Aims of the workshop
This workshop examines communication and learning in social networks and the resulting challenges and poten-
tials for strengthening ecologically sustainable development. How do networks foster communication and
(collective) learning? What are the different approaches and particular challenges to gathering data of this sort?
What are the strengths and limitations of adopting a network approach to learning? To what extent can one link
social networks to ideas of sustainable development? Particularly, but by no means exclusively, the workshop
will focus on networks in the context of policy making and governance. Taking into account all possible spatial
and administrative levels — from the very local to the global — and different network approaches, the workshop
will provide an arena for cross-disciplinary learning on this important topic. The workshop is unique in scope in
that it will bring together scholars from diverse sub-disciplines and fields such as sociology, social network
analysis, actor-network theory, political science (governance networks), cultural sociology (e.g. “network soci-
ety”), anthropology, globalization and cultural studies, management and organizational science, or regional
sciences. Doing so, the workshop will explore new avenues of sustainability-oriented research.

Background
Social Networks have become a major focus of attention in social scientific research. While a wealth of concepts,
methods and empirical results have been presented in the last decades, much of this research has remained
detached, research having developed into — and from within — several different subdisciplines. Much potential
lies in bringing different concepts together. For instance, important works on governance and policy networks
regional networks (Fürst & Schubert 1998; Kleinfeld 2006; von Malmberg 2007) have remained rather concep-
tual and qualitative, neglecting the possibilities offered by formal social network analysis (Granovetter 1973;
Burt 1992; Wasserman & Faust 1999), with some exceptions (Knoepfel & Kissling-Näf 1998, Raab & Kenis
2007). Other approaches conceive of networks as global phenomena (Booher & Innes 2002; Haas 2004; Kern
2004), some even proclaiming an era of “network society” (Castells 1996) with virtual networks playing an ever
increasing role (Rheingold 1993, 2002; Wellman 1999; Stegbauer et. al. 2006; Kardorff 2006). Similarly argue
sociologists and cultural anthropologists who engage with “social networks” in order to capture contemporary

Only recently, scholars have turned their attention specifically to the potentials of networks for advancing sus-
tainability through improved learning and communication (Crona & Bodin 2006; Rydin & Falleth 2006; Manring
2007; Prell et al. 2008; Prell et al. 2009; Newig et al. 2009). What is there to learn from these approaches? The
workshop will ask: How do we conceive of networks? Is it useful to include non-human elements in sustainabil-
ity-related network research, as it is done in Actor Network Theory (ANT; Latour 1996)?
Kinds of papers
The workshop will solicit papers from various disciplines with either a theoretical or empirical focus. All contributions will be expected to address both networks, learning and aspects of environmental sustainability.

Workshop format
The workshop will last from Monday, 28 September 2009 (around noon) until Tuesday, 29 September (afternoon). On Monday evening, there will be a joint dinner at a restaurant in Lüneburg’s charming history city centre. We encourage lively, challenging debate that nonetheless is respectful of others’ home disciplines and different approaches/views to this topic. Planned theme are found below (these may change once abstracts have been received and reviewed):
- Different theoretical and/or methodological approaches to networks (e.g. ANT, SNA)
- Networks of different scale (local, regional, societal)
- Networks within different environments (e.g. the Web, organizations, country versus city)
- Policy and governance networks
- Networks explicitly designed as ‘learning networks’ and education for sustainable development.

Speakers will be asked to provide at least short papers (approx. 2000 words plus references) by early September, giving everyone the opportunity to prepare for the workshop.

Please send your paper proposals (maximum of 300 words) to the members of the scientific committee.

Time lines
15 July Deadline for submission of paper proposals (abstracts)
31 July Notification of acceptance
05 September Short papers (approx. 2000 words plus references) due
28 September Start of workshop

Scientific committee
Jens Newig (newig /at/ uni.leuphana.de)
Maik Adomßent (maik.adomssent /at/ uni.leuphana.de)
Katina Kuhn (kuhn /at/ uni.leuphana.de)
Christina Prell (c.prell /at/ shef.ac.uk)
Daniel Schulz (daniel.schulz /at/ uni.leuphana.de)

Local organising team
Daniel Schulz (daniel.schulz /at/ uni.leuphana.de)
Jens Newig (newig /at/ uni.leuphana.de)
Katharina Dobrick (dobrick /at/ uni.leuphana.de)

Venue
Leuphana University, Institute for Environmental and Sustainability Communication, Scharnhorststr. 1, (University Campus, building 14), Lüneburg, Germany. For more information about the more than 1000 year old city of Lüneburg, please consult www.lueneburg.de (also available in English).

References