that even the most ideal-typical forms of rationality (alternative reconstructions of scientific method) are embedded in deeper layers of meaning and relevance. Cohen’s minimalist notion of logical rationality as a presupposition for democratic governance thus opens for interesting perspectives as to the *type* of rationality set to structure specific democratic discourses. In the present context we can highlight a difference between the rationality of competitive individualism and utilitarian advantage (“market rationality”), and the rationality of ecosystem interdependency (“ecological rationality”). Whereas the former serves as a presupposition of the dominant model of “competitive” or “market” democracy, the latter can be posed as a necessary presupposition of “ecological democracy” – which we in turn can identify as a normative precondition for sustainable development.

4 ECOLOGICAL RATIONALITY

As most specifically developed by John Dryzek (1987), the concept of “ecological rationality” is a mode of “functional rationality” that aims to capture the essence of the interrelationship between human activity and ecosystems. As such, the idea “embodies both a value (or values) and mode (or modes) of behavior appropriate to the attainment of that value (or values)” (1987: 25). There is thus a clear aspect of “strategic rationality” related to the concept. Ecological rationality indicates “guiding principles for societal self-direction” with respect to specific types of existing “ecological problems”; and, in the present case, such problems can be related to a need for regional governance.

In this light, the point of departure for identifying ecological problems is the particular nature of “ecosystems”. These exhibit several distinct characteristics: (1) *Interpenetration*: ecosystems are always embedded in other ecosystems. Though it is possible to identify borders of ecosystems for analytic reasons, it must always be remembered that there is considerable activity and exchange taking place at and across the borders. (2) *Emergence*: ecosystem properties can never be circumscribed by a knowledge of the components of the system alone. New properties and characteristics emerge from unpredictable interactions within the subsystem. (3) *Homeostasis*: ecosystems are self-regulating, constantly adapting to both external and internal forces. This does not imply, however, that there is an identifiable purpose related to self-regulation. Overall structural-functional adaptation takes place on a contingent, not a teleological, basis.

Human activity is viewed as taking place within (and being dependent on) these ecosystem characteristics. The relationship between human and natural systems gives rise to five types of “ecological problems”:

- (1) *Complexity*: ecosystems are, in their own right, extremely difficult to systematize and predict. This complexity is only made *more* intricate and unpredictable as a result of human societal activity.
- (2) *Non-reducibility*: it is not possible to provide compensatory solutions to ecosystem disruption by manipulating one or more sub-components of the system. Partial instrumental interventions will invariably lead to unpredictable consequences.
- (3) *Variability*: Regardless of how similar ecosystems may appear, they will always vary in significant ways across both space and time. Differences in socio-cultural forms compound this variability.
- (4) *Uncertainty*: the total effect of all three ecosystem characteristics creates problems of severe unpredictability. Given the fact that intervention itself can contribute to uncertainty, it is often not even possible to delimit confidence intervals for probability estimates.
- (5) *Collectiveness*: the interaction between human and ecological systems affects large numbers of actors, giving rise to problems of “collective rationality”. What appears to be rational on an individual level is quite often irrational for *either* the social collectivity or ecosystem as a whole.
- (6) *Spontaneity*: ecosystems have a tendency to right their own imbalances - a feature which human intervention often obscures or actively undermines. The problem arises as to how to understand and harness this particular characteristic without turning it against the ecosystem itself.

An additional, and highly relevant, feature of Dryzek's understanding of ecological rationality is that it is avowedly anthropocentric. Interest is only focused on those aspects of ecosystems which "provide the basic requirements for human life" (p. 34). These include *productive needs*, *protection* (against harm) and *waste assimilation*. Dryzek stresses that this focus is not meant to under-estimate other aspects and functions of ecosystems (either aesthetic or biocentric values), but he feels that the anthropocentric focus is necessary so as to be able to relate ecological rationality to other forms of functional rationality (whether economic, social, legal or political). He is in this respect more concerned with "what ecosystems can do for humans, rather than with what ecosystems can do for themselves" (p. 36). Obviously, this is also a central focus for the notion of sustainable development, with its underlying goal of satisfying basic human needs within the limits of nature.

Building on the above ideas, Dryzek defines ecological rationality as: "the capability of ecosystems consistently and effectively to provide the good of *human* life support", with "consistently" understood to mean "long-term sustainability". It is the ecological rationality of "social choice mechanisms", as these interact with natural systems and, in practice, lead to different "ecological problems", that is the subject of his analysis. For present purposes, we can say that the focus is on the types of problems which democratic social-choice mechanisms lead to/confront when trying to realize sustainable development as a *regional project for sustainable development* which aims to incorporate ecological rationality.

The challenge of regional sustainable development can thus be seen as an incidence of an ongoing process of democratization, in which the task is one of defining a *new community (demos)* which is expected to adapt its social choice mechanisms to a *new (ecological) rationality*. As an initial contribution to this task, we can begin here by identifying what appear to be *potential conflicts* between key values of community and rationality within liberalist competitive democracy, and alternative values for sustainable development. Figures 3 and 4 outline the relevant dimensions, and indicate possible reforms: reforms which could accommodate the demands of sustainable development *without* coming into conflict with essentialist democratic norms. In the terms of the Cohen model (Figure 1), this amounts to the identification of new "instruments" for the democratic governance of regional sustainable development

5 THE NEED FOR A NEW COMMUNITY

5.1 Identity and space

In Western democracies, the units by which communities have come to identify political membership and rights (citizenship) have developed under specific, and relatively similar, historical conditions. We live in villages, townships, municipalities, counties and states with borders which, in most cases, have been defined under premodern conditions for premodern purposes. Yet our identities and political responsibilities remain attached to the established administrative units. When we cross a border from the one country to another, or from one state to another, or from one province, county, or municipality to another – we tend to leave behind our duties as a citizen.

But problems related to environment and ecosystems know no such borders. We live within “ecological niches” of varying scope and holistic interpenetration. The notion of a functioning region presupposes that basic identities and responsibilities be shifted from time-worn and possibly dysfunctional administrative units to new boundaries for communality. Not (in the first instance) as a replacement for current allegiances, but as a supplementary identity in the direction of an emerging “ecological citizenship”. Effective collective action for regional sustainable development requires a new consciousness with respect to the totality of contiguous and interdependent ecosystems; a consciousness which focuses our identity as a species and our responsibility for natural life-systems.

In this connection, there are several possibilities for developing and eventually institutionalizing such an identity (Figure 3). At a minimum we require specific mechanisms for aiding the transition from administrative-geographical identity toward a more eco-centered approach. This requires a broad-based pedagogical effort in the direction of better knowledge of local ecosystems. In the current context this implies an expanded understanding of regions to embrace the key ideas of ecological rationality. Efforts in the area of “ecological cartography” and natural-resource accounting, with mapping of biodiversity, resource stocks and the consequences of local production and consumption activities, could provide a more relevant foundation for community goals and policy debate. Such efforts would also lay the foundation for a more effective application of concepts such as “ecological space” (Buitenkamp, 1993; Hille, 1995) and the “ecological footprint” (Robbins, 1994; Rees, 1994; Wackernagel and Rees, 1995), concepts which serve to focus the regional and global ecological impacts of local and national consumption patterns.

The major burden for action in this area lies with informational and media-related change. One could, however, also entertain the prospect of regional and local “Ecosystem Councils” to coordinate initial efforts at trans-border identity and problem specification. Such councils (cooperative bodies of stakeholders) could also take on the task of coordinating and disseminating information on ecosystem conditions. Efforts in this direction are already visible in Austria, Finland, Norway and Ireland, where recent monitoring of the implementation of “Local Agenda 21” reveals a spontaneous diffusion of the LA21 idea to broader notions of “Regional Agenda 21” (Lafferty, 2001).

5.2 Representation and interests

Representation is an essential aspect of democratic governance in large-scale units. The effectiveness of face-to-face democracy is clearly delimited as to both time and space, and effectiveness is a vital condition for political stability and democratic legitimacy. Representation is but one of democracy's many "instruments" (Figure 1), a device which requires constant change in line with emerging social problems and shifting constellations of interest.

While current democratic systems have developed apace with nation-building and the growth of the welfare-state, the demands for ecological democracy require new forms of representation and the delegation of power. Within the electoral (parliamentary) channel, we are accustomed to think in terms of "one man/woman - one vote", and within the channel for interest-group representation, we apply the notion of "corporate pluralism" (Rokkan, 1966). Both of these steering mechanisms reflect, however, a liberalist bias, with the individual citizen recognized as sole legitimate actor, but with a grudging recognition of the need for functional representation (Bendix, 1964).

What is important in the present context, however, is that both channels presuppose what Thompson (1970) has referred to as "the democratic objective": that decision-making should reflect the aggregated preferences of *specific* individuals and interests passed upwards within the system. One of the most crucial differences between conservative and liberalist notions of this objective was the transition from so-called "virtual representation" to "direct representation". The difference between the individual and the group in this connection is less important than the difference between a representational system where the purpose is to articulate and aggregate specific votes and interests as the basis for decisions; and a system where the purpose is to make decisions *on behalf of* designated individuals and groups.

It is, however – interestingly enough – this latter pre-liberal notion which comes to expression in the concept of sustainable development. The preferences and wants of current citizens and pressure-groups must be adjusted to take into consideration the interests of several "virtual" groupings: future generations; the distant poor; the affected interests of contingent non-citizens; and (in the eyes of many) other non-human species. The challenge is to develop representational devices whereby the interests of such groupings can be accorded weight in current decisions as to resource use and allocation. While the ethical debate on these issues has taken place for quite some time (see the contributions by Wetlesen, Ariansen and Malnes in Lafferty and Langhelle, 1999), the discussion as to specific reforms has only recently begun. We can identify at least four perspectives on possible alternative instruments.

5.2.1 Normative futures research

There is a clear need for placing greater emphasis on scientific (disciplined) attempts to project and accommodate the interests of future generations. Through the use of scenarios and simulations developed from the norms of sustainable development, researchers have, for example, developed the idea of "back-casting" future interests into current plans and decisions (Dale and Robinson, 1996). By attempting to identify future constellations for need fulfillment on the basis of normative goals and current trends of production and consumption, it should be possible to represent the interests of future generations in a more systematic and well-founded manner. Futures research has, in this respect, made considerable conceptual and methodological gains in recent years (Bell, 1997 and Slaughter, 1996), and, in Norway,

the use of long-term econometric models has been adapted to clearly specified “ecological premises” (Hansen, Jespersen and Rasmussen, 2000).

5.2.2 Councils of “Ecological Stewards”

Though national coordinating committees for the implementation of the Rio accords are a recommended part of the UNCED program, they have thus far been given only marginal status in most countries (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000). What is obviously necessary is a type of more official council with high visibility and greater policy influence. One way to conceive of such bodies would be to structure participation so as to include previous government ministers and heads of political parties, and to stress the future-oriented and global responsibility of sustainable development. In Norway, for example, it was possible on one occasion to bring together four previous prime ministers (from four different political parties) to openly reflect in a public hearing on why they could not, as heads of government, realize more effective policies for environment and development. Given the extreme importance of moral political leadership in this area, there can be little doubt that a body of political elders – freed from the bindings of party programs and bureaucratic inertia – would be able to exert a more long-term and holistic influence. There is an analogy in this respect to the councils of elders employed by North-American Indian tribes, whose sole responsibility was to plan for the Seventh Generation. A similar council of trans-boundary “stewards” could clearly be used to heighten awareness and planning with respect to regional problems.

5.2.3 Representation by “proxy”

The notion of representation and voting by “proxy” is today most common in corporate business, but there is no reason why such a mechanism could not be extended to the political sphere. The origin of the idea lies in the Roman office of “procurator”, an agent who was mandated to exercise power on behalf of a given body or authority. As a tool of democratic representation, proxy votes could be allocated to parliamentary agents for the virtual groups affected by non-sustainable development. Though the entire notion of responsibility to future generations is normatively highly complex (Partridge, 1981; Gower, 1992), specific proposals have been put forth (Dobson, 1996), and there is a clear analogy to the now-accepted institution of “ombudsman”, which was hardly less controversial at its inception.

5.2.4 Expanded ecological rights

Finally, there is the possibility of bringing absent or distant interests more strongly to bear on decision-making by assigning them in current constitutions enhanced ecological rights. Though the issues have been elaborated theoretically (Nash, 1989), there are as yet few attempts to specifically assign rights to either other species or future generations. The Norwegian constitution goes relatively far in this direction, however, with its amendment 110(b) which stipulates that: “Everyone has the right to an environment which secures health, and to a state of nature where both the productive capacity and biodiversity are preserved. Natural resources should be disposed of within a long-term, comprehensive perspective, *whereby the rights herein also are preserved for coming generations*” (emphasis added).

6 THE NEED FOR A NEW RATIONALITY

6.1 Reallocating risk and responsibility

Western democracy builds on principles of individual freedom and autonomy, values that have developed in close correspondence with property rights, judicial security and political sovereignty. The functional relationship between market liberalism and “competitive” or “market” democracy is a well-discussed theme among political theoreticians (Schumpeter, 1976; Macpherson, 1962, 1967; Held, 1987). But while the discussion previously focused on whether or not the Western model could be transferred to non-Western settings, we are now confronted with the question as to whether the functional inter-dependencies of the model are suitable to the task of sustainable development. Is the “democracy” of a liberal-capitalist regime adequate to the needs of an ecological regime?

The idea of “sustainable production and consumption” (as outlined in Agenda 21, Chapter 4, and subsequently elaborated within the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)) rests on the assumption that it is the industrialized countries of the wealthy North which bear the greatest responsibility for environmental degradation.⁴ A similar assumption can also be said to apply within each country, where it can be said that it is those who are most responsible for non-sustainable production and consumption who must bear the greatest burdens of change and reallocation.

All this involves relatively massive changes in both lifestyle and control over natural resources. As previously shown, sustainable development implies a marked change in the direction of greater equity, on a global, national and regional basis. This means a clear reallocation of responsibility – of risks, gains and losses among the major “stakeholders” in society. The problem is similar to that which was anticipated for socialism. But with respect to sustainable development change is expected to take place by way of open competitive party politics, at the same time that the *need for change* is said to stem from objective ecological constraints (rather than “dialectical materialism”). The challenge is to create legitimacy for such change within a system where “democratic freedom” is integrally related to personal autonomy and corporate private property. The “deep structure” of liberalist democracy in high-consumption societies thus poses serious problems of adaptation for any regime devoted to the goals of sustainable development.

6.1.1 Social-ecological justice

One important reform possibility here is a more rigid legal code with respect to non-sustainable production and consumption, together with a more active and “ecologically rational” judicial system. A “balance of power” between the legislative, executive and judicial functions is an integral part of the Western democratic model. In many countries, however, (e.g. Scandinavia, Great Britain, Ireland), the powers of the judiciary with respect to modifying

⁴ The initial paragraph of Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 reads as follows: “Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated. While poverty results in certain kinds of environmental stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances” (United Nations, 1993: 34).

and shaping public policy, are weakly developed. The potential for strengthening these powers procedurally to the detriment of parliamentary decision-making is clearly one possibility. All judicial systems operate within relatively contingent “legal cultures”, and it should be a major task in the pursuit of sustainable development to explore the possibilities for “cultural change” in this area. Lawyers and judges should be “gently prodded” to cultural self-reflection on the underlying and often non-coded values affecting their daily routines.

6.1.2 Co-operative management regimes

Perhaps even more promising in the short term, however, are approaches to risk and burden-sharing which build on principles of *voluntary negotiations and agreements*. In a recent collection of articles on “democracy and the environment”, there emerged widespread evidence of both enthusiasm for, and innovative practice in, these types of approach. Lafferty and Meadowcroft (1996) refer to such efforts as “cooperative management regimes”, the major characteristics of which are: (1) a prior recognition that there exists a serious ecology-related problem, which (2) must be settled jointly, even though (3) any settlement involves a clear re-allocation of loss and gain. Given a minimum of favorable preconditions, and a systematic application of given procedures, it has become increasingly clear that problems conceived of in this way can be tackled successfully.⁵

The key underlying process in these efforts is “social learning”, whereby relevant stakeholders, through a joint commitment to regulated dialogue, seek to alter ingrained perspectives as to the balance between particular and general interests. One is reminded in this connection of the vital process identified by John Stuart Mill as an essential aspect of democratic development (see Thompson, 1976). There is, claims Mill, a built-in tension in all democratic systems whereby it is necessary to balance between, on the one hand, a need for timely and effective decisions, and, on the other, a need for citizen education and increased personal competence. In the present context, we can claim that it is the responsibility of democratic leaders to develop dynamic procedures which are both effective and educative at the same time. Cooperative management regimes would appear to be just a system.

6.2 Legitimate scientific authority

Yet another tension which must be resolved is that between a basic democratic commitment to equality and “common sense”, and an obvious need for a sustainable-development regime to better integrate and apply science and expertise. Despite documented tendencies towards elitism and oligarchy in democratic systems, the mainstream normative approach has been to defend and expand procedures for maintaining popular control over elitist (expert) rule. Thomas Paine’s classic, *Common Sense* (from 1776), was not only one of the most influential pamphlets of the “age of democratic revolution”, it served to establish individual citizen competence as core element of liberalist democratic rationality.

⁵ This area of reform is receiving increasing attention, particularly with respect to the new demands implied by the Kyoto agreement on reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Signatories to the climate convention are now confronted with the problem of allocating reductions across national sectors and industrial branches. Confronted with the prospect of heavy across-the-board carbon-emission taxes, several industrial branches are trying to maintain their national positions and international competitiveness by entering into different types of negotiated co-operative agreements. For an overview of the general nature of such agreements, see Meadowcroft, 1998.

Yet one of the most distinctive characteristics of the modern environmental movement is the use of natural scientists to promote and legitimize demands for change. Nearly all of the early environmental publicists had natural-science training, and they openly used their disciplinary knowledge and status to document the imminent crisis. As maintained elsewhere (Lafferty, 1996), the program for sustainable development derives moral support from two separate directions: the school of “ethical realism” and the school of “ethical consensualism”. As consensual ethics, the program rests on the support provided at Rio from over 156 national governments; and as ethical realism the program builds on virtually thousands of research reports (particularly with respect to environmental health hazards, climate change and ozone depletion) which document the pressing need for effective change. As elaborated by Dryzek, the essence of ecological rationality is itself a variant of natural-law thinking, whereby “the good” lies in the direction of an overall balance in nature.

The challenge in this area is to find methods and institutions for striking a better balance between the expert (and often arcane) knowledge necessary for sustainable-development guidance, and a need for popular insight, understanding and control. Two possible techniques here are: (1) *national scientific councils for sustainable development*, with joint representation for scientists, technicians, leading stakeholders and lay persons; and (2) a more widespread and consequential use of *public hearings* and different forms of “*consensus conference*”. The aim of both methods should be to bring forth the best and most recent knowledge for the area in question, and to present it in such a way that average citizens can both gain insight into the underlying causes of everyday problems and offer their own forms of indigenous knowledge in return. There have already been conducted numerous such social-learning experiments in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, and in both Norway and the Netherlands there have recently been published comprehensive reports on science, risk and decision-making (NSCGP, 1995; NENT, 1996).

6.3 Holism and emergent properties

One of democracy’s most crucial values is a toleration for diversity. For theoreticians as diverse as John Dewey, Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl, it is the competition and interaction among different “parties” which is the very essence of the form. Democratic leaders are to compete for popular support, and power must be open to rotation on a recurring basis. Effective governance is secured through majoritarian rule, with 50.1 percent of the vote as sufficient (in most cases) for action – but the system must also be “protected” from suppressive majorities by adequate checks and balances among the different governing functions. The result is cyclical and alternating periods of change, stagnation and policy reversal, with bargaining, compromise and increasing “governmental overload” as potential dysfunctions in the system. Development under modern democratic governance is thus increasingly incremental and unpredictable; a reflection of the price of tolerance, pluralism and liberalist constitutionalism.

As we have seen, however, sustainable development and ecological rationality require holistic decisions and effective, lasting change. That which serves a particular constellation of interests at a particular time can prove to be both damaging and irreversible for the system as a whole. Pluralism’s greatest strength can become the ecosystem’s greatest weakness – at least when pursued under conditions of a presumed limitless surplus. Partial interests and fragmented results are an inherent characteristic of the pluralist “game”. So-called “win-win”

strategies can be realized, but they are the exception rather than the rule, and, in any case, seldom transcend an incremental and time-bound understanding of the interests at stake.

6.3.1 Strengthening the exigencies of long-term planning

One major line of reform here is a stronger emphasis on long-term planning. Even if it is hardly possible to develop models and scenarios that grasp the totality of ecosystem penetration and emergent properties, it is clearly possible to do much more than is currently being done in most welfare states. Considerable resources are, for example, devoted to long-term planning processes in the Nordic countries, and the values and goals of sustainable development are being increasingly phased in (Hansen, Jespersen and Rasmussen, 2000). There is also (in Norway, at least) a growing tendency for the parties in parliament to requisition their own expertise in connection with the recurring debates of the official four-year plans, and to provide their own alternative scenarios and projections. The prospects for greater coordination of the national plan at the regional and local levels is also present, particularly as part of the growing interest in so-called Regional and Local Agenda-21 processes (Lafferty, 2001).

All in all it should be pointed out that the UNCED process itself has reintroduced the notion of democratic planning into the process of policy implementation in a way which could not have been imagined a mere decade ago. While the ideological trend on most fronts points clearly in the direction of market liberalism and deregulation, there is simultaneously a growing interest in, and commitment to, environmental and sustainable-development planning.

6.3.2 Parliamentary discourse – not debate

Another important possibility for increasing holistic understanding is to direct attention towards the quality of political debate within existing legislative assemblies at the national, regional and local level. There can be no doubt that the parliamentary discourse in European post-industrial societies has become increasingly instrumental and increasingly “programmatic”. Though this can be viewed, from the point of view of democratic rationality, as a progressive development in relation to debates among more individualized representatives (as is often the case in the United Kingdom and particularly the United States), it can also be faulted with respect to a need for more genuine dialogue and more holistic understanding. If the essence of parliamentary debate bogs down in rigid arguments for and against programmatic positions, there is clearly little room for either “enlightened understanding” through genuine dialogue (Dahl, 1986: 191-225) or a better grasp of ecological rationality. It is difficult to see how an effective program for sustainable development can be achieved without at least one form of national assembly devoted to the type of discursive ideals associated with the traditions of Greek and Roman public fora, and more recently systematized into a general epistemology by philosophers such as Dewey, Searle, Toulmin and Habermas.

6.4 Decisive and effective action

Finally, we have what, for many, is the most crucial area of conflict (potential and real): the tension between liberalism’s emphasis on a need for dialogue and learning, and the

increasingly precarious requirements of sustainable development. Democratic procedures are well known for working both slowly and ineffectively. Many theoreticians have, in fact, emphasized just this characteristic as one of democracy's greatest *advantages*. Change does not take place too quickly, so that citizens have the opportunity to develop their competence and insight through reflective dialogue and compromise. It has also been maintained that, if a group has not yet reached an adequate level of consensus on a particular issue, it is probably better that the decision not be taken at all, so as to avoid excessive strain on the bonds of community.

As already indicated, however, democracy must also be shown to work *effectively*. It must, as Jon Elster (1983) puts it, prove to be "serious" in tackling important problems, regardless of the size and nature of the minority affected. And, as we also have seen, there is perhaps no more crucial problem-area for democracy to address just now than the presumed "ecological crisis". As used in this context, the idea of "crisis" is borrowed from medicine, where it refers to an unstable state of a given illness where it is unpredictable as to whether the organism will restore health or degenerate towards death. Given that there clearly *do* exist crisis symptoms within the sphere of ecological rationality, it becomes a crucial question as to whether or not democratic steering is adequate to tip the balance back towards health, rather than towards further decline and an ultimate breakdown in life-support systems. In this context, it is not surprising that serious questions are being raised as to the potential of existing democratic procedures to resolve the different crisis areas.⁶

Even though most of these critical queries stop short of openly advocating authoritarian solutions, the tone of the critique is serious enough to place the issue at the core of any discussion of "ecological democracy". Rather than risk throwing the democratic baby out with the ecological bath water, however, it would seem more prudent to first try to reach a more tolerable balance between both. Ecological clocks are clearly ticking in a number of areas – and there is clearly little comfort in trying to deaden the sound with technological earplugs – but neither should we give in to premature democratic panic. There are, I believe, a number of possible reforms (in addition to those already mentioned) which could clearly increase the problem-solving effectiveness of an ecological state.

6.4.1 Democratic planning and implementation

In the area of planning and implementation there are several types of initiative which could clearly improve the effectiveness of environmental decision-making and change. Among these are: (1) a strengthening of the visibility and decisiveness of local and regional planning processes (as already achieved and documented for several of the Scandinavian countries (see Kleven, 1996)); (2) a stronger integration between planning and policy implementation (through, for example, the establishment of Local and Regional Agenda 21 programs which combine the mobilization of local citizens and stakeholders with regional and global networks of other Agenda-21 communities); and (3) a more focused and integrated use of problem-specific hearings and local referendums (Glasbergen, 1994 and Coenen et al., 1998).

⁶ The debate is highly visible in Norway where two leading spokesmen for environmental values have recently published strongly critical, and widely popularized, attacks on the role of democracy in contributing to the ecological crisis (Lem, 1994 and Wyller, 1999). The present author has been an active participant in these debates, taking as point of departure a more pragmatic, constructivist position (as initially outlined in the concluding chapter to Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 1996).

6.4.2 Broad-based personal and family mobilization

Another model which has proved to be extremely successful in Norway is the establishment of what is called an “Environmental Home Guard” (see Lafferty, 1994 and Lafferty and Eckerberg, 1998). Founded in 1990-91, the Home Guard is one of Norway’s most recent and innovative environmental initiatives. It bears all the characteristics of a “new social movement”, purposefully avoiding the imagery and problems of traditional collective action. Pointedly referring to itself as a *dugnad* (an ad-hoc cooperative effort) rather than an “organization”, the purpose of the campaign is to mobilize and educate average citizens and families in the everyday facts of ecological living. Those who become involved (as “participants”, not “members”) initiate their activity by signing off on a checklist of daily tasks or commitments to improve household and community life-styles in a more ecologically friendly direction. There are no meetings or other types of collective responsibility, yet the members of the Guard become increasingly aware of other “participants” through the circular community effects of their own actions.

Initially sponsored by 18 major environmental and solidarity organizations, and with yearly financial support from the Ministry of the Environment, the Guard has now grown to more than 130,000 participants and community coordinators, and is becoming increasingly active in promoting the goals of both Local and Regional Agenda 21. To the extent that “misguided public opinion” (in the form of narrow materialist interests) undermines ecological rationality in and through democratic procedures, the transformative potential of the Home Guard offers an innovative alternative to more traditional forms of collective membership and mobilization.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Assuming that regional sustainable development is a highly prioritized goal in Europe, the purpose of the present paper has been to explore the implications of this goal for the contemporary mode of democratic decision-making.

The initial and more fundamental premise of the exercise is that “development” is a shorthand concept for positive change in both the general standard and distribution of living conditions in a given community. Furthermore it is assumed that any given mode of development will derive a large part of its meaning and valence from an identifiable “rationality”; an underlying set of knowledge components that serves to integrate the aspirations of development with the means of achieving them. Given that democracy is currently a consensually preferred means of social choice, this implies that any significant change in the rationality of development requires a change in the mode of democracy. “Form follows function”: a transition from non-sustainable to sustainable development ordains a need to at least review – and most probably revise – democratic systems.

This perspective is strengthened by a second aspect of the problematic: the coupling of “region” and “sustainable development”. By convention, a region indicates a spatial designation which somehow transcends existing political-administrative boundaries. As a dynamic aspect of European integration, the notion of “region” has emerged as a major symbol for identifying and generating new possibilities for community. The discourse has taken place at several levels: to emphasize the need for regional identity with the “European Community” itself; to ease traditional conflicts at sub-levels of the Community (both within and among member-states); and to strengthen potential bonds across the borders of outlying member-states. In all of these cases it is the identification of a new community – what democratic theorists refer to as the “demos” – which is in focus. If regional projects of any sort are to be realized in a rational and effective way, it becomes a prerequisite to shape and empower a collective actor. Once again, “form follows function”: regional goals require a new form of regional community.

Building on these perspectives, the paper goes on to show that the two issues raised – community identity and developmental rationality – correspond directly with Carl Cohen’s two “presuppositions” for democracy. Working practically with the contingent challenges of “regional sustainable development”, thus implies working conceptually, on a most fundamental level, with the premises for democratic governance. By identifying the underlying rationality of sustainable development with John Dryzek’s notion of “ecological rationality”, the paper lays a foundation of conceptual “requirements” which a new democratic form will have to adapt to. The argument is then completed by juxtaposing key values and institutions of contemporary “competitive” or “market” democracy with the requirements for both a new “demos” and a new “rationality”. This serves to highlight potential points of ongoing conflict between the contemporary form and the consensual goal, hopefully raising thereby an increased understanding of just how problematic the pursuit of sustainable development through *existing* democratic procedures is. The exercise is also used, however, to identify specific reforms and steering instruments which might better achieve the declared goals, without compromising a basic commitment to democratic governance.

In sum the paper can be viewed as an attempt to outline a new framework for identifying and working with steering problems related to sustainable regional development. The emerging model of “ecological democracy” can perhaps best be understood at this stage of the discourse as a new regional “regime” for sustainable development. This would associate the task of developing a new democratic form at the sub-national and trans-national regional levels – both scientifically and practically – with the ongoing discourse on international regimes.⁷ Given the commonality of these discourses with respect to a need for enhancing effective governance across the borders of traditional communities and loyalties, there is surely much to be gained by a more direct discursive involvement.⁸ Whereas international regimes place more weight on trans-state effectiveness, without adequately resolving problems of citizen involvement and legitimacy, the discourse on “ecological democracy” proposed here reverses the priority. We must first resolve issues of community and rationality before we can move on to effective regional change.

Finally, I would like to point out that there also exists a highly fruitful potential between these discourses and the emergence of efforts to implement Chapter 28 of the Rio action plan, Agenda 21, at the local and regional levels. We have elsewhere identified (MoE, 2000) clear criteria and indicators for evaluating progress on Local Agenda 21. The substantive issues signified by these criteria are directly related to an integrated understanding of the issues of community and rationality raised here, and are furthermore directly applicable as a framework for Regional Agenda 21. The criteria and their sub-sets are here attached as a separate appendix.

7 For overviews relevant to this possibility, see Young (1989 and 1997) and Andresen et al. (2000).

8 See particularly the chapter on “Regimes as governance systems” by Olav Schram Stokke in Young (1997: 27-63).

Figure 1 : Democracy – A Conceptual Model

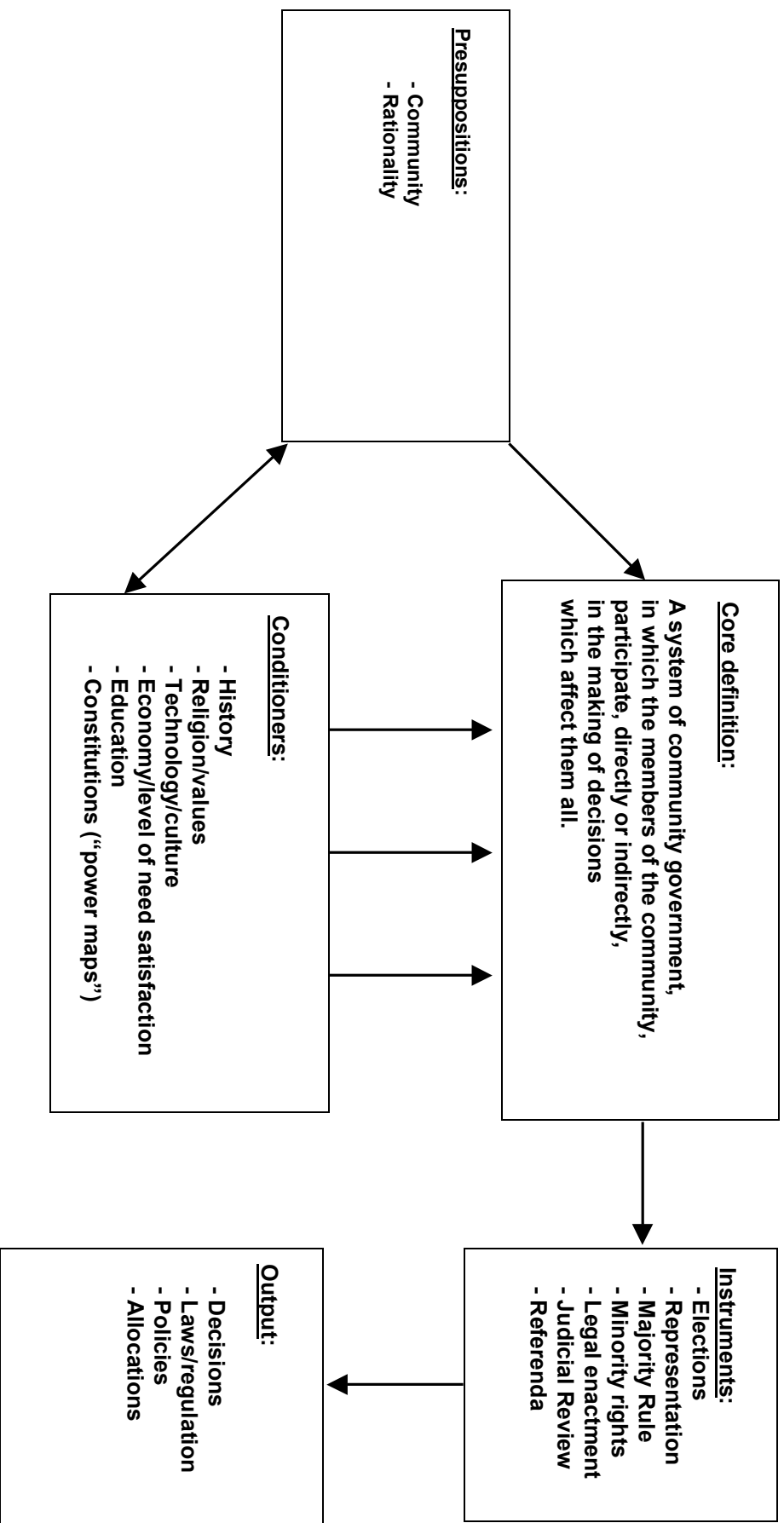


Figure 2: Democratic form follows community function

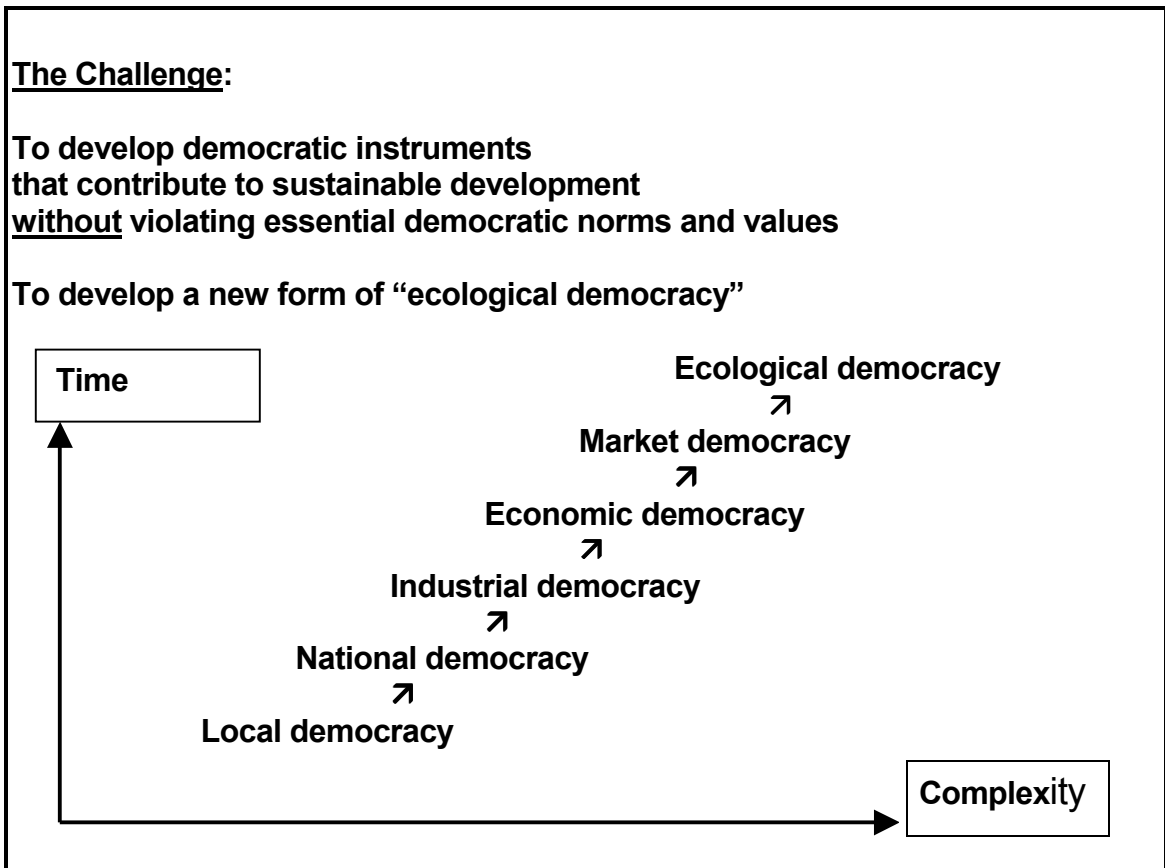


Figure 3: Democracy and regional sustainable development: The need for a new community (“demos”)

<i>Liberal democracy involves:</i>	<i>Ecological democracy requires:</i>	<i>Possible new instruments:</i>
Community within historically defined administrative units	Community within ecological units: A trans-boundary “demos”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ecological cartography – Local and regional ecosystem councils
Administrative citizenship and direct representation of interests	Ecological citizenship, and the representation of “external” interests: trans-boundary Protecting the interests of future generations and (possibly) other species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Normative futures research – Councils of “Ecological Stewards” (Previous ministers and parliament-arians to debate long-term issues of sustainability) – Representation by “proxy” for designated groups – Expanded concepts of ecological, generational and animal rights

Figure 4: Democracy and regional sustainable development: The need for a new rationality

<i>Liberal democracy involves:</i>	<i>Ecological democracy requires:</i>	<i>Possible new instruments:</i>
Freedom and equality before the law	Redistribution of loss, gain and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Social-ecological law – “Judicial review” of political-economic decisions – “Cooperative Management Regimes” (CMR’s)
Equality and “common sense”	Science and expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National Science Councils for Sustainable Development – Public hearings and “consensus conferences”
Pluralism and the majority principle	Holistic decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional plans for sustainable development/ “Regional Agenda 21” – Horizontal integration of sectoral governance – A parliamentary “Commissioner for Sustainable Development” – Constitutional amendments/ guarantees reflecting the Rio Declaration
Debate, dialogue, compromise, reflection and learning	Prompt and effective action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional-local action plans with specific binding targets for sustainable development – Multi-stakeholder “contracts” / “covenants” for sustainable-development implementation – Regional hearings on specific environmental challenges – An “Environmental Home Guard”

APPENDIX

Official criteria for Local Agenda 21 in Norway

In 1999 ProSus was commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment (MoE) to develop a set of criteria for assessing progress on Local Agenda 21. Building on work done within the SUSCOM network (see Lafferty, 1999 and 2001), the criteria are primarily designed to identify distinguishing characteristics of LA21 activity at the municipal (urban and rural) level (MoE, 2000). The hope is that they will gradually gain wide enough acceptance so that they can be used as national benchmarks for identifying “best cases” and for annual reports on overall progress with respect to the broader and more long-range intent of Chapter 28.

Each criterion is identified with a short (and semantically similar) title, with five sub-categories for the purpose of identifying different types and degrees of activity within each of the five areas. Recognition of activity can be made separately for each of the five dimensions, or cumulatively for that unit or units which ‘scores’ highest across all five indicators. By ‘local authorities’ is meant local or regional politicians, civil servants and other administrative personnel, with the term ‘stakeholder’ used as a substitute for the term ‘major

As currently being applied in Norway, the five categories and sub-categories are as follows:

I. A New Dialogue

Have local authorities:

- Passed a resolution in the Municipal Council in support of the ‘Fredrikstad Declaration’ and of Local Agenda 21.*
- Initiated efforts for a broadly based media campaign, providing information to citizens and other stakeholders on the commitment to Local Agenda 21.
- Arranged public hearings and meetings to disseminate information and to discuss and register suggestions for LA21 activities.
- Taken an initiative to develop methods for maintaining the ‘dialogue’ through, for example, interactive information technology or other communication systems whereby citizen input can be channeled into LA21 processes.
- Taken concrete steps to develop a ‘vision’ for the local community, and moved to involve key stakeholders in goal-oriented efforts to achieve the vision.

II. A Sustainable Economy

Have local authorities:

- Made specific efforts to integrate the language and values of ‘sustainable development’ into the municipality’s key planning documents?
- Tried to promote a clearer understanding of the municipality’s ecological setting in a regional context, with particular emphasis on biological diversity and the local resource base.
- Taken steps to chart the ecological impacts of the municipality’s production and business structure (through ‘green accounting’, environmental audits, etc), and to integrate environmental impacts in long-term planning and budgeting.
- Initiated co-operative programs for addressing the environmental problems of households, and given direct support to stakeholder projects for sustainable production and consumption.
- Taken steps to introduce a method of ‘directional analysis’ with respect to municipal policy, whereby all municipal activities are monitored with respect to values, goals and targets for sustainable development.

III. Sectoral integration

Have local authorities:

- Created a permanent administrative position with responsibility for coordinating environmental policy and LA21 activities.
- Taken steps to establish a ‘stakeholder forum’ for discussing, planning and coordinating strategic initiatives for sustainable development.
- Tried to find routines for an effective application of ‘the precautionary principle’ (within an ecosystem frame of reference) to trans-sector planning, budgeting and implementation.
- Initiated a program for ‘putting one’s own house in order’ by the ‘greening’ of municipal administrative routines, ‘green purchasing’, and training of municipal employees in the values and principles of sustainable development.
- Taken the necessary procedural and administrative steps to establish a Local Agenda 21 plan as the primary strategic steering instrument for municipal activity.

IV. Global orientation

Have the local authorities:

- Taken initiatives for direct contacts with local communities in less developed countries, through, for example, ‘twinning’ programs or other types of North-South co-operative arrangements.
- Charted existing points of contact and interaction between local stakeholders and governments, businesses, organizations and communities in less developed countries.
- Taken steps to document the effects of local production and consumption patterns (material flows, resource dependency, market impacts – the ‘ecological footprint’) with respect to less-developed countries, and to publicize the results.

- Made a conscious effort to integrate North-South distributional issues in municipal planning and initiatives.
- Initiated assessments of the global environmental impacts – particularly with respect to energy flows, climate change and biodiversity – of local production and consumption.

V. Constructive evaluation and revision

Have local authorities:

- Invited local educational institutions at different levels to become involved in the evaluation and follow-up of LA21 efforts, both within their own institutional domains and through the application of specific types and levels of competence and local knowledge.
- Tried to involve citizens and stakeholder representatives in monitoring and evaluation, and established procedures for channeling feedback and new initiatives back into municipal planning and revision.
- Taken steps to share information on LA21 experiences with other municipalities, and tried to improve administrative competence in LA21 'best cases' and procedures.
- Introduced ongoing routines for monitoring and revising LA21 activities with respect to clearly formulated goals and indicators, and by promoting procedures such as environmental audits, EMAS-protocols, 'directional analysis', etc.
- Taken steps to combine active and regular reporting on LA21 progress with public meetings and hearings.

*The "Fredrikstad Declaration" was adopted at a major conference on Local Agenda 21 in Fredrikstad, Norway in the Fall of 1998. It is a document similar to the Aalborg Charter, designed to mobilize Norwegian municipal and regional support for Chapter 28 of Agenda 21.

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