

,Social Meta-structures' As Strategic Planning Tools Facilitating Sustainability Of Fairness

by **Per Traasdahl**

visual artist, leading editor of ArtSourceLab
pt@artsourcecelab.net

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Artsourcelab

Chausseestr. 48
D-10115 Berlin
Germany
Tel./Fax +49 30 6273 7813
www.artsourcecelab.net

This paper is available as MS-Powerpoint presentation, 20 Min., English narration, incl. lots of more photos.
It is contained on a Windows CD-Rom, also including an extensive Documentaiton on the project 1001 Doors
(38 Min. Powerpoint, German narration) and a PDF-File of a theoretical poster on the Community FairWays
project. Contact: cd@artsourcecelab.net

Content

1	On Social Meta-Structures and cfw ToolSets	3
2	Participation versus dedication – in need for <i>optimal instability</i>.....	4
3	1001 Doors, a project with prisoners	5
3.1	For participating prisoners the conditions are	5
3.2	The baselines for our intervention are	5
4	Incentives for facilitating partners.....	7
5	System sequences of 1001 Doors.....	8
5.1	Acupunctural interventions (Fig.21).....	8
5.2	Documentation of learning and transfer (Fig.22)	8
5.3	Consolidation and Change (Fig.23)	8
6	TeenKom, self organized teenage job networks	9
6.1	Remote-controlled Intervention (Fig.24-26)	9
6.2	Technical Supervision (Fig.27)	9
6.3	Local Co-operative Project Groups (Fig.28).....	9
6.4	Central System Support Agency	9
7	The TeenKom Strategy: Money, Power and Fun	10
8	The Meta-language of project conception including <i>for-profit</i> and <i>non-profit</i> stakeholders	11
9	New Democracy Tools	12
10	Advice to policy-makers in public and private sectors.....	13
10.1	support <i>only</i> the constitution of a project-system	13
10.2	demanding long-term strategies tailored to cause sustainable self-organization	13
10.3	stay financially out of project operations as conditions for self-organization realize.....	13
11	The Community FairWays ToolSet #1.....	14
11.1	Community-Based Stakeholder Monitoring (CBSM)	14
11.2	Stakeholders Balanced Question Board (SBQB)	15
12	On ArtSourceLab and the author	16
13	Illustrations	17
Fig.1:	The Community FairWays Project.....	17
Fig.2:	Lay-Out for a Social Meta-Structure	17
Fig.3-6:	Art bridging mental and social instability	18
Fig.7-20:	1001 Doors, a project with prisoners	18
Fig.21-23:	1001 Doors, system sequences	19
Fig.24-28:	TeenKom, self-organized teenager networks	20
Fig.29-30:	New democracy-tools	21

1 On Social Meta-Structures and cfw ToolSets

The concept of Social Meta-Structures was developed within the ArtSourceLab Network in 2003 as a move to study the way we intervene with strategic project ideas. While working together with a multidisciplinary circle of experts on a concept for shrinking cities in the spring of 2004, the concept of Social Meta-Structures expanded into a number of new concepts and we gave this development the name Community FairWays (cfw) with the subtitle *Decision-Making In Communities, ToolSets and CaseReports*. ([Fig.1](#), www-c-f-w.net)

A Social Meta-Structure facilitates and hosts inter-sectorial partnerships presumed to enable a sustainable development for a specific scenario ([Fig.2](#)). Prior to such establishment, however, many difficult negotiations and interventions happen. We call the strategic design guiding this development a ToolSet. It accounts for the complete development leading towards a self-organized system, including the processes before and after an on-site launch among target clients.

A cfw ToolSet is like a software within a social action frame. It consists of a number of sequences (single tools) of which several will be launched prior to a Social Meta-Structure on-site launch (among target clients). cfw ToolSets aim to support and challenge human resources in all stages of building specific communities. Like open source software, cfw ToolSets are extendible and can be modified and appropriated to other specific scenarios.

The point of operating with ToolSets is to say that every scenario is unique and must be structured uniquely but not from scratch. The relation between ToolSets and eventually realized structures is like the relation between a written play and the final theatre piece. In the course of structuring the actual piece, all components of the written play will be modelled by the director, the actors, the stage designer, the technical supervisors and by the financial facilitators. The theatre piece can only function when all partakers cooperate. This requires a broad mixture of decision-making and negotiation.

In this paper I will outline two developing Projects with almost opposite community building strategies. As introduction, I will draw a perspective on psychic premises for self-organization deriving from our work with traumatized refugees.

2 Participation versus dedication – in need for *optimal instability*

Participation most often requires that citizens challenge norm-sets of their context. Even in the very early phase of participation, each new move resembles small intervals of self-organized action. Participation is then a rather modest term for the kind of action taking place inside and outside the mind of a participant. Collective processes of decision-making are rather signified by continuous re-challenged moments of *dedication* in the minds of targeted individuals and groups.

Our mind, the brain and its feedback systems in the body will recede in dissociation causing fragmentation or forced dedication unless it is capable of sustaining the shifting Now's of reality and form a self-organized medium for association. In trauma treatment the medium for such a capability is characterized with the term Safe Place.

Since a Now alone really doesn't exist, at least, it is constantly already gone, governance of a safe place medium requires a *mentally strategic shifting* in and out of Now's while not mistaking any one Now, any one appearance of reality as sustainable alone. Hence, the base for our mental well-being, the premise for any dedication to enhance capabilities of decision-making, can be characterized as a governance of mental instability, an *optimal instability*.

In the social domain factual objects, places and spaces bridge our psychic instability with the omnipresent social instability. Artworks serve this function ([Fig.3-6](#)), but also nature or any other circumstance can happen to play this role.

3 1001 Doors, a project with prisoners

In the project 1001 Doors, old 100 Kilo heavy prison doors serve as symbolic containers for questions and imagination concerning the social instability of transferring prisoners to the labour market. (see [Fig.7-20](#))

3.1 For participating prisoners the conditions are

- **We Go From Here;** we – the supervisors - do not receive any information from prisoner records prior to the workshops and we do not demand any information about their private life.
- **We Take You Somewhere;** we do not promise any final result – any job - and we openly share our double-thoughts about what it really takes to bring out and communicate the best potential in a person.
- **Others Will See You;** participating prisoners – as well as all other participants - have to accept publication of films and photos. Inevitably, numerous sequences from the workshops would have misleading or harmful effects. So, such an up-front agreement requires trust. In effect, it also serves to install a *psychic instability* on our part reaching beyond our professional position. This disclosure of our human qualities resembles the unsettled intimacy border-lining friendship. Consequently, we are neither perceived as official persons nor as personal friends.

3.2 The baselines for our intervention are

- **Co-Authorship;** we consider not only the prisoners but all participating institutions and their representatives as co-authors in the constitution of the art project medium.
- **Process Equality;** we use film and photographs but also email-traffic and display of system formulas in our publications.
- **Rebounding Documentation;** ([Fig.12-16](#)) our extreme *output set-up* with 2-3 video cameras is also used to *channel input*. We let the prisoners film, we film the filming and the evaluations of films. This allows concepts of ones social image to realize as *encounter* and not just as verbal rationalization. The shifts between allowing re-takes and demanding one-shot filming stress the inevitable but also the relative qualities of the Now, the handling of

situations.

- **Upgrading of Imagination;** The structuring of fiction and reality is handled with equal concern and precision.
- **Dual Terminology;** We distinguish between *system terminology* and *process verbalization*. Clients should never have to feel that they have to adopt a certain way of thinking. (see also Chapter 11 and Fig.30)
- **Language Equality;** It is our job to reflect each situation and each participant and address them according to their most intelligent domain while regarding for example the task of managing and leading a situation as a language on equal terms with the spoken language.
- **Food for Thought;** ([Fig.17-18](#)) On the first workshop day we hand out questionnaires on *My Strength, My Weakness* and *My Basic Positions* while the prisoners are asked to rate all questions and given the option to propose differently phrased questions. Between workshop days a *Data-Development-Group* including a social worker and a prison officer who knows the prisoners evaluate the questionnaires. At this early stage of the process a conventional assessment would confuse and demoralize. The feedback to the prisoners is therefore concentrated into one theme and its short description. The feedback can be as the following examples:
 - Theme: ***Functional Relations***
 - Description: ***How can I change involuntary to voluntary***

And another one:

- Theme: ***At Ease***
- Description: ***Perceive things in their contrary perspectives***

Seen out of context, the statements are not particularly profound, in fact, they could be true for anyone. And this is also the point: to intervene with an uncomplicated portion of common sense, however chosen carefully for the client.

1001 Doors is currently in planning as a two year model-project in Tegel, Berlin, Germany's largest prison. In this phase we have the task of targeting the labour market and find partners facilitating employments.

4 Incentives for facilitating partners

As a platform stimulating Corporate Citizenship policies 1001 Doors will invite private but also public organizations to participate in the project. Their incentives can – apart from the employment of a released prisoner – be

- **Public Relations;** the interest in a different kind of art project, and the public esteem this can lead to.
- **Human Resources;** as learning tool for human resource departments in their dealing with optimal profiling and staff integration.
- **Organization Development;** as an object for processes in the learning organization, for example by using film from the prison-workshops for spin-off processes.

In this sense, we are not operating with the term *sponsorship*. At all steps, the motive is to share concern and disclose resources on competitive and fairness-based give-and-take premises.

5 System sequences of 1001 Doors

The system sequences of 1001 Doors are:

5.1 Acupunctural interventions ([Fig.21](#))

...in the form of only four workshop days per group, spread over two-three month, three to twelve month before release. The strong momentary effect and a large volume output serve to sustain and unite future actions in the different sectors of the project.

5.2 Documentation of learning and transfer ([Fig.22](#))

The often year-long transfer plans for prisoners including skills training-programmes are documented and archived together with protocols from monthly feedback-contact. A password-protected access allows partners and clients of the project to trace individual job-candidates in all details of their re-integration and, of course, to surf around in the extensive workshop-documentation archive. In return, partners are required to represent their organization on the platform, for instance by describing goals, challenges and current obstacles for their own organization tasks besides challenges of possible job-positions.

5.3 Consolidation and Change ([Fig.23](#))

The impact of workshop documentation, publication of prisoner potential seen within the workshops, will inevitably form a contrast to drop-out rates and failing employment. This contrast, however, will be used to further impulses suggesting reform of training measures within prison institutions and to engage the labour market as partners of such trainings.

6 TeenKom, self organized teenage job networks

1001 Doors starts out with the targeted client and then coaches him and all implied institutions on a path towards employment.

The concept TeenKom, winner of the innovation price of the [Youth and Family Foundation of Berlin](#) 2002, goes the other way around. The system sequences of TeenKom are:

6.1 Remote-controlled Intervention (Fig.24-26)

A web-based software serves as control-station for small-job centrals for teenagers in *location-based* communities like city-quarters. Member teenagers receive small-job-offers as SMS, confirm likewise, customer and teenager rate each other after the job and all have their profile represented in the TeenKom web-platform.

6.2 Technical Supervision (Fig.27)

The software has pre-configured roles and procedures like in a strategic computer game while still allowing each community to shape their own network style, for instance with their own name and logo. The pre-configuration shall enable and force the teenagers to maintain controlling and evaluation mechanisms with a minimum of supervision from grown-up's.

6.3 Local Co-operative Project Groups (Fig.28)

A TeenKom start-up is applied for by a local project group. Not just professional social workers and their organizations, but also parents, one or more companies etc. can form project groups. They have to present a catalogue of fulfilled requirements. A licence is renewed every two years.

6.4 Central System Support Agency

Basic game-rule-sets are decided centrally and protected with a licence. Main Support- and PR-partners are contracted centrally, small-job partners are always contracted locally.

7 The TeenKom Strategy: Money, Power and Fun

The TeenKom Strategy is to “leave the kids alone” and attract them with the prospect of making money and run their own network, while letting “good behaviour” happen as *side-effects*. The software game-rules shall trigger moral values made out of teenagers own collective common sense and fairness principles. The success of their doing will show very concrete as income and as positive community dynamic and not as statements from grown up’s.

8 The Meta-language of project conception including *for-profit* and *non-profit* stakeholders

The two Leading ArtSourceLab Projects 1001 Doors and TeenKom represent very different approaches to community building including *for-profit* and *non-profit* stakeholders. The only reason for such difference is the analysis of implied stakeholders positions and needs. The project Community FairWays is meant to further studies and discussions in this field and to juxtapose this with legal and financial models without which no community can process self-organization. In this field of study we develop what can be described as the Meta-language of project conception.

9 New Democracy Tools

The motive for Community FairWays is the need for new Decision-making Tools, which essentially are also New Democracy tools ([Fig.29](#)). The Projects 1001 Doors and TeenKom could neither develop gradually in a *basis-democratic decision-making process* among clients (bottom up) nor as projects launched from above by the *parliamentary democracy* (top down).

In *basis-democratic* processes we would simply stumble over the lack of hope, courage and – not to forget – a reluctance or disability among target groups to point out their own optimal challenge and not just their wishes!

In *parliamentary* processes leading to legal and financial security of the projects, we would have lost the incentive and the call for opportunity targeting *for-profit* investors.

10 Advice to policy-makers in public and private sectors

Our advice to public and private policy-makers and financial facilitators is to

10.1 support *only* the constitution of a project-system

while

10.2 demanding long-term strategies tailored to cause sustainable self-organization

(and this, of course, requires know-how about the mechanisms of self-organization)

but then to

10.3 stay financially out of project operations as conditions for self-organization realize.

A development in this direction would lead to

- **an increase of time and resources before project launch** while
- **much fewer project-ideas would qualify as sustainable.**

11 The Community FairWays ToolSet #1

The first cfw ToolSet lays-out a virtual cycle of intervention sequences. Important is here to keep the principle of Dual Terminology in mind ([Fig.30](#)). Terms and their relation within the ToolSet are first of all meant to stimulate the task of conceiving intervention strategies and not as a menu for clients, partaking communities or financial facilitators. The ToolSet-example consists of System Tools in seven sequences of which the first four tools focus developments taking place before an intervention settles in the target scenario. Additionally, a Process Story Board with two sequences is included.

In this paper (while referring to the cfw [web-site](#) for further information) I will just highlight the first two system tools, both structuring the roles and positions of stakeholders without holding any presumptions about their future actions up against them.

11.1 Community-Based Stakeholder Monitoring (CBSM)

The CBSM serves to conceive a meaningful division of *stakeholder-types*. The first cfw ToolSet operates with three stakeholder-types:

- **Mediation Stakeholders**; is the group conceiving the intervention strategy and editing the whole process. They can be commissioned by the public administration, but also by corporations or community groups. Crucial and critical for the mediation stakeholders is to set their own agenda so not to end up as a pure marketing instrument with little or no credibility in the community.
- **On-Site Stakeholders**; include not only target clients but all relevant institutions and often also the public administration in the target scenario.
- **Experts Stakeholders**; act as consultants to the mediation stakeholders, helping them to precision project proposals and diplomatic efforts. This engagement of experts aims to utilize ready-knowledge and best-practice suggestions from experts while avoiding dense and expensive scientific or technical production.

11.2 Stakeholders Balanced Question Board (SBQB)

The SBQB serves to monitor potential and interests at the hand of all pre-set stakeholder-types, including the mediation stakeholders, one of whom edits the board. The editing mediator asks five questions thought to be relevant to the particular position of each stakeholder, who then edits the questions the way he or she considers them fair to raise, but without answering them!

12 On ArtSourceLab and the author

ArtSourceLab (ASL) is an independent art project based in Berlin. ASL motive is to bring about new direct ways of utilizing resources and actions of art as a catalyst in society. ASL is organized as an open community including researchers as well as practitioners of psychosocial professions and their organizations. ASL is as the first representative from the arts elected as full member of the German “National Network For Civil Commitment” (<http://www.b-b-e.de/>).

Leading Projects:

<http://www.teenkom.de/>

<http://www.1001doors.com/>

<http://www.showyourlanguage.com/>

<http://www.communityfairways.net/>



Per Traasdahl, born 1962 in Denmark, was trained as a visual artist in New York City in the mid eighties. Following a decade of extensive international showing and projects for business corporations while based in Switzerland, he started working with traumatized refugee children in 1999. Two years later, the combined psychosocial and marketplace oriented activities led to the founding of ArtSourceLab.

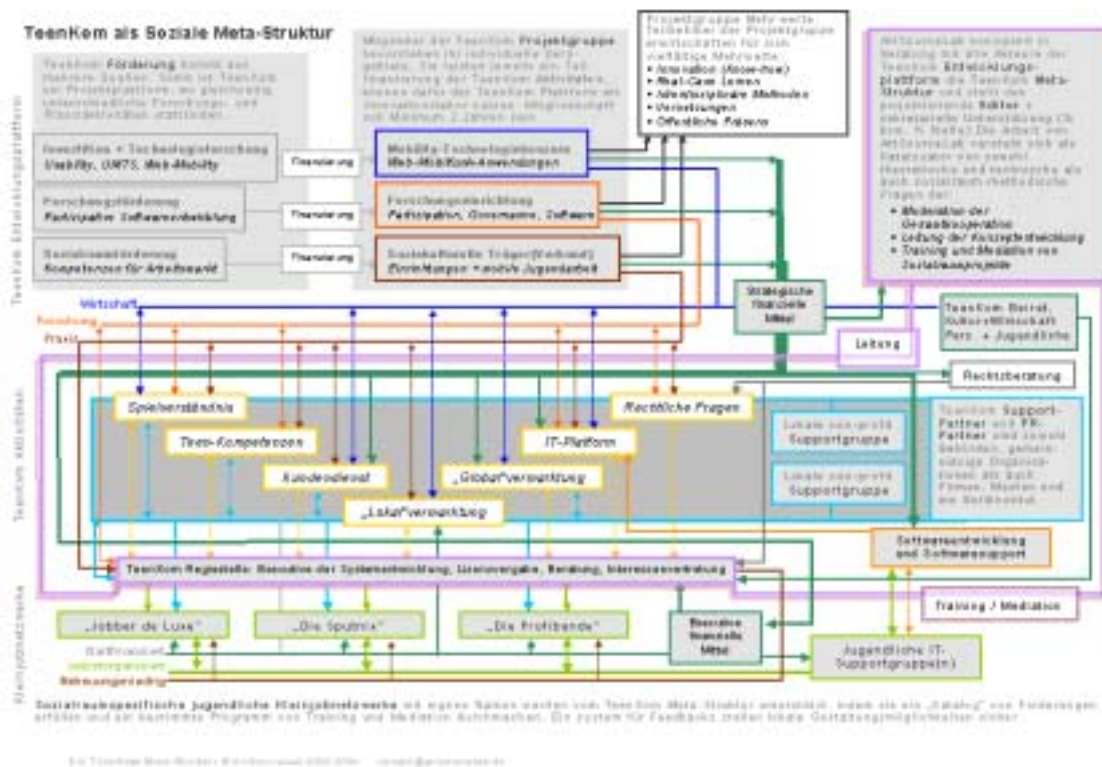
13 Illustrations

Fig.1: The Community FairWays Project



[On Social Meta-Structures and cfw ToolSets](#)

Fig.2: Lay-Out for a Social Meta-Structure



[On Social Meta-Structures and cfw ToolSets](#)

Fig.3-6: Art bridging mental and social instability



From left to right:

[Back to: Artworks serve this function](#)

- Fig.3: Hieronymus Bosch, *Temptation-of St. Anthony*, early 16. Hundred
- Fig.4: Jeff Wall, *Dead Soldiers Speaking*, 1992
- Fig.5: Martin Kippenberger, *Metro-Net Project*, Syros-Dawson, 1993-95 (2 Photos combined)
- Fig.6: AES-F group, *Ballet St. Petersburg*, 2001

Fig.7-20: 1001 Doors, a project with prisoners



Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10



Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

Fig. 14



Fig. 15

Fig. 16

Fig. 17

Fig. 18



Fig. 19

Fig. 20

[Back to the section: „Food for Thought“](#)
[1001 Doors, a project with prisoners](#)

Fig.21-23: 1001 Doors, system sequences



Fig. 21: [„Acupunctural“ interventions](#)

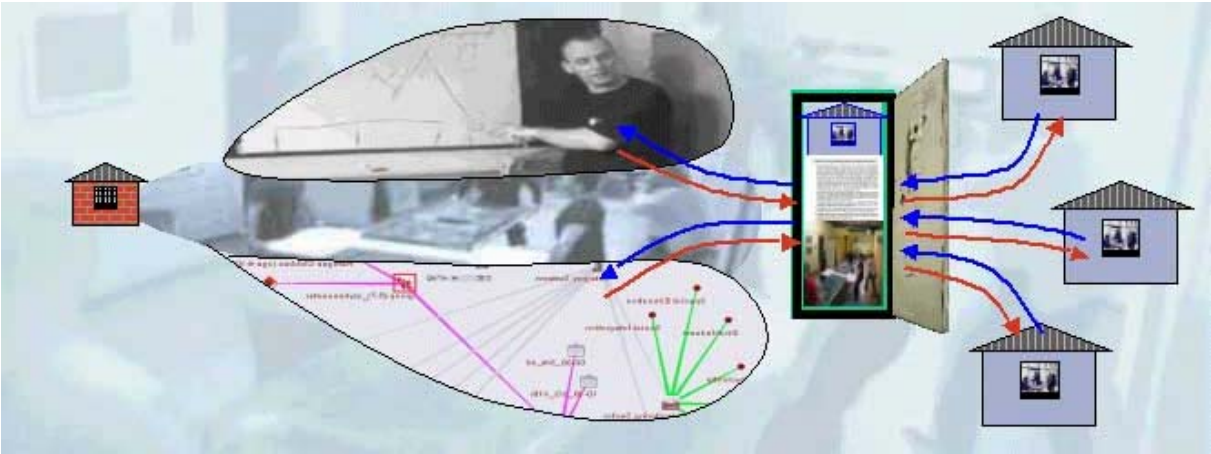


Fig. 22: [Documentation of learning and transfer](#)

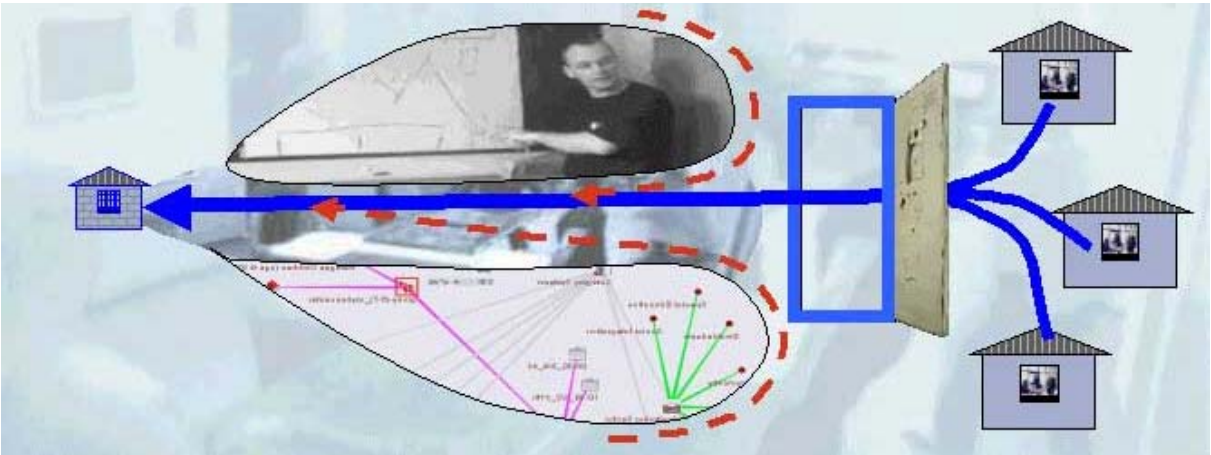


Fig. 23: [Consolidation and Change](#)

Fig.24-28: TeenKom, self-organized teenager networks



Fig. 24



Fig. 25 [Remote-controlled Intervention](#)



Fig. 26

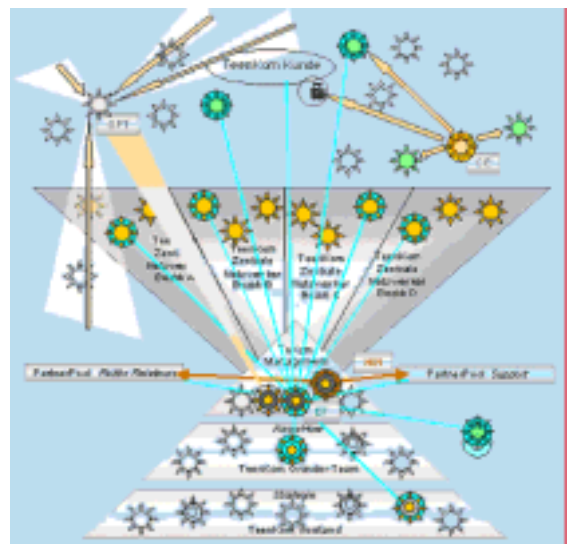


Fig. 27 [Technical Supervision](#)



Fig. 28: [Local Co-operative Project Groups](#)

Fig.29-30: New democracy-tools

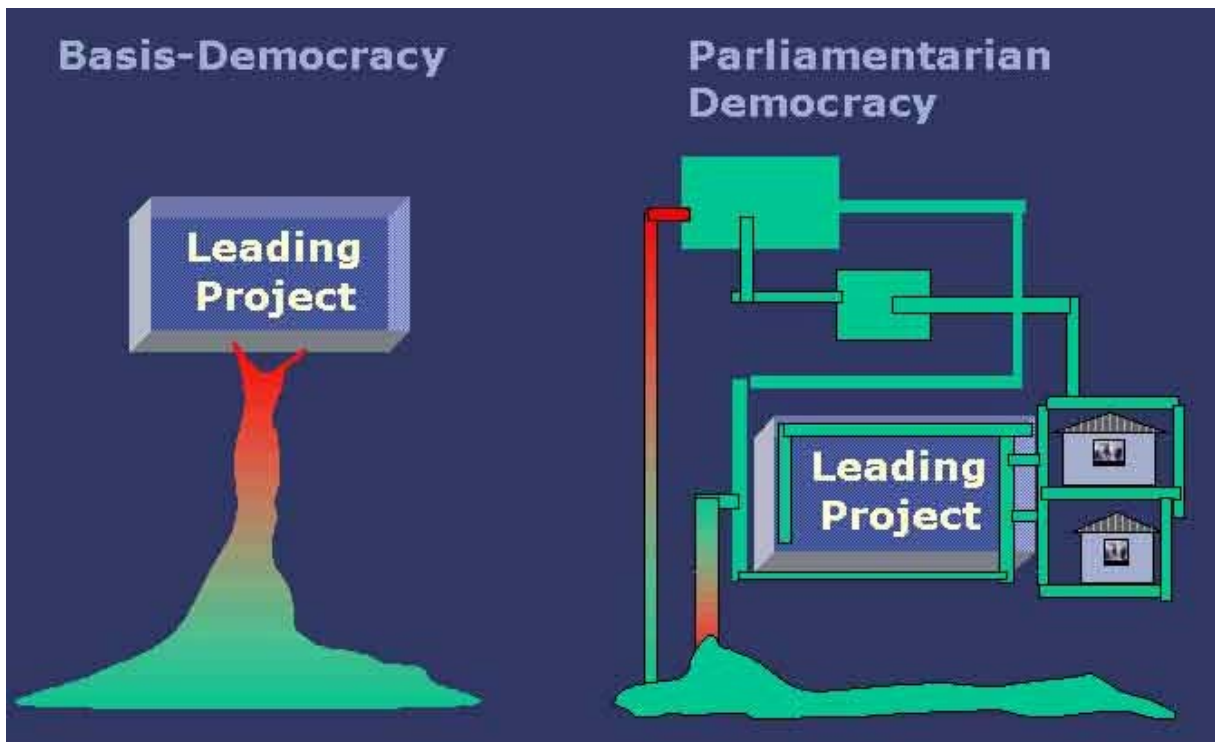


Fig. 29: [New Decision-Making tools are essentially also new Democracy Tools](#)

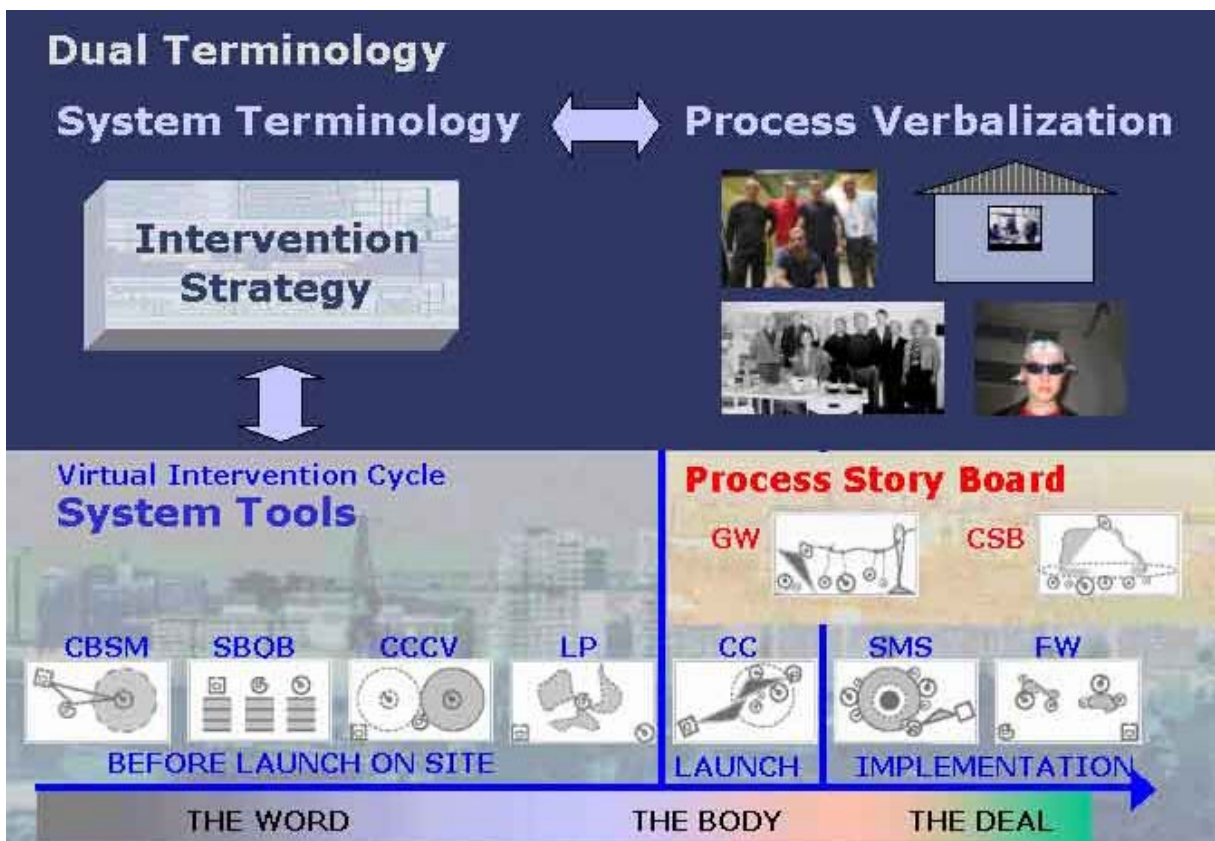


Fig. 30: „Dual Terminology“, a crucial conditioning of the intervention methodology