

**Implementation Concept
for the Foundation of the
Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis
of Social-Ecological Systems (WINS)**

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Preface

The rationale for the foundation and development of a specific international centre, the “Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems” (WINS) has been explained in a Scientific Background Paper. This has shown the state of the art regarding current research and main discourses on institutions and governance structures that regularize the interaction of human societies and natural systems, often by also employing other, i.e. man-made physical facilities such as infrastructure and technologies. Various scientific communities deal with this subject area, however, they approach their research issues in quite different ways mainly because they use different *analytical frameworks*.

However, communication and collaboration across most of these scientific communities using different analytical frameworks seems to be rather weak. After looking for the reasons behind this particular phenomenon, the Scientific Background Paper has drawn conclusions on how mutual learning could be stimulated in this “scientific action situation”. We suggested organizing integrative discourses and interdisciplinary research processes combined with advanced teaching to increase the quality of knowledge generation. The “Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems” (WINS) might be able to contribute to such progress not just by abstract deliberation, but by establishing concrete projects attractive for those who want to engage in applied and comparative analysis. Offering an open space and facilitating modes of organization for such collaboration is considered the core task of WINS.

This paper deals with the implementation of WINS following these guiding ideas. It develops a plan for its initial set up and further development, after having given a brief overview of the scientific objectives and by which means they can be achieved. An additional paper, which is available in German, explores the specific option to establish WINS together with “IRI THESys”, the Integrative Research Institute at Humboldt University devoted to “Transformations of Human-Environment Systems”.

1 Introduction

It belongs to the most enlightening results in the area of institutional analysis of natural resource systems that regularizing those transactions and interactions of humans which are mediated by linked social, ecological and technical systems requires institutional diversity and polycentric governance. Sustainability of human-environment systems crucially depends on human (individual and collective) behaviour that is guided by sets of rules (institutions) and forms of organization (structures and modes of governance) to put institutions into practice (rules in use). For this type of nature-related institutional analysis very different heuristics and languages have been used in those analytical frameworks which are used by different scientific communities. They prevail in different scientific communities and research networks which all deal with approaches to the institutional analysis of the interdependence of natural-technological and social-institutional systems. Some of the communities may not even be aware that they use an analytical framework which in such cases is implicit.

This observation presents the point of departure from which the initiative for the foundation and development of the “Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems” (WINS) derives. It gives rise to the research question as to what this situation implies for the development of a generalized analytical framework for the institutional analysis of Social-Ecological-Technical Systems (SETS). Though not included in the name of the Workshop, we focus not just on Social-Ecological Systems (SES), but on Social-Ecological-

Technical Systems (SETS) to account for the importance of technology and infrastructure in the processes of interaction between humans and nature.

An attempt at answering the question mentioned above will be the main though not exclusive focus of WINS, in particular how it should stimulate communication and research across scientific communities using different analytical frameworks. By playing such an integrative role, WINS is expected to serve as a vehicle for enhancing self-organization of scholars in international networks and increase the quality of knowledge generation and dissemination. The guiding vision of WINS is to be open to all topics of interdisciplinary problem-oriented and comparative research in linked social, ecological and technical systems (SETS). It may be worthwhile mentioning that there is no such centre elsewhere that combines a genuine interest in the study of analytical frameworks for analyzing institutional design and institutional change in Social-Ecological-Technical Systems via international collaborations.

2 Designing the Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems (WINS)

This concept for establishing the Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems is based on the observation that (explicit or implicit) analytical frameworks used by scientific communities in the area of institutional analysis of SES show major differences. They are neither neutral as regards the theory used by scientific communities nor independent from their empirical field of application and the methodological tools used. They embody differences in intention, meaning and relevance. Characteristic of an analytical framework are the dimensions of intentions associated with the research it guides, the meaning it attributes to research objects and the relevance claims it makes. Relevance implies a normative focus: What problems do we intend to solve with our analysis? Meaning arises from theories which provide an explanation of the domain of perceived reality in which the problem occurs. Relevance derives from the empirical background of theories, both in a positive and a normative perspective, as it raises the question whether we actually understand the problem including its contexts and causalities and, derived from this, whether we can make reliable and feasible recommendations based on sufficient reason how to achieve solutions which we may desire to be sustainable, robust, efficient and equitable, or what else evaluative criteria may be applied by the scientific community in question.

2.1 Recognizing the Reasons for the Existing Diversity of Analytical Frameworks

This leads to an important strategic conclusion: Any attempt at developing a general framework for the most important institutional constructions that shape societies relationships to its biophysical, non-human environment is deemed to fail, if it is predominantly based on an analytical framework - including its specific framing, heuristic and language - that just one scientific community or group of scholars has developed and is used to. Furthermore, generalizing an existing framework in this manner, what could be called a “bonding strategy”, necessarily will lead to misunderstandings and face resistance from scientific communities that did not develop it, as well as it is likely that such a generalized framework will not speak well to the settings these communities are used to analyze.

Therefore, we recommend exploring the background of analytical frameworks that are used by different communities for the analysis of institutions and governance structures and to develop an understanding of why they have emerged. Such an approach is likely to reveal

that diversity of analytical frameworks is superior to an unrestricted generalization approach, given the diversity of nature-related activities, technologies; actors and cultures. Mutual learning may be stimulated such a “bridging strategy”. It is important to note that the analytical frameworks are often not completely different but sometimes “clusters of frameworks” have similar conceptual roots (e.g., as regards institutional micro analysis, use of political economy approaches, links to ecological concepts, etc.) which facilitates bridging between the communities.

2.2 Bridging of Frameworks and Mapping of Communities

Following these arguments, it seems recommendable to develop a welcome culture towards all scientific communities that use (different and perhaps very specific) analytical frameworks for the institutional analysis of SETS and to engage in a bridging strategy. Accordingly, WINS will explore the structure of scientific communities engaged in SETS institutional analysis and, based on this, draw a specific “science map of analytical frameworks” (MAP) that explains the locations and networks of knowledge in this area. From this preparatory work, the following questions may arise:

- Why have different analytical frameworks arisen in particular territories of MAP?
- Which communities and disciplines work in the respective territories of MAP?
- How does micro analysis of the core activities investigated by the disciplines linked to the transaction-interdependence-institutions nexus explain its “territorial claims”?
- Why have the analytical frameworks developed differently as they are driven by the research questions and research processes in the respective disciplines?
- How can these orientations be interpreted as an outcome of intention, meaning and relevance that have guided the work of scholars in the disciplines?
- What heuristics and languages do these disciplines use and for what reasons were they considered appropriate for framing their research-related action situation?
- Are the analytical frameworks separated or overlapping in MAP, does their relationship show cross-cutting the cleavages or parallel cleavages?
- What impact does this have on the political economy of a bridging strategy?
- Can advocacy coalitions for such bridging efforts be built to achieve mutual gains?
- What efforts does bridging between the frameworks and its proponents require?
- Whether and how could this contribute to improving the SETS analytical framework?
- What sets of rules and modes of organization would make the bridging strategy work to the benefit of a general analytical framework for SETS institutional analysis?
- What benefits can be expected from the bridging strategy and how can they be identified and attributed to different elements of the bridging practices?
- Do such benefits arise only in scientific communities or also in those fields of application where practitioners expect to receive fruitful and feasible recommendations?

Tackling such issues by targeted, direct analysis certainly is a straightforward conclusion. However, it may sometimes be equally fruitful to engage in a practice of bridging in communication, analysis and teaching, a process which will also provide answers to the above mentioned questions, for example in processes of applied or comparative research on relevant topics in the area of SETS. In other words, WINS researches will engage in both MAP-related research questions as mentioned above, in particular in the first phase, and in applied and comparative research that is interdisciplinary in nature in accordance with the guiding notion explained above to institutionalize cooperation between scholars from different com-

munities used to different research framings. To this end, WINS needs to embark on a broader agenda including communication, research and education.

2.3 Pathways towards an Integrative Strategy

This agenda starts with a well-organized process for collecting expertise from scholars working in different scientific communities or networks, who are familiar with specific analytical frameworks and the problems, theories and empirical methodologies from which they emerged. It requires identifying people worldwide and making them interested in such an endeavor. As this could be facilitated by a funded network project, WINS may focus a collaborative effort for attracting such a network grant. As main elements of the agenda, we will combine:

1. Integrative Discourses for institutionalizing communication between members of several research communities
2. Interdisciplinary Research for conducting studies guided by one or more, single or linked analytical frameworks
3. Advanced Studies addressing both junior and senior researchers

In preparation of both the Integrative Discourse and the Interdisciplinary Research activities the above mentioned analysis of existing relationships and interaction among scholars and their communities for providing a science map (MAP) will be conducted. This serves to obtain a clearer view regarding the communities working on SETS institutional analysis, what analytical frameworks, theories, empirical approaches and communication channels they use, and what relationships they have to other scientific communities.

The Integrative Discourse activities aim to include scholars and PhD students from different traditions. They will be involved in discourses by the following measures (which will not all be taken immediately, but stepwise put into practice over a longer period of time):

- Starting workshop to inform about WINS and its particular nature and for including scholars and PhD students in working groups and the organization of future workshops
- Formation of “Interdisciplinary Group” with mixed membership from communities with different research traditions who advise the foundation process
- As an incentive for participation, members of the Interdisciplinary Group may use this opportunity to initiate funded research projects together with other affiliated faculty groups
- Inviting visiting scholars who can participate in WINS activities, in particular in setting up joined research projects, organized communication and advising young researchers
- Series of thematic workshops which focus on relevant issues and topics and seek participants’ commitment to initiate and contribute to these research processes
- Working groups which focus on selected issues and topics and as an incentive for participation apply for funding of collaborative research projects or teaching activities
- Internet forums which facilitate continuous discussions from the workshops and exchange within and between the working groups
- Publication workshops with limited number of participants to support particularly young researchers to publish in journals and for the edition of special issues
- Conferences for disseminating research results and maintaining the WINS network
- Introduction of an Online Journal as a potential, medium-term objective

The Interdisciplinary Research activities of WINS are expected to review and integrate the various lines of research that are part of the research traditions mentioned above in a way

that helps overcome parcelled conceptions of SETS analytical frameworks. To explore whether, why and how comparing and bridging the analytical frameworks of scientific communities make sense, and subsequently develop new analytical strategies to that end, the following types of research are planned:

1. Illustrative Review of Existing Studies of the research traditions described above in order to reveal complementarities and conflicts
2. Empirical Focus Studies on Key Questions relevant for the integration of the research traditions analytical frameworks
3. Advanced Studies beyond Conventional Paradigms to demonstrate the potential of advanced analytical frameworks, theories, empirical approaches and improved communication achieved by the integration efforts.

Decisions on the choice of *concrete* topics within these classes of research will be made as the research process unfolds. This will be supported by the Interdisciplinary Group which will discuss conflicts and complementarities between strands of research. At the same time, working groups may form and develop their own initiatives. In particular, topics that members of THESys and the affiliated faculty of WINS are working on and are familiar with, or interested in, will be taken into consideration. Of course, the choice of topics also depends on opportunities and successful collective action to attract funds. The following list of examples (which is incomplete, of course) may illustrate what *topics areas*, where *problem-oriented and comparative studies* are needed, might be considered as being relevant:

- Capacity and vulnerability of natural resources in securing world nutrition
- Provision of energy from natural resources and its rivalry with food provision
- Land management and soil protection including land conversion and conflicts
- Water management and protection of water including irrigation and drainage
- Climate change impact, mitigation and adaptation strategies, climate engineering
- Institutions, organisation and policies in fishery, forestry and wildlife
- Economic incentives for maintaining or reinforcing ecosystem functions across sectors
- Nature conservation, biodiversity, genetic resources and genetic engineering
- Natural resources in social and political systems in deep transition
- Natural resources and development, resource use and sustainable livelihoods
- Specific resource use systems such as GMO agriculture or converting peat land
- Political responses to natural disasters such as flooding, drought and famine
- Institutional change due to urbanization with resource scarcity and climate change

This process of theory building and methodological innovation will also engage a high-level international academic community in Advanced Studies and Teaching. This is a precondition for establishing the critical mass which is necessary to address the role of institutions and governance structures in regularizing actors' behaviour in coupled social, natural and technical systems. A Colloquium in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems will be introduced. A course dealing with the main knowledge areas of WINS, i.e., Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological-Technical Systems, may become a core element of the Advanced Studies. Visiting scholar will attend this course and contribute themselves to training and education. The Advanced Studies and Teaching activities may also be appropriate to complement the THESys Graduate Program.

3 Concrete Modules for Implementing the Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems (WINS)

In the following we will make an attempt to decompose the concrete task of setting up WINS into useful work packages. This is motivated by the idea that a reasonable arrangement and sequencing may help to increase efficiency and to avoid mistakes. However, we are aware that learning by doing and in particular learning by cooperation and communication will be an important element of the process.

(1) Starting an Initiation Project

The establishment of WINS requires some instrumental research work for conceptualizing, explaining and disseminating the ideas of WINS. For this purpose, an initiation project will be launched based on funds presently available. The topic of the project is: "Mapping Science, Linking Communities, Identifying Networks and Stimulating Discourse for International Collaboration in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems" (MAP). As a result of this project, a collective effort will be made to apply for a network grant that supports us in activating the WINS network and gathering expertise from its scholars. MAP is not only a project that fits the guiding research ideas of WINS and will produce its own publishable results, but is at the same time expected to improve the planning of the first steps for building WINS and also its further development towards making WINS sustainable in scientific, organizational, social and financial terms. Designing a WINS website and producing other communication tools will also belong to the initial tasks.

(2) Finding an Appropriate Organizational Form

It was important to take a decision on the legal and organizational form at the beginning, because this has considerable influence on the entitlements, choices, interaction and commitment of participants in WINS and beyond, mainly in its network. Options such as an informal working group or a formalized interdisciplinary centre were taken into consideration. Making WINS a permanent workshop in THESys, however, has advantages ranging from thematic compatibility to organizational feasibility and, above all, a stimulating context. Some of these expected synergies have been pointed out in a separate paper (mentioned in the preface).

(3) Constituting WINS Affiliated Faculty and other Groups

The main group of actors WINS will be based on is affiliated faculty, i.e. scholars from HU Berlin and other German or foreign universities and research institutes. An appropriate procedure for nominating and choosing affiliated faculty will be developed. A "Deliberation Group" will be formed and asked to reflect on how WINS should be designed and developed. The members of this group (selected from the affiliated faculty) will be asked to participate in meetings such as colloquia and workshops more or less regularly. For reasons of feasibility, most of them should come from the Berlin region or at least from East Germany. An "Interdisciplinary Group" (already mentioned above) with representatives from communities with different research traditions will advise the foundation process and the set up of research projects. Integrating young academics including PhD students into the WINS structure will deserve special attention.

Visiting Scholars and former Visiting Scholars will present additional and probably growing groups in WINS and the WINS network. Depending on how successful fundraising will devel-

op, we may be able to employ a staff for fulfilling various management tasks. Coordination of WINS will be best organized by a small group of co-directors who share responsibility for different areas of WINS activities. Our understanding of WINS is not to form a group working in the bondage of strict rules and inflexible procedures. In contrast, our visioning orients towards a permanent lively workshop developing a culture of openness and thus welcoming everybody who may contribute to creative discourse, research and teaching.

(4) Foundation of WINS and Making it Sustainable

After basic decisions on the internal organization of WINS have been taken, a minimum capacity (staff, office, funds) will be set up possibly supported by THESys. Foundation of WINS should take place on a starting workshop attended by selected scholars interested in institutional analysis of linked social, ecological and technical systems. This will be organized as a discussion workshop which is expected to contribute ideas and support for the further development of WINS and the design of various WINS activities. For organizing and financing this starting workshop, we consider following the COSMOS scheme offered by HU Berlin. First we would apply for a COSMOS Workshop combined with the starting workshop mentioned above, and then decide whether this could lead to a COSMOS University.

Though starting with limited funds, the initiators of WINS have a vision of what capacity and output is in terms of budget, staff, rooms, technical equipment, travelling, visiting scholars, colloquia, projects, publications, courses, etc. the process should aim at. Following such a perspective, WINS can be established in a sequential way. It should be launched with a "*Starting Capacity*" which may consist of a staff member for organizing the research and discourse, a staff member for office work and event management and an initial endowment with rooms, equipment and computers. Then "*Additional Capacity*" can be built, for example setting up a laboratory for SETS-oriented behavioral experiments, a publication manager and a fundraising expert, and student assistants. Of course, research projects based on external funds would add to the capacity needed for making WINS work.

(5) Discourse, Network and External Commitment

For making the work of WINS operational, setting up a data base on network partners with addresses and affiliations, fields of research, and other attributes would be necessary. This would happen in parallel with developing the science map of communities dealing with (different activities in) SETS. An elaborated concept on "bridging across the boundaries" by discourse and collaboration - on learning to understand each other's framing of SETS interaction - would similarly be a prerequisite for initiating an integrative discourse. Such an endeavor can be supported by the "Interdisciplinary Group" mentioned above gathering representatives from communities with different research traditions. Organizing a regular workshop of this group on what the objectives and activities should be in the future and what development should be aimed for will lead to a learning process. This might be comparable to the "Workshop on the Workshop" (WOW) at Indiana University.

(6) Programme of Advanced Studies and Teaching Special Courses

A visiting scholar program would be a main tool for enhancing the internal quality of WINS' work and building international reputation. However, this cannot exist alone but needs a con-

text of ways of institutionalized discussion opportunities such as seminars, research colloquia and special graduate courses. All together this would constitute a Program of Advanced Studies and Training. It is very important to engage in a process of designing such a program, in particular as regards the core module which might be comparable to Module Y673 in the Ostrom Workshop. Providing opportunities in this area which other centres do not offer can contribute to the attractiveness of WINS. The advanced studies and training activities may be integrated with the Graduate Program organized by IRI THESys. Similarly, the question arises to what extent this can build on programs and practices of education already existing in other institutes and departments of Humboldt University.

(7) Fundraising, Writing Proposals and Projects

Funding of this process will be achieved by addressing appropriate foundations and funding organizations. This needs an elaborated concept defining a sequence of activities to attract funds stepwise. It also requires routines of cooperation regarding exploration of funding opportunities, writing proposals, managing of projects and communication of project outputs including publication strategies may develop. As these issues can be best dealt with by collective action, interested affiliated faculty as well as junior researchers should be involved.

4 A Perspective on the Future of WINS

The vision is to have a centre in Berlin in five years that strategically follows the model of the Vincent and Elinor Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University in Bloomington and its associated research community at Indiana University; this means an internationally recognized and attended place for communication and exchange, high-level teaching, and enhancement of research and theory on the role of institutions and organization in social-ecological-technical systems. WINS will learn from the Ostrom Workshop and at the same time be open to other institutionalist schools. Further, WINS views the whole breadth of activities of humans in social-ecological-technical systems including conversion and conservation of entire resource systems, extraction or withdrawal of resource units from resource systems, using such systems for waste disposal and its absorptive capacity by pollution, using them for nature-based production such as growing livestock and cultivating crops linked to a value chain with marketing and consumption of commodities and non-commodities, and finally protection of humans against adverse impact from natural systems. Through analyzing transactions and transformations and interaction in action situations associated with such activities, WINS will engage in bridging of analytical frameworks for institutional analysis and collaborating across scientific communities while exploring different modes and levels of governance.