ment technologies (e.g. Mongolia, Israel/Jordan/Palestine), drinking water treatment (e.g. Vietnam) or ground water desalination technologies (Namibia).

Next to these large-scale technology options, many projects developed innovations on a non-technical or low-tech level, such as dry toilets (Mongolia), innovations in agricultural practices, such as irrigation schemes (Uzbekistan), or small-scale rain water collection (Namibia). The overview also shows that all projects developed innovations aimed at management processes, most of them in form of models, analysis and scenario analysis for decision support and monitoring, some projects including software development for the task. For example, IWRM Olifants, South Africa, purely engaged with water management innovations. The project had detected deficient water management as a root cause for lacking water availability. Necessary treatment technologies already existed, but financing proved problematic. Instead of developing large scale pilot technologies, the project developed models for private sector participation in water management. Other projects contributed to a change of legislation, such as laws or policies, towards a more sustainable water management.

Consequently, I argue that although the IWRM call for proposals left less room for agency than the call for proposals of the Megacities funding initiative, the IWRM projects used their agency to focus on those aspects of IWRM that they deemed important next to the technology development specified by the BMBF. The projects' interest in non-technological issues of IWRM also became apparent in the crosscutting working groups, which focused on governance, capacity development, decision-making support and participation, and whose topics had been identified in a discussion project among all IWRM projects (interview with PP06).

10.3 Project practice: Subversion or compliance?

In chapter 7, I have traced the imbalances in power between research community, project management agency and the BMBF in discourse production. Imbalances in the distribution of power over decisions and resources also coined their interaction in implementing research projects in the Megacities as well as the IWRM funding initiatives, observable in the project participants' common practice of withholding any open criticism directed towards the ministry and of preventing to demonstrate any potential weak spots themselves. In this line, window-dressing was observable throughout all instances of project representation. Optimized self-representation was common in formal contexts, such as reporting to the BMBF or the project management agencies on behalf of the ministry; as well as in more informal contexts, e.g. in the survey carried out by the IWRM accompanying project on application of results (Ibisch and Borchardt 2014).

The tendency to hide any underlying problems and to withhold criticism extended to the interviews conducted, too. While some projects reflected openly about challenges, in other projects I observed that things said deviated from the practices I observed during participant observation. Some project coordinators refused to be interviewed at all or only agreed to be interviewed anonymously – out of fear that I would use the data for a project evaluation or that criticism would be used against them. In instances of participant observation, I regularly noted a sensitivity towards any kind of perceived evaluation, which had never been my intention (field notes LiWa, 01.08.-30.09.12; field notes IWAS Brazil, 1.10.-30.11.12).

An interviewee involved in one of the accompanying projects mentioned that "[t]he projects give us feedback on programme design based on their experiences. Some things are really problematic. But the projects don't revolt. There are no revolutionary tendencies, they are too dependent and don't want to risk future projects." (PP27)

A similar precaution characterized the behaviour of the project management agencies' employees, who seemed caught in a difficult position between the ministry and the projects. Some project management agency employees refused to be interviewed or requested anonymisation. Being financially dependent on the BMBF and expected to fulfil the BMBF's demands themselves, the project management agencies had to act as a mediator for partially contradictory expectations towards the projects' impact, to control projects and to advise them at the same time. In an informal conversation during the 2013 FONA Forum, a project management employee, who refused to be officially interviewed, stated that the project management agencies could criticize projects, but never the BMBF itself. According to the person, fear was omnipresent and led to show events entailing only honey-covered flatteries, as any (self-)criticism could be potentially dangerous (fieldnotes on FONA Forum, 09.-11.09.13).

The wish to be anonymized as well as the choice of some project participants or project management agency employees not to be interviewed may thus be interpreted as general statements about the system of (perceived) dependence, power distribution and fear among project participants, employees within the project management agencies and the BMBF. From a perspective of discourse stabilisation, the researchers' reluctance or even fear of voicing criticism was certainly convenient for the BMBF. However, the ministry was certainly *not* engaged in conscious practices of actively silencing researchers. Despite the imbalance in power, the researchers participating in funded projects as well as the project management agencies played an important role in maintaining the equilibrium within the social constellation by accepting the BMBF's powerful position and voluntarily complying with it: The project participants practiced a type of self-censorship.

The empirical material collected does not entail any data pointing to actual negative consequences for researchers who openly contested the BMBF. Nevertheless,

the project participants' anticipatory obedience suggests that they assumed that negative consequences were likely. Projects and project management agencies had internalized the power constellation to a degree that led to re-enacting it without questioning it. Without having to discipline the deviation of ideas from the BMBF's policy discourse, the BMBF was able to prevent open contestation (ch. 3.2). Next to those researchers who shared the BMBF's discursive stance and subscribed to it unreservedly (and who are necessary actors within the equilibrium of research and policy interests, ch. 7.4), many researchers complied with the BMBF ostensibly and continued to apply for project funding, even if off the record they were critical of the policy direction, the process of agenda setting, the BMBF's push for fast implementation, etc.

Two arguments may explain their compliance. First, BMBF programmes are attractive enough and in a unique selling position: Obtaining third party funding becomes increasingly important in the German research landscape (ch. 5). In this scenery, the access to funding for large-scale projects, including funds for post-doc and doctoral student positions, appears to be an incentive large enough even for senior scientists, such as professors with permanent positions, to sign up for it. Additionally, the BMBF's funding initiatives offer non-financial rewards such as access to international networks and opportunities for empirical research, which are funded much less by other funding institutions. The project participants' reluctance to admit any type of problems encountered and their fear to voice open criticism in instances I observed during fieldwork needs to be seen in the context of perceived dependence from the ministry as main founder of applied research in Germany and its power over current and future resources (ch. 7.4). Even if researchers did not completely agree to the policy discourse expressed within the funding initiatives, the incentives were large enough to apply for funding.

In addition, I argue that the room for agency within the funding initiatives was big enough to allow for a type of *passive resistance* (Scott 1990). Projects funded in both the Megacities as well as the IWRM funding initiatives used the rooms for agency in adapting policy expectations.

Even though mediated through the projects' self-descriptions and likely mirroring their perceptions of BMBF expectations, the overview about the manifold project (intentional) outputs in both initiatives are telling in light of the contrast between policy expectations and actual outputs – not in a quantitative sense, but in view of the type of results. Despite of the BMBF's diverging expectations, projects in both funding initiatives developed a wide range of knowledge, products, and/or solutions, as exposed in chapter 10.2. Neither did projects within the technology-oriented IWRM initiative produce only and purely technological results, nor did the more holistic starting point in the Megacities initiative produce only non-technological solutions. Even though the demand for high-tech solutions and involvement of German business partners was not as prominent in the Megacities funding ini-

tiative, the projects came up with high-tech solutions such as software tools or monitoring systems. Turning a holistic system analysis into an entry point of the funding initiative enabled the projects to consider manifold approaches to applied research and look into a variety of different innovations on individual level, in public administration as well as for a larger public (Appendix B-3b). The projects funded within the IWRM initiative, in turn, were officially bound to a technology-oriented funding frame, but nevertheless seized different rooms of agency to complement technical and non-technical innovations on different levels.

While projects in both funding initiatives developed solutions for individuals (such as energy efficiency in housing) as well as innovations for a broader public benefit (such as waste water treatment at a larger scale), and despite of the different policy framings and approaches, in both funding initiatives the projects' main efforts targeted the level of public administration and policy making. The tangible outputs that were developed and the innovations that were implemented included high-tech solutions, such as tools and software developed for IWRM decision support, or traffic monitoring systems on the one hand. On the other hand, projects in both initiatives came up with non-technical products, such as strategies and plans, or innovations in governance processes, such as stakeholder participation in decision making. This concentration of solutions targeting policy and administration developed in both funding initiatives suggests that the projects considered the level of public governance and administration as a crucial entry point of transformation towards sustainability. The projects' emphasis on solutions aimed at the governance level challenges the BMBF focus on visible results at the expense of invisible – but potentially more needed – ones.

Despite the projects' endeavours of reinterpretation and modification of the policy discourse, the BMBF successfully transmitted their original discourse from the policy level to projects. The intended orientation of the projects, such as the orientation towards the application of German technologies in case of IWRM, was never abandoned, but merely complemented by additional facets of applied research – as well as critical social science research in some cases. Nevertheless, the variety of different outputs in both funding initiatives suggests that in both funding initiatives, project participants made use of street-level policy making, or, in SKAD terms, they were able to re-interpret the policy discourse, to expand it and to include alternative discursive ideas into the practice of their doing. They were thereby able to adapt the BMBF's policy frame to their research interests as well as the partner country's necessities.

While one the one hand, the deviation of the types of outcomes from the originally narrow policy frame reflects the adaptation of the main policy discourse and therefore may be portrayed as a subversion, on the other hand, the room for deviation from the BMBF's policy discourse on a smaller scale also contributes to its overall stability. Next to the funds and the political back up in international re-

search projects, the space for agency below the tight shell of policy discourse seems to be one of the decisive incentives for researchers to apply for BMBF projects. I argue that only because a certain degree of deviation, a room for agency, is permitted within the funding initiatives, the number of researchers applying for calls for proposals is large enough for the BMBF to select projects according to the ministry's quality standards.

Although in power over the distribution of resources, the BMBF depends on the research community's interest in the topics proposed as well as the quality of the research proposals handed in. The room for deviation inscribed in the funding initiatives ensures higher numbers of applicants and thus enables the BMBF to continue with its policies. Informal deviation – or at least expansion – of the main policy discourse on the smaller scale of projects is then not necessarily a practice that leads to a long-term destabilisation of the policy discourse from within, as has been observed in other occasions (Hornidge et al. 2013). I argue that rather than leading to an overall discursive change, the practices of the adaptation of the policy discourse within the projects rather contribute to the stability of the policy discourse. Instead of open contestation, those parts of the science community critical of the discourse direction seize hidden spaces of agency within the funding initiatives instead.