



TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF FOREST POLICY

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In order to get a breakthrough in the consultations on prevention of climate change, we need a profound change of attitudes of citizens. This could push the decision makers and politicians to a consensus on concrete actions. This cannot be motivated by particularistic, anthropocentric oriented values, otherwise there are hundreds of competing proposals based on differing human and ecological circumstances. They may hinder each other in competition on funds raising or they can create an uncertainty about what should be made first and immediately, as we have noticed in the Copenhagen Climate Summit 2009.

We need commitment to universally accepted principles, global ethic, through which also the intrinsic value of trees and forests can be comprehended. As unique representatives of species they contribute to the destiny of the planet. For this change we need a group of pioneers creating a critical mass. But although we need thousands and hundred thousands of change agents the real ethical change of attitudes is never an issue of masses but individuals. This is the difficult way we must pass aiming to get a profound change. Or we can put it by saying: the mass can be critical for a new opening only, if the new values are committed by individuals. In the focus of change there is the growing process towards awareness of the necessity to personal engagement for common good.

The problem lies on the concept of common good. In respect to the protection of environment and especially forests we can state four main approaches belonging to the environmental ethics.

How we deal with forests depends on the evaluation of their value. There is firstly a difference, if we state an intrinsic value of trees or if we give them

only an instrumental value, and assess their usefulness for our own purposes.

How we evaluate the forests and trees depends secondly from the angle we identify ourselves as actors in the ecosystem, if we understand ourselves as rules of the nature or as part of the nature and its cooperators. Do we assess the forests from an anthropocentric or from a non- anthropocentric point of view?

There is also researches who represent a consensus model so as Bryan Norton (1987) the leading contemporary apologist for anthropocentric environmental ethics. Instead of deepening to the intrinsic value of nature forests and trees, we should according Norton enlarge our conception of human wellbeing. Critical we must state to this that, if we enlarge our sensitivity and relationship from an anthropocentric point of view to nature, also then the selfish and one sided motivation may remain. It will be one way to maximize our own wellbeing.

But Norton has right when he states as follows:

“If we rest environmental ethics on as broad and firm foundations as possible, we can best ensure its rapid implementation.” (J.Baird Callicott, Environmental Ethics. In:Encyclopedia of Bioethics 2,1995,677.)

Although we see the huge power of market values and money in the decision making in politics, Norton supposes that we do things which are not directly steered by money. They gain our own wellbeing also on the realm which are not concrete and connected with economic “having” values. We must ask, how realistic it is to think that we, in the name of our wellbeing, can take in account the social “loving” and existential “being” values?

Let’s see the difference between anthropocentric and non- anthropocentric approaches. In the anthropocentric approach the preservation of trees and cultivation of forest industry is motivated by the selfishness, according so called market rules. But the own wellbeing can also be more directly dependent on forests.

The problem lies on the difference of circumstances of people on the earth. Some people have very near and intensive relationship with forests, they live on the conditions of nature without belonging to a fishing or hunting culture. Others can own forests but visiting very seldom their forest. To the later forest is only property and is used as market target.

And further there is a great difference in the attitudes between those who need it for their every day energy or if the forests have more or less only an esthetic value, observed from distance. It is very difficult to find out what is right or wrong for both groups in the same time. The anthropocentric approach does not lead to a strategy, which both groups could accept.

From the non-anthropocentric point of view the value of forests and nature represent not first – or at all- economic or esthetic values but more common intrinsic values. Humans are seen as part of nature and their privileges, to use the nature according their own will, is questioned.

Forests are not proprium according the concept of Roman law, it means private property. They belong to the common wealth , dominium which should gain all the people in the community. Its care is given to some actors, to whom it is not aloud to take un-proportional advantages from it.

If we understand our planet as common dominium and the role of humanity to gain and preserve it, we should ask every day what kind of effect our attitudes, values and deeds have on nature and its bounty. It means that we act not from anthropocentric values but from values which take care the wellbeing of the whole ecosystem. It does not mean that we underestimate the needs of human being and the fostering and cultivating human mind but the non-anthropocentric starting point make us more responsible for the ecosystem in its entirety.

To be capable to do this , we need ability to discern the differences in our own values system. It is necessary to find out on which values basis our philosophical, theoretical, cultural and economic-political thinking and decisions are laid. It is said that our concrete actions today are decided on the basis of monetary win. It means that having- values are emphasized or overemphasized. If the interests of market economy may rule, there is reason to be afraid that human beings with their aspirations, religious and philosophical experiences, are not taken in account. The preconditions to moralize the globalized market is then lost. The awareness about the importance of the existential human being values is vital for understanding the deep dependence between the faceless market and individual human beings.

It can be scrutinized by stating, that every economic decision has an impact to mutual human relationships. To be unemployed is in many cases a human catastrophe. It is the price which the worker pays for the wins of the company.

This means that the social responsibility is not anchored to the socioeconomic culture of the community. The distance and anonymity of the decision makers from the daily work, makes it easier to set aside these loving- values of mutual care taking.

Environmental and here especially forest ethics need the implementation of the three values groups: having, loving and being. They create together the precondition for using and preserving the nature and the forests.

2.WHY THE COMMITMENT OF THE YOUTH TO THE PROMOTION OF ETHICALLY SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY IS VITAL

The wellbeing or unwell of forests is a matter of commune, global concern. What happens to forests, in its function of lungs of the planet, happens to the whole ecosystem. Forests indicate the state of the world, but their condition indicate in the same time also the values which steer the forest policy and environmental goals. In the perspective of the ENO-project and its activity to engage the youth of the world for planting trees, and their commitment to promote sustainable forestry, we could take forests as metaphor for the ecosystem or even more as metaphor for nature itself.

The youth represent the future and represent often more critical different values and attitudes as the average adults. In many cases they are not so fixed to the earlier solutions. However it is not quite right to speak about "youth" in singular form. In the world there are many different youth culture and orientations to the nature and forests. It depends on the education and values awareness of the surrounding society and especially the teachers of public schools how the relationship of children develops further. As we know many emotional experiences in the childhood remain lively through the years of adulthood. The sensitivity towards trees and forest can be educated as some kind of art education. We could learn much from the Japanese ikebana and respect for nature. The sensitivity and new relationship towards trees can be educated as the ENO-Project shows.

Vital in this process of education is the creation of balance between the three groups of values, having, loving and being. No one of them can rule the whole process, if we aim to an ethically sustainable forest policy.

The having values of industry must be taken in account but they shall not subordinate interests based on other values groups. The same can be said about the loving values of society aiming to maximizing the use of forest as living environment. The existential, philosophical being- values of individuals are often based on holistic emotional reactions, but they, as only starting point, can lead to one sided reactions and unproductive clashes.

By the youth there is much sensitive and intuitive understanding of moral argumentation and ability to be engaged to concrete, if only parents, NGOs, and schools would help to create preconditions to them.

The moral commitment to ethically sustainable forestry is one of the most important contributions of children and their teachers.

In the childhood human beings have usually great imaginative capacity to see and interpret their perceptions in a creative manner. This should be developed further. They can give names to things without accommodating to the inherited conventions and formulations. They create symbols for phenomena which adults are not able to perceive or pass as non-real issues. We should remember the well known formulation of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, poet and pilot of the French air force in the WW2 as he states: “There is no better way to see than through your heart.”

With their imaginative capacity in their plays children realize many other values than adults in trees, also their intrinsic nature. With eyes of children it is possible to see in small plants already a dense forest. My five year old boy planted once some acorn in old yoghurt pots and put them to the windowsill at home. First nothing happened but after the frail saplings came out of the earth I asked his aim. The answer surprised me: “They will be my climbing trees, on which I can play.”

In Africa I have admired the way how the children make toys of waste materials pots, stones, bricks and wire. The imaginative capacity is in every children, but the way how it will be developed and educated differs.

Also preconditions to comprehend and experience the intrinsic value of trees and forests is everywhere. It belongs to human nature as universal category.

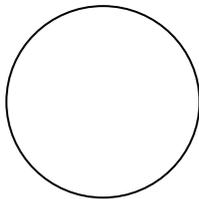
Shall we, inspired by the ENO-Project, develop an alternative forest-ethic – pedagogy based on the possibilities of imaginative intelligence combined with the old “learning by doing.-pedagogy”. Through the already existing network we would have all the ideas arisen in various continents and lands for common pedagogical use. The work of teachers and researchers would be to sample them to three values groups (having, loving, being) and work out new models to take care of our environment and forests.

This would promote creating a common motivational basis. We need a new strategy and paradigm for an environmental and forest policy, which we today are so deeply missing.

IDENTIFICATION OF FOREST POLICY
FROM THE STAKEHOLDER POINT OF VIEW

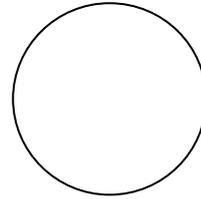
ANTHROPOCENTRIC
FOREST ETHICS

INDUSTRY



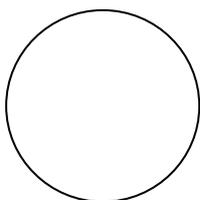
FOREST REPRESENTING
INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

"CITY GREENS"

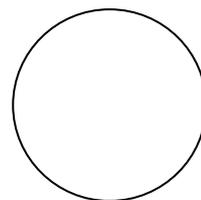


FOREST REPRESENTING
INTRINSIC VALUES

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE



"THE YOUTH"



NON-ANTHROPOCENTRIC
FOREST ETHICS