ESRS (European Society for Rural Sociology) 2005 Congress Keszthely
23 August 2005, Working Group 16

The Development of Local Sustainability in the Rural Region Kautzen, Lower Austria - Driving Forces and Conditions of Success at the Choice for Sustainable Development

Baum Josef
Austria

Industrial Regional Ecological Research
+43 2231 64759 +43 664 1142298
baum.josef@utanet.at

CV + list of publications + key areas of research:
http://www.purkersdorf-online.at/lib/baum_engl.php

Key areas of research:
Industrial and ecological economics & regional studies:
Mergers, innovation, business parks, technology parks, retail, new economic geography, regional policy, energy economics, climate change, flood control, sustainability, migration, border regions, cross border economic policy, Eastern Europe, China

The presentation refers to the following book (in German):

The Development of Local Sustainability in the Region Kautzen, Lower Austria - Driving Forces and Conditions of Success at the Choice for Sustainable Development , Rainer Hampp Verlag, Munich, 2004

Also available in the net (in German):
http://www.purkersdorf-online.at/lib/arbeiten/index.php
Die Entwicklung lokaler Nachhaltigkeit am Beispiel der Region Kautzen
//

I would like to analyse the development of population patterns in rural areas in many **European countries** in a similar way and to generalize the results, and so try to answer the sustainability questions.

Therefore I would like to design an European Research project
I **seek for partners** abroad.

baum.josef@utanet.at

Sustainable development := development
balanced in space AND time
(=not concentrated)

socioeconomic development **on 7 joint levels**
- processes of **interaction** and exchange on the principle of **reciprocity**

⇒ i**nformation**
⇒ **energy**
⇒ **mass - matter**
⇒ **work – working time**
⇒ **value – production of value**
⇒ **capital**
⇒ **finance**

Kautzen

- ⇒ a peripheral place in a peripheral region
- ⇒ a peripheral rural municipality in the north of Lower Austria.
- ⇒ **1200 inhabitants**, 10 villages
- ⇒ district Waidhofen/Thaya: highest unemployment rates and high net outmigration since that 18th century

Since the 80ies Kautzen was one of those few Austrian pioneer places, which made systematic steps towards local sustainability.

In literature Kautzen·as
"symbol of the change of trend in the rural area"·
"indication of hope absolutely"........

Until 2000 to the 20,000 visitors from 36 countries in Kautzen

%%

Motivating question for study:
Why despite obvious necessity to protect the bases of life global no or only minimum developments to sustainability

By local and regional case studies
to find ·typical factors and conditions for swinging on a sustainable path

focus not on socioecological processes

Sustainability per se has strong regional embedding:·

- ⇒ importance of regional economical cycles
- ⇒ importance of social networks
- ⇒ Creation of value remains in the region
- ⇒ Traffic and transportation optimization
- ⇒ To a large extent independent energy sector
- ⇒ High degree of the regional self-supply within many ranges

Three phases of local or regional sustainability

1. "Networking Economy"
   "Take off" = transition from1 to 2 – that's it
2. "sustainable producing region"
3. "island of sustainability"

The point:
“Sailing” despite "head wind
finding new ways advancing quasi by correct setting the sails

Traditional theory (of technical innovations):
Innovations particularly in "more developed” regions

In socioecological context: hypothesis:
“less developed regions” fit for transitions to paths of sustainability

⇒ more intact nature
⇒ Use of regional resources·
⇒ Use of regional energy sources·
⇒ short ways·
⇒ Quality of life by few immissions·
⇒ regional economic circulations·
⇒ intact solidary social relations·and something similar.

So problems (e.g. peripheral situation) can transform into strengths.

Take-off rather in poorer or richer regions?
Richer regions have more finances

crucial however: "incentives": why should one deviate from working paradigms?

system-theoretical view

Schumpeter:
dynamic competition process in relation to innovations.
Innovative entrepreneurs realize "monopoly revenues", until others copy.

analogy product cycle/region cycle is obvious:

⇒ slow "initial speed", "takeoff" with steep upswing, flattening and finally decrease. No cycle….

⇒ Pioneer regions, which precede at the sustainability path.

Also:

Perroux: "growth poles" in industries, diffundation
Kontratieff: long waves over some 50 years

Socioecological innovation cycle Kautzen:
Phase 1:
innovative environment - takeoff constellation:

- ⇒ Innovation readiness
- ⇒ Mental preparation
- ⇒ Groups of interests as carriers for changes
- ⇒ Impulses from the outside
- ⇒ Occasions

Mix of “philosophers” and practitioners

Occasions:

- ⇒ Local museum
- ⇒ Expensive heating by electricity in school
- ⇒ New sewage system
- ⇒ New regional institutions: village renewal consultants and energy consultants
- ⇒ New mayor
- ⇒ Regional textile industry collapse

Socioecological innovation cycle Kautzen:
Phase 2: Time of acting - takeoff

⇒ conceptive work for energy projects starts 1987
⇒ Energy and regional consultation,
⇒ energy concept after first setbacks
⇒ energy consulting for private households ➔ private energyinvestments
⇒ biomass energy projects for 2 villages
⇒ 2 cooperatives
⇒ solarthermic and photovoltaic systems

"Usual things unusually well implemented" (Kastner)

⇒ local history museum
⇒ bordercrossing activities before INTERRG
⇒ “Telestube” granite – local telecommunication centre
⇒ combination of flood protection and leisure facility
⇒ combination of school and multipurpose center
⇒ new small enterprises

…..

break- turnaound

End of the very ambitious oil seed energy project.

⇒ Crash - spectacular end - 1999
Insolvency about 2 millions EUR

⇒ oil price fluctuations and tariffs

⇒ rapid successes of earlier projects: too fast and too little carefully developed

Successes:

⇒ steps for a municipal climate and energy policy -- Kyoto goal accomplished

⇒ obtainment of additional agricultural incomes in the region

⇒ diffusion - demonstration effect

⇒ democratization and activation

Remaining results

In principle Kautzen was successful in the field

⇒ of renewable resources and
⇒ some
⇒ additional agricultural incomes.
⇒ Local value added could replace imported not renewable energy.

The **economic goals in general were not** accomplished altogether roughly on the scale which would have led to an effective stabilization, though.

The calculated CO2 reduction in the energy field in Kautzen is responsible

⇒ about two thirds on consultation and energy-saving measures and on
⇒ One third to common energy projects

Outstanding meaning of services, communication and advice!