

If not for profit,
for what and how?

S O C I A L
E N T E R P R I S E

“Parole, parole, parole” – discourses and innovative social entrepreneurship

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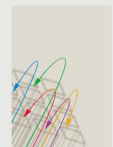
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1. INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper indicates its focus: “parole”, meaning “words” or “languages” in Italian. Even though the song from which we borrowed this line is a love song, it is not all about harmony. Instead, the question is: what kind of influence do discourses exert on social innovations and social entrepreneurship?

While most of the literature on this phenomenon so far concentrates on examples of successful entrepreneurs and their individual characteristics (cf. Austin et al. 2006; Dees 2007; Faltin 2011; Martin/Osberg 2007), our emphasis is a different one: we focus on the embeddedness of social entrepreneurs and their undertakings in local contexts. On the one hand, this comprises structures and the respective political, social and economic context. This part has already been taken on by researchers (Mair/Martí 2006; Klein et al. 2009). However, we argue that the power of words has so far been underrated in social innovation research while it has been advanced for the functioning of civil society in general (Katz 2006). We will illustrate our thesis by results of the WILCO project¹, particularly findings from the Münster context.

First of all, we will outline our understanding of “hegemony” based on Gramsci and sketch an application of the concept to the field of discourses. Following this, some general information about the WILCO project will be provided. In section 4 of the paper, we will explain some of the main features of the structural and cultural background of Münster, which forms the basis of the current discourses. The dominant frames of the welfare discourse and their historical emergence in the local context as a reaction to specific challenges will be delineated afterwards (section 5). Even though they stem from the broad area of economic policy, they likewise have important implications for the local welfare discourse as will be depicted in this part. Following this, two examples of social innovations in Münster – one from the field of family policy, one from labour market and integration policies – will be analysed in more depth in order to demonstrate the effects of the discursive hegemony on social entrepreneurship.

In a concluding section, lessons to be learned from these case studies regarding the overall importance of discourses for social innovation and social entrepreneurship will be reflected. The influence of discursive structures on the potential success of social innovations as well as the possibilities of social entrepreneurs to in turn influence the frames will be outlined in the conclusion.

2. HEGEMONY AND DISCOURSES

According to Gramsci, hegemony implies the dominance of a mode of living and thinking over alternative modes in a specific society. This dominant mode influences prevalent norms of behaviour, values and social relations (Katz 2006: 335). As such, the concept of hegemony denotes a dominant rule, which is generally based on consent and needs to exert power by force only in few exceptional cases. The more the hegemony of a class is not only tolerated, but actively supported by other classes, the more securely the hegemony will be established (Scherrer 2007: 72f.). In addition to this, a class can reinforce its hegemony through forming specific state structures as a form of political leadership and thereby increase its influence in the society (Opratko 2012: 36-39; Scherrer 2007: 73f.).

In the context of such an existing, well-established hegemony, change can only be generated by the formation of a “historic bloc”, in which several actors from different classes join forces and develop an alternative ideology (Katz 2006: 336f.). However, the more the interests of the dominated classes can be obtained through or within the hegemonic system, the more difficult it will be to initiate change (Scherrer 2007: 73). Those interests are, according to Gramsci, not pre-determined by class

¹ Further information regarding the project will be provided in section 3 of the paper.

status, but are formed in a historic process and therefore alterable (Scherrer 2007: 75). In a process of universalization, the particular interests of the dominant group diffuse into the ideologies and experiences of the subaltern groups and thereby adapt them to the hegemony. At the same time, the dominating ideology integrates certain elements of the interests of subaltern groups and thereby enhances its validity. The boundaries of such compromise are drawn by issues which challenge the basis of social power of the dominating class(es) (Opratko 2012: 43).

The ideas and perceptions of the hegemony are (re)produced by so-called intellectuals. These are persons who work at different levels of civil society to organise – deliberately or unconsciously – the world view, self-conceptions and norms of the hegemony (Opratko 2012: 48f.). Through this focus on (public and civil) actors, Gramsci's conception of hegemony can be adapted and applied to politological questions. While Scherrer (2007: 75) differentiates between the Gramscian focus on the hegemony of groups of persons and the Foucaultian notion of the hegemony of discourses, we argue for a combination of the two since discourses are socially constructed and thus dependent on social action. We understand discourses as systems of rules, established by a series of statements ("énoncés"), which delineate the kind of statements that can be uttered (Foucault 1997; Busse 2006). Those rules are formed by discourse coalitions which are defined as follows:

"people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system – that is a basic set of values causal assumptions and problem perceptions – and who show a non-trivial degree of coordination activity over time." (Sabatier/Jenkins-Smith 1993: 25).

Thus, we attempt to apply the concept of hegemony to the interplay of different actors forming discourse coalitions and establishing discursive rules. Those rules form the context in which social innovators and entrepreneurs need to present their ideas in order to find partners, build coalitions and implement their plans successfully. Social innovation is in this paper understood as new processes and/or products helping to solve social problems and/or to create societal value (Phills et al. 2008). Social entrepreneurship denominates one possibility through which social innovation can be implemented. It describes an innovative combination of social and entrepreneurial elements that transcends traditional notions of the economic/civil society sector divide (Defourny 2001).

In our application, we conceive of hegemony as a situation in which a group of actors establishes a dominant set of the rules of discourse: what can be said, regarding argumentation, legitimate (policy) goals and the assumed connection between causes and effects of certain measures. These rules are implicitly contained in the frames of the discourse. This term comprises the underlying norms and values of statements within the discourse as well as actors' beliefs about reality and typical goals pursued (Majone 1989; Rein/Schön 1991). Those frames are cemented by coalitions of "intellectuals" (as defined above) advancing the ideas and by their influence stemming from the institutional positions they hold in society.

The views and interests of opposing groups can either be actively integrated by the dominant coalition through adaptations of the dominant frames. This process is defined as co-optation in a (discursive) hegemony, by which support of subaltern groups is secured. Another strategy of the dominant group could be to exert influence on the argumentative corroboration of the opposing interests in order to align them with the dominant frames (cf. Scherrer 2007: 72f.). As such, the hegemony is established and maintained through a balance of consensus and (structural) coercion (Scherrer 2007: 77f.). The range of influence of such hegemony both in terms of topics covered and in spatial terms is an empirical question. Our case study focuses on the local level, however, since most innovations and enterprises start small in a specific context.

3. THE WILCO-PROJECT

Within the WILCO-project, a detailed analysis of different local contexts has been undertaken. WILCO is the abbreviation of "Welfare Innovations at the Local Level in Favour of Cohesion", a project which is funded by the 7th research framework of the European Commission. The project is implemented by a consortium of research institutions in 20 middle-sized and large cities in ten European states². The internationally comparative perspective allows the analysis of 79 innovations in different political, economic, social and cultural contexts and thereby gives a good insight into the establishment and functioning of social innovations and social entrepreneurship. The project concentrates on the policy fields of labour market, child care and housing. Most of the innovations (80 per cent) studied in the project are new services to enhance social cohesion and participation of different target groups. In many cases, this comprises the establishment of new networks of service-providing institutions in order to bridge gaps between existing facilities and to offer one-stop concepts to access information and services.

The contextual embeddedness of innovations in the respective local contexts is one of the main research areas of the project. Through this, anecdotal evidence of successful innovations shall be supplemented by questions regarding conditions of success and failure. These, in turn, shall help social innovators and entrepreneurs in establishing and scaling successful undertakings in different contexts. Therefore, apart from establishing the general context of welfare policy in Germany and its historical development, local discourses were studied. In order to establish the frames underlying the welfare discourse in Münster as well as its structures, a document analysis of local newspaper articles and documents of the city council was complemented by expert interviews and focus groups with stakeholders from local politics, public administration, civil society and local entrepreneurship. Before presenting the findings of this analysis, a short overview of the locational context of Münster needs to be given.

4. MÜNSTER AS A MIDDLE-SIZED CITY IN A RURAL AREA

The local context of welfare policy in Münster is, on the one hand, influenced by the national welfare regime as categorised by Esping-Andersen. The German welfare state is generally characterised as conservative-corporatist. This implies a traditionally strong role of welfare organisations and their incorporation in public service provision. The welfare state shall ensure maintenance of achieved standards and statuses through rather broad social insurance systems (Esping-Andersen 1996).

On the other hand, specific local circumstances form the basis of distinctive local systems within the German welfare state. Münster is a middle-sized city of app. 280,000 inhabitants in the north-west of Germany and serves as the centre of the rural region of *Münsterland*. The city has a long tradition as a city of administration and services, or "white-collar" city since the 19th century. By this, it forms a contrast to the neighbouring Ruhr area which is predominantly an industrial region. Also today the largest employers in Münster are the University and the two Universities of Applied Science, regional and local administrations as well as a few companies. This leads to a high demand for well-educated workers. The unemployment rate is comparatively low (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2013). In contrast to the general trend in North Rhine-Westphalia, the population of Münster is increasing. This is in part due to the labour market, since the growing service sector is attracting workers. The quota of non-German inhabitants is lower than the average of the *Bundesland* (Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen 2012). All in all, Münster's economic situation can be rated positively and it has not been hit as hard by crises as other regions.

²These are: Germany: Berlin (Friedrichshain), Münster; France: Lille, Nantes; United Kingdom: Birmingham, Dover; Italy: Milan, Brescia; Croatia: Zagreb, Varazdin; Netherlands: Amsterdam, Nijmegen; Poland: Warsaw, Plock; Sweden: Stockholm, Malmö; Switzerland: Genève, Bern; Spain: Barcelona, Pamplona.

Culturally, Münster is strongly influenced by its tradition as a catholic centre and diocesan town. For a long time, a conservative core dominated Münster's culture, which can still be seen today in the predominance of catholic social organisations. Accordingly, the party of the Christian Democrats (*Christlich Demokratische Union, CDU*) dominated the local city council for a long time. However, since the 1970s this position has been challenged by a growing importance of the Social Democrats (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD*). Also the Green Party (*Bündnis 90/Die Grünen/GAL Münster*) gained a stronghold within the student milieu. Today, the CDU has to work closely together with the SPD and the Green Party since the party enjoys just a very tiny majority in the local government.

5. THE LOCAL WELFARE DISCOURSE

Resulting from the context described above, two possible outcomes can be anticipated: the lack of clear majorities in the city council and the rather conservative environment could lead to a strong perseverance of traditions and existing structures, if compromises between the different local milieus cannot be found. If such compromises are possible, however – for example if interests are not considerably divergent – widely accepted decisions can be taken. The question resulting from these scenarios is: are there collaboration and agreement on social policy between different groups in Münster? If so, how are decisions taken?

In order to answer these questions, we have to go back in time about 20 years. At that time, many stakeholders in Münster feared a decline of the city, due to relocations of regional administration and companies and to plans of other cities (e.g. to build a large shopping-mall that might pull visitors away from Münster). In order to counter these trends, a broad advocacy coalition transcending political cleavages was formed around the common goal of strengthening Münster's competitiveness *vis-à-vis* other cities. This goal brought together stakeholders from the University, especially from the Institute of Business and Administration with members of local public administration. In the process, they were joined by representatives of the local entrepreneurship, politicians and civil society. This cooperation between the University and the municipality was perhaps the most crucial novelty at that time, since both milieus had been rather separated beforehand. The cleavage had been exacerbated by the fact that the universities are legally institutions of the *Bundesländer* in Germany and that the question of "*Zuständigkeit*" (which can be translated as "responsibility" or "competence") played an important role in the behaviour of municipal actors:

*"... the city has always had an interior view, thinking about 'what are my competences and what are those of the others', but not attempting to regard an issue in its entirety."*³

The lack of collaboration between the two institutions was overcome mainly by the business sector and the respective faculty at the University approaching the public authorities in order to conjointly develop a policy for Münster's future. Through the application of marketing strategies, the challenges mentioned above – posed by the economic situation in Münster in the 1980s and 1990s – should be addressed. Public actors, especially local politicians, were reluctant in the beginning but finally integrated into the coalition, which was eased by the growth of the alternative students' milieu and the entering of people from outside Münster (cf. focus group III). The growing awareness for mobility was able to break up the former passiveness of the municipality: *"the city has always cherished the status quo; it has not prised the option."*⁴

Following the common perception of the need to promote Münster as a location for business, an integrated city marketing was established as an owner-operated municipal enterprise (*Münster Marketing*). The difficulty in this process was the integration of a high diversity of stakeholders: each

³ „... die Stadt immer aus dem Innenblick nach außen geguckt hat und Zuständigkeiten, also wofür bin ich jetzt zuständig und wofür sind die zuständig, aber nicht, sagen wir mal, versucht hat, die Dinge als Ganzes zu betrachten.“ (leader of *Münster Marketing* in focus group III).

⁴ „die Stadt hatte immer eine hohe Wertschätzung für den Status Quo, sie hatte nicht eine Wertschätzung für die Option.“ (former mayor in focus group III).

department has jealously monitored its sphere of competence and exerted its influence so as to be adequately represented in the new structures and processes (cf. focus group III). To achieve a balance of the diverging interests and positions, a long dialogic process (more than ten years) was needed. The final decision to establish the agency was facilitated by the fact that marketing had not formerly been an issue in public administration, so no department felt their domain severely threatened by the new distribution of tasks. Participation of different groups and citizens also played a major role to achieve a broad as possible acceptance while strong and transparent leadership was needed to ensure implementation and compliance. When the issue was laid out before the municipal politics, first of all a proposal was filed to discuss it comprehensively instead of the usual procedure of debating it within the different departments. This approach – described as an “*administrative innovation*”⁵ – facilitated agreement along with the institutionalisation of regular planning meetings between different departments as well as other long-term network structures. Through this regular collaboration, a firm coalition of actors sharing major problem perceptions (e.g. fearing a decline in the labour market situation) and political goals (especially strengthening Münster as a business location and as an attractive living environment) was established.

As the most important factor, however, stakeholders underline that a change in perceptions and municipal “culture” was necessary. This contained a change in the self-perception of the city: from a rather conservative, provincial town to the “most liveable community” (as attested by the international LivCom-Award 2004). It also contained a change in the philosophy of administration, towards a more comprehensive image of the municipality:

*“It is a change process, a huge one, and if you want to do it successfully, it is not just either bottom-up or top-down, but both in dialogue, and you have to bring about that change in the culture, in the basic attitudes.”*⁶

The city’s marketing agency is currently integrated in most local decision processes. Even though they are thus engaged in a broad spectrum of topics, a preference for lighthouse projects⁷ as well as prizes and public campaigns to stimulate investments in the city and advocate it as a lucrative location worth living and working in can be observed. This focus corresponds to the concept of a “festivisation” of local policies as defined by Häußermann and Siebel (1993). The external perception of the city shall accordingly be maintained and further improved, which also includes questions of urban development, architecture and a focus on the attractiveness of the city centre. The position of Münster in the competition of communities all over Germany serves as the crucial indicator of success for the advocacy coalition supporting this process.

The members of this coalition have – willingly as well as unconsciously – established a frame of competitiveness and investment that pervades a whole range of different topics at the local level. This discourse is also used in order to prevent the insistence on individual interests since the overarching aim of strengthening the locality can be advocated as lying in each and everybody’s interests. A positive image of Münster is generally assumed to promote financial investments, support the local labour market and further improve the city’s economic situation. The specific advantages of individual projects are thus secondary, since they are more likely to incite protest and individual dissent. Insofar, the arguments are used strategically to underline common goals and facilitate networking and cooperation (cf. focus group III).

Through the deep-seated incorporation of the marketing agency as well as of its basic concepts in policy-making in Münster, the advocacy coalition presented above is not only relevant for the

⁵ „das war nochmal eine verwaltungstheoretische Innovation.“ (member of the Office for Urban Development, City and Traffic Planning in focus group III).

⁶ „das ist ja ein Change-Prozess, ein ganz gewaltiger, (und wenn man den) erfolgreich machen will, also dann ist ja nicht nur Top-Down oder Bottom-Up in einem Dialog, man muss ja beides zusammen bringen, sondern man muss diese Veränderung in der Kultur, in den Grundeinstellungen mit bewegen.“ (former Professor for Marketing at the University of Münster in focus group III).

⁷ Even though, apart from such lighthouse projects, the necessity for interim small successes or “quick wins” to ensure commitment and acceptance of the approach is also acknowledged (cf. focus group III).

business sector. Instead, the core frames of competitiveness and investment also have a strong impact on the local welfare discourse. Good economic performance and growth enhancement are forming the levelling pole against which policies are measured. In the social sector, this is complemented by a frame of prevention: instead of classic curing and caring policies, preventive instruments are preferred, which are perceived as being economically more efficient. Measures are directed towards ensuring that all persons and groups are able to participate as successfully as possible in the (labour) market. Thus, the frame of competitiveness is carried forward from the city level to the individual level of each citizen. One example of this approach is the setting-up of expansive child care facilities which is advocated as both an “investment” in the future of the children and as an encouragement for the labour market participation of their parents. At the same time, Münster shall be presented as a family-friendly city to outsiders and thereby attract investors and companies in addition to well-educated young people.

One of the strengths of the coalition is its powerful cohesion which is assured through small trusted networks which work together on specific topics. At the same time, the cohesion of the networks hinders the integration of new actors who enter the field or who try to promote policies or projects without connecting them to the dominant frame. This leads to a situation in which most social policy measures are presented as stimulating either the competitiveness of the city directly – for example the renovation of run-down neighbourhoods in certain districts – or as strengthening the ability of certain groups in participating in the market – for instance education measures as “investments in human capital”. The discourse thus seems to establish a context in which social entrepreneurs need to comply with the dominant frame in order to secure financial or advocatory support.

At the same time, the willingness of public actors to provide funding is decreasing. This is related to the self-perception of the municipality: stemming from the catholic tradition of the local welfare system, subsidiarity plays a vital role. This means that the most basic unit (e.g. the family or the community) should be responsible for supporting weaker members of the society. This founding principle is reinforced by the strong reliance on market mechanisms in Münster:

“There must be a framework that offers incentives for investors. In the context of the development of the city centre 15 years ago we complained that there were no investments. But then it started to work due to a consequent development strategy and investments were indeed made. It is not always the city itself who invests. Rather, there must be a suitable climate for people to say: I dare to invest and I believe that I can achieve some profit.”⁸

Financial intervention by public actors is merely agreed upon as a measure of last resort, as shown for example in an urban rehabilitation programme in the neighbourhood *Osthuesheide* in Münster. Here, stakeholders only agreed on investing in renovation measures since the area was on the verge of serious deterioration. In the long term, however, the investments are even expected to be profitable through sustainable rent incomes. The comparatively high financial involvement of public actors in this case seems to have been rendered possible also by the strong connection of the topic (urban development) with the dominant frame. In instances where this is not the case, financial support is a lot harder or even impossible to achieve, as will be shown in more detail below.

⁸ „Es müssen Rahmenbedingungen da sein, dass tatsächlich Anreiz ist, zum Beispiel in eine Innenstadtentwicklung, die wir vor 15 Jahren hatten, haben wir beklagt, dass es keinerlei Investitionen gab in der Innenstadt. [...] Und dann hat das aber durch eine konsequente Innenstadtentwicklung funktioniert, dass die Investitionen eben doch gekommen sind. Es ist nicht die Stadt selber immer, die investiert. Es muss ein Klima da sein, dass Leute auch sagen: Ich traue mich, das zu tun und ich glaube auch, dass ich davon dann auch einen Gewinn habe und leben kann und so [...].“ (Interview with the head of *Münster Marketing*).

6. INNOVATIONS IN THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

In the following, two innovations from those studied within the WILCO project in Münster will be presented in more detail. The dynamics between the innovative ideas, the dominant discourse and actors' constellations will be analysed in order to establish the role of discourses for social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

6.1. Child care policy: prevention visits

As mentioned above, the dominant discursive frame in Münster extends also into local welfare policies. In this policy area, not only competitiveness, but also investment and prevention are important notions in the local discourse. For example, the expansion of child care facilities is viewed as an investment into the future: *"Münster has taken up the cause of the reconciliation of work and private life. This is the topic of the future per se"*⁹, a representative of the Family Office explains in an interview. Thereby, high birth rates as well as high labour market participation of young parents shall be achieved.

One recent innovation in the field of child care policies in Münster is the establishment of prevention visits by the local Youth Office¹⁰ in 2008. Such visits have already been launched in other German cities¹¹; however, their implementation in Münster includes certain distinctive features. In general, the prevention visits are an offer to parents of new-born children, who receive a visit to their home to be informed about the different service offers for families in their respective city and other relevant topics, among others parental benefits, child care facilities and preventive health care offers. These visits shall assist the parents with the upbringing of their children and at the same time improve child protection and prevention of child neglect and/or abuse through an early contact between families and the Youth Office: *"We have to begin with prevention and must be careful not to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted. This is our standard"*¹². This argumentative support for the visits complies with the dominant discursive frames in Münster: prevention as a more efficient instrument than curing policies as well as investments into human capital as a strategy to ensure active participation of citizens. In this stance, the empowerment of young parents and their children plays a crucial role. Concerning the reputation of Münster as a whole, the perceived improvement in child care promotes the image of a "family-friendly" city to attract young, well-educated workers. This benefit is also actively used by the city marketing agency (cf. interview with the head of the Youth Office).

Simultaneously, the prevention visits aim at adjusting the rather negative image of the Youth Office prevalent in Germany, which is built up also through supra-regional media.¹³ Instead of a control institution threatening to take children away from their families, the Youth Office shall be perceived as a service provider and partner of the parents, supporting them if problems arise. To create a friendly atmosphere, the employees of the office who carry out the visits welcome the new-born child with a small gift.

⁹ „Münster hat sich ganz groß auf die Fahnen geschrieben, die Vereinbarkeit von Familien und Beruf. Das ist das Thema der Zukunft schlechthin.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

¹⁰ The Youth Office is responsible for child protection (§1 Abs. 3 S.3 SGB VIII). For this aim, the office can intervene in families where the wellbeing of the children is threatened and can, as last resort, decide to take children out of their families. Due to this, the Youth Office has a negative reputation in Germany, which is aggravated by the role of the Youth Office during the Third Reich and in the German Democratic Republic. With its staff of around 1,400 employees, the Youth Office in Münster is the largest administrative unit within the municipality (Source: Youth Office Münster 2012: 163).

¹¹ The original so called 'Dormagener Modell' is the title of a local program which aimed to develop instruments for preventing child abuse and intrafamilial violence. This pilot project was developed in the German municipality Dormagen in 2006. Many other municipalities were convinced of this new concept and adapted it (Source: Website of Dormagen, <http://www.dormagen.de/>).

¹² „Das ist auch unser Standard: Mit Prävention anfangen, noch bevor das Kind in den Brunnen gefallen ist.“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

¹³ Source: Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

“About ten years ago (...), the Youth Office had the image of a supervisory authority. If its employees detected any irregularities, they might take the children from their families. We have to get away from this image because we are service providers. Our job is to assist parents in educating and developing their children to happy and capable human beings (...). If you talk about these questions in a situation which has positive connotations, parents will find it easy to remember even in stressful times (...). This is a door opener.”¹⁴

This aim points to a changing understanding of the role of public administration. It is increasingly seen as a service provider, taking a more pronounced clients' perspective and pursuing collaborative service provision.

One of the particularities of the “Münster model” compared to other cities is the fact that all families, not only those in deprived neighbourhoods, are visited. The head of the Youth Office explains that she met political resistance towards her plans to carry out these visits for the whole city area from actors fearing state interventionism in family life: *“Then I said, either all or none (...) child protection issues affect everyone (...) it is a visitation service, not an inspection visit.”¹⁵* The dynamic role and dedication of the Office's head was one of the crucial factors for the success of the innovation while neither civil society, nor local politics played an active part in this process. Owing to her central standing and her good connections to different stakeholders in the city, the head of the Youth Office was able to anticipate potential resistance early. She underlines that this was important for being able to react timely and achieve a supporting coalition of actors. In order to accomplish this, she made some minor adjustments to the concept: instead of connecting the visits to the social work department, she created a new branch. Through this, the notion of “inspection visits” could be turned into a friendlier one of assistance and support visits acceptable to the majority of politicians (cf. interview with the head of the Youth Office).

The local media praises the program as “a good step”¹⁶. For evaluation, Münster takes part in an empirical study about German municipalities which have introduced the instrument of prevention visits. In this, the instrument and its specific features in Münster are evaluated positively (Frese/Günther 2012). According to the Youth Office, many families did not know about the provided services until the prevention team informed them about the different offers available for families in Münster. These experiences encourage the Youth Office to continue the prevention visits. With their fixed budget, they can be seen as an integral part of their prevention programme and as firmly institutionalised within the field of local welfare politics in Münster. This is also apparent in the merger of the prenatal advice and the prevention team in 2010. In June 2011, the unit “Prenatal advice, prevention services and family visits” was founded. This step enables a better networking between early services and the expansion of existing cooperative governance structures (Youth Office Münster 2012: 85).

At the same time, the role of the Youth Office is that of an information service, pinpointing the relevant support agencies and institutions. Not all of the services open to families are provided by public actors – instead, there is a considerable amount of private providers.¹⁷ In order to improve the

¹⁴ „Jugendamt hat in Deutschland bis vor zehn Jahren (...) immer so das Image gehabt (...), die kommen kontrollieren und wenn die sehen, dass was nicht gut läuft, dann nehmen die einem die Kinder weg. Von diesem Image müssen wir einfach weg, weil wir sind Dienstleister. Wir sind dazu da, Eltern in ihrer Aufgabe zu unterstützen, ihre Kinder zu glücklichen, lebensfähigen Menschen zu machen (...). Wenn man in einer positiv besetzten Situation über solche Fragen spricht, dann fällt es Eltern sehr leicht, in einer stressbeladenen Situation sich zu erinnern (...). Das ist ein Türöffner.“ (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

¹⁵ „Dann habe gesagt, entweder alle oder keiner und Kinderschutzthemen berühren hier alle in der Stadt, da kann ich Ihnen die Zahlen geben und das ist ja auch ein netter Besuchsdienst und nicht hier ein Kontrolldienst.“ (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).

¹⁶ „Reicht ein Besuch?“ a comment of the local journalist Karin Völker in WN 05/06/08.

¹⁷ One example are child care facilities: of all groups in such facilities, 34,8% are today provided by Catholic organisations, while the share of the municipality amounts to 23,7% (Stadt Münster 2012: 10).

services or rather the fitting of services and needs, the municipality is not attempting to integrate services into public programmes, but is rather guiding the parents and families to the correct contact persons and/or institutions. This conforms to the traditional notion of subsidiarity outlined above.

6.2. Labour market/integration policies: MAMBA

Another example of social innovations in Münster is MAMBA (*Münsters Aktionsprogramm für MigrantInnen und Bleibeberechtigte zur Arbeitsmarktintegration*), a local project for the labour market integration of migrants and persons with a right to stay. It follows the general perception – dominating in civil society as well as among public actors in Münster – that labour market participation is crucial for the social integration of migrants (cf. interview with the founder of the GGUA).

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

MAMBA was originally developed in 2008 by the local refugee relief organisation GGUA (*Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung Asylsuchender e.V.*), which is considered as one of the most experienced organisations in this field in Germany. The project is established as an intersectoral network, linking partners from the non-profit, for-profit and public sector. The network efficiently joins different competences: whereas the GGUA has good access to the target group, the other institutions are familiar with Münster's labour market and have contacts to local enterprises. The project's main tasks are to counsel and qualify migrants as well as to find employers willing to offer them jobs. The GGUA serves as the network hub. One of the programme's main qualities is that the GGUA is widely-known and well-reputed among the target group. Refugees are more comfortable addressing a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) to seek work than accessing a public institution such as the *Jobcenter*, as the interviews with MAMBA employees indicate. At the same time, the popularity of the organisation beyond the city of Münster has helped to promote the project nation-wide. However, MAMBA cannot be seen as a "lighthouse project" for the location of Münster, since it is confined to the field of refugee policies which is hardly ever used for city marketing purposes (cf. interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader).

MAMBA follows an empowering approach, including language courses and further training such as computer courses. The individual competences of the participants are perceived as the building stones for their potential contribution to the local labour market. As the interviews indicate, employers are interested in the MAMBA project as they consider participants as highly motivated for most kinds of jobs and also for temporary work. This motivation not only stems from financial reasons since employment can even lead to improvements in their residence status.

MAMBA receives multilevel funding from several institutions. The largest share is provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) whereas the city of Münster has contributed comparatively small sums twice on an *ad hoc* basis to ensure economic survival of the project. However, funding by the EU and the federal government is limited to the end of the year 2013. Thus, it seems as if the network will be terminated at the beginning of 2014. Nonetheless, MAMBA is seen as a big success by many local stakeholders. The success of the project in terms of the number of participants and the percentage placed in paid labour is also established in internal evaluations of the project as well as those of the federal programme (Mirbach et al. 2013; Mirbach/Schobert 2011; interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader).

In general, MAMBA is in line with Münster's local discourse: strengthening the employability of refugees and migrants follows the main paradigmatic lines of Münster's welfare system outlined above, since it improves their individual competitiveness and saves expenses from the public purse in terms of social benefits.

*"In the field of labour market policies, we can more easily say 'let us join', because you can also argue for potential cost reductions for the municipal budget, because you can argue that it is good if people earn their own living."*¹⁸

However, it is not integrated into the core of the dominant frame: the labour market integration of refugees can hardly be used to promote Münster as an attractive location for business investments. Instead, the founder of the GGUA and the leader of MAMBA both point to the fact that external funding was necessary to implement the project, even though local political and administrative actors support the ideas underlying it. So far, no local actor has indicated a willingness to act as sponsor after the end of funding by the ESF (cf. interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader). Thus, it seems that the availability of external funds opened up a window of opportunity for the project that would otherwise not have been realised.

Regarding the support of local stakeholders and local citizenship for the activities of the GGUA as a whole, the founder of the organisation underlines the importance of the concepts and perceptions transported through public statements and the media: while it is rather easy to gain support for projects to assist refugees (which implies a humanistic focus), the notion of "Asylbetrüger" (asylum fraud) leads to negative reactions. He emphasizes that the organisation is constantly attempting to strengthen the humanitarian notion of the subject of migrants and refugees and that support for their policies among citizenship is generally high. However, he mentions that he meets resistance when he is trying to address concealed racism in the city: *"they would rather fork out money than openly address the issue of racism in Münster."* (interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader). Apparently, the overwhelming majority of politicians and members of public administration are not including racism in their problem perceptions, which is why statements on this topic are excluded from public discourse. Evidently, the attempt to establish a counter-discourse for the field of migrant policy has so far not been successful.

Even though, influencing the local discourse is possible, albeit in incremental steps and sometimes requiring structural changes. One of the most important steps for securing public support as an NGO – as underlined by the founder of GGUA – was the spin-off of refugee policies from the regulatory agency (*Ordnungsamt*) into an autonomous office. Not only did this imply a valorisation of the topic and the responsible personnel, it also led to a change of discourse: the regulatory agency has a specific view on refugees – similar to that of the police – stemming from its professional perspective and competence. The newly created office, instead, was more closely connected to social policies, which entails a rather different perspective and linguistic framing of the topic. This more benevolent view on refugees and migrants eased collaboration between NGOs and public administration in this field (cf. interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader). The improved collaboration led to a series of projects and service contracts between the municipality and the GGUA. However, there is still a difference between the GGUA and other established providers of general social services in Münster, especially the Catholic organisation of Caritas. The founder of the GGUA stresses their privileged access to the public administration which leads to many municipally financed projects being awarded to established welfare organisations instead of smaller NGOs (cf. interview with the founder of GGUA). Therefore, the survival of the GGUA is dependent on private contributions. The founder of the GGUA underlines:

¹⁸ „im Arbeitsmarktbereich können wir leichter sagen ‚lasst uns da mitreden‘, weil man auch über Einsparungsmöglichkeiten für den städtischen Haushalt argumentieren kann, weil man auch darüber sprechen kann dass es doch gut ist, wenn jemand für seinen Lebensunterhalt selbst sorgen kann“ (MAMBA project leader in the interview with the founder of the GGUA and MAMBA project leader).

"They [the administration] would never relinquish their own interests in order for us to have a solid basis."¹⁹

Hence, the case of MAMBA shows a different effect of the local discourse and the coalition established through it: the GGUA as the responsible institution of the project remains outside of the dominant coalition, being admitted as partner solely on a temporary basis depending on the respective topic addressed. In areas which are more easily connected to the dominant frames – such as the integration of migrants through labour market integration as a well-delineated field – integration is possible, if funding is provided by other institutions. In other areas – for example regarding the issue of racism – integration is less probable and the GGUA takes the role of the opposition to the dominating coalition.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Hegemony in Münster

The case study has shown that there is a broad consensus of different groups in Münster around the goal of promoting Münster's competitiveness. This has been established as the dominant frame for local discourses and has led to hegemony of this aim and its attached rules of discourse. The high diversity of different stakeholders supporting this objective and their influence in different institutional settings has consolidated the hegemony of the frame of competitiveness and investment. Through structural changes, the dominant local actors (especially from public administration and *Münster Marketing*) have become involved in most local decision-making processes and in these environments act as the "intellectuals" reproducing the hegemony.

For those actors who are members of this coalition maintaining the dominant frames promoting new ideas is rather easy. They can rely on a broad network of supporters, they can easily adapt their argumentation to the logics of the discourse and they can retrieve information about potential resistance at early stages of the intended innovation. This gives them the chance to adjust their plans or arguments in order to achieve wide-spread endorsement. Such a development could be observed in the case of the prevention visits initiated by the head of the Youth Office in Münster. Though she mentions serious political resistance against her idea – in particular against also visiting well-off families not corresponding to the dominant image of a socially deprived "problematic case" – she was able to implement it successfully and achieve secure and sustainable funding by structurally creating a new department for the visits instead of directly connecting them to the field of child protection.

Other groups which are outside the main coalition can be co-opted by the hegemony. One example is MAMBA: a few of the aims of the GGUA have been integrated into the hegemony by the promoters of the dominant frame. This is strictly limited to the narrow thematic field of the project: the need for migrants to be able to earn their own living, which is by now widely acknowledged in the city. Other aims of the responsible organisation, the GGUA, are rejected by the dominant actors since they do not fit the dominant frame. These are blocked by the boundaries of compromise formed by the core aims and values of the coalition (in this case: Münster's competitiveness compared to other cities). One example for this is the issue of racism, which remains a topic that is pushed aside by local political and administrative actors. The reluctance of public actors to admit covert racism to be an issue in Münster might stem from the fact that such a discourse runs counter to the general aim of promoting the city as a modern, pluralist and open-minded location.

This gives rise to an ambivalent position of the GGUA in Münster: while it is on the one hand partially integrated in the hegemony and is dependent on the openness of the administration for achieving its main aim (i.e. the improvement of the living situation for migrants in Münster) it is on the other hand

¹⁹ „Sie würden aber niemals ihre eigenen Interessen zurückstecken, um dafür zu sorgen, dass wir eine vernünftige Basis haben.“ (Founder of the GGUA in the interview with him and MAMBA project leader).

an opponent, pointing to flaws in local migrant and refugee policy. This function as counter-pole is accentuated by the founder of the GGUA, who has for more than 30 years been acting as a “watch-dog” for local and national refugee policies. Therefore, he does not seem to be interested in becoming a fully-fledged member of the hegemonic coalition.

The possibility to exert influence through the distribution of resources can be seen as an instrument of power of the municipality. Those interests that cannot be co-opted might in some cases still be forced to comply with the dominant rules of discourse in order to obtain funding. This possibility has been voiced by the head of the GGUA when he pointed to the fact that some cities are imposing service contracts on NGOs which explicitly prohibit objections against municipal decisions in the field of refugee law. While he emphasised that he would currently not be willing to accede to such conditions, he admitted that this might be difficult to maintain in times of tight financial situation of an NGO. This shows that the relation between the hegemony and the GGUA or MAMBA is at the border between a co-opted group (aligned through the moral-cultural dominance of the hegemony) and a ruled subaltern group (domineered through coercion by financial means) (Opratko 2012: 35-39).

7.2. Discourses and social innovation

The innovations studied in Münster show that social innovators and entrepreneurs need to be sensitive to the dominant goals, problem perceptions and frames of the local discourse in which they act. Even though Münster displayed a particularly unified hegemony and a very broad coalition, discourse analysis in other cities within WILCO has also confirmed the power of words for social innovation implementation. At times there might also be two opposing discourses struggling for hegemony in a setting. This gives innovators more leeway to choose coalition partners, while a well-established hegemony as shown in the Münster case study will narrow these options considerably.

The strength of the hegemony not only depends on the intensity of collaboration and networks, but also on the resources commanded by them. This is also true for the potential strength of an innovator or entrepreneur: public administrative actors have more resources at their immediate disposal than non-profit actors who mainly have to rely on external support (e.g. in terms of funding). The cases studied in this paper suggest that the more dependent an actor is on external support – be it in terms of funding, of access to target groups, of public support etc. – the more important the alignment with the dominant discourse becomes. Actors from the coalition establishing the dominant discourse, for example, underline that broad agreement about the most prevalent problems of Münster was just as crucial for the success in changing former structures as the support by the mayor. This opened up the possibility of changing the structure of the administration in a way that favoured the establishment of the city marketing agency and its involvement in various policy fields. This finally led to the firmly established hegemony. Thus, as illustrated in section 2 of this paper, discourses and therefore discursive hegemony are not some pre-determined, definite fact, but are instead socially constructed through the interplay of different actors in the medium and long term.

Consequently, not only do social innovators and entrepreneurs need to be sensitive to the dominant frames, but they can also attempt to influence them in the long run. Nevertheless, this requires a “historic bloc”, including potent promoters and partners to install an alternative frame. For the context of Münster, however, the chances for this are low, since the existing hegemony is supported by a wide range of actors from local politics and public administration, local entrepreneurship as well as civil society. Those actors are institutionally well-placed to maintain the hegemony as long as there are no other, more pressing problems which contradict the dominant frame.

Most changes in discourse will thus only be achieved in small steps. For example, the innovations brought about by the Youth Office needed a shift in the image of the child protection policies as an issue for socially disadvantaged families, which could be achieved through the far-reaching networks of the office’s head. The case of the GGUA on the other hand underlines the long time periods necessary for changes without such broad support structures: the founder of the organisation has been active in the field of refugee policies in Münster for more than 30 years. In the beginning, his

NGO was perceived as the “enemy” by the responsible bodies within local administration. Step by step, collaboration was established through common projects, discussions and even structural changes. Close networking as in the case of MAMBA further helps to influence discourses at the small scale, especially regarding specific areas of refugee policies such as labour market integration. In this field, the competences of the NGO are widely accepted and their actions are in line with municipal interests: the promotion of the labour market integration can be advocated as saving local fiscal resources which would otherwise be spent on social benefits. Nonetheless, this concerns only one small aspect of the thematic field of the GGUA. Moreover, the collaboration is fragile: further lobbying work directed against municipal actions and decisions can threaten support, which is usually granted only on a short-term basis – compared to the routine funding of well-established charities and other organisations in social policy (cf. interview with the founder of GGUA and MAMBA project leader).

The lesson to be learned for social innovators and entrepreneurs is therefore to be sensitive to the dominant local discourses, their underlying values, goals and rules. In order to ensure short-term support, aligning the proposed undertaking to these frames might be helpful or, in the case of a strong and closed hegemony, even necessary. In the long run, however, proponents of a specific topic or project can try to influence the local discourses according to their own interests if they can form support networks. Knowledge about the institutional embeddedness of the discourse coalition(s) and potential allies will again prove most helpful in this attempt.

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