Co-producing Safeness? Order Partnerships in German local governance arrangements

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1. Purpose of the Paper

In addition to ongoing hierarchization, the intensified implementation of policy networks is shaping the transformation of local governance in Germany. The institutionalization of cooperative steering tools is intending both an increased input-legitimacy through more citizen orientation just like an enhanced output-legitimacy of public administration (Holtkamp/Bogumil 2007). In this context, Order Partnerships are a relatively new instrument in German local governance. They target on a more democratic participation of the citizens in local safeness policies. Therefore the municipality police departments and the public order offices identify specific topics of public interest like forhandedness against criminality, juvenile delinquency or road safety and invite local third sector organizations and civil society initiatives to develop and carry out strategies against these problems together with the local authorities. In recent years, these partnerships as a part of new public management arrangements indeed contributed to a broader citizen participation in these policy fields. On the other hand the involvement of selected civil society actors in the basic realm of state action challenges democratic theory: How can it be justified to select specific partners while other stakeholders are excluded?

The proposed paper intends to present the results of fourteen case studies of local order partnerships in the field of local road safety in the Münsterland region (North-West Germany) which have been carried out in 2009. Thereby it will answer the following questions:

• How are local order partnerships functioning and who are the involved partners?
• Which instruments are they using and which strategies do they follow?
• Do they really enhance citizen participation or are they a modern form of “window dressing” of local governance?
• How do they have to be estimated from the perspective of democratic theory?

The paper illustrates that Order Partnerships as instruments of participative traffic safety policy are part of focal governance, usually initiated by the local government and impartially moderated by municipal police stations. A gain in efficiency is possible when the involved partners agree on clear targets and establish competences and responsibilities.

2. References


