Protected areas: model landscapes for sustainable development

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My academic working context

- ZENARiO - Centre for Sustainable Spatial Development at Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg
- German Association of Geographers – Rural Geographers Working Group
- NeReGro network: Hammer, Siegrist, Weixlbaumer
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Protected areas: the European experience

- Special role of protected areas (PAs) for nature conservation:
  - Easily identifiable landmarks
  - Significant impacts on the landscape
  - Highly visited
- Relevance of historical perspective: cultural vs. natural landscapes

- Since first designation of PAs significant increase in number and area
- Controversies about targets and functions of PAs
- Consequently differentiation of several types
- Further advancement highly predictable (e.g. Switzerland, Norway)
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• Obvious advancement of area protection well reflected in territorial dimension of PAs in the Alps

Paradigm shift
• Dominant role of IUCN category V across Europe: „protected landscape/ seascape“
• Major focus on „interaction between people and nature“
• Examples: conservation and agriculture . . . and tourism . . . and . . . renewable energies
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- Confusing diversity of terminology across Europe
- However, several types of PAs can be identified as „dynamic PAs”

Major types of dynamic PAs in Europe:

- Naturparke (Germany, Austria, South Tyrol)
- Regionale Naturpärke (Switzerland)
- Parc Naturel Régionaux (France)
- Parchi Naturali Regionali (Italy)
- National Parks (UK)
- Regionalparker (Norway)
- Biosphere Reserves (international)

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- Increasing role of dynamic PAs reflects obvious shift (or extension) of paradigm
- Weixlbaumer (2005): two basic principles of area protection
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- Hence, increasing relevance of PAs as "working landscapes" and even model landscapes for sustainable development
- Complexity of challenges

In summary, conceptual frame based on four major assumptions:
- Address diverse functions in an equal sense (multifunctionality)
- Involve stakeholders concerned (governance)
- Create synergies between different forms of land-use
- Contribute to economic, ecological, and socio-cultural development (integrated approach)
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- So far heterogenous performance of PAs regarding conceptual demands (e.g. Mose 2007, Hammer 2003)

Performance of PAs as model landscapes
- Naturparke: slow response in Germany with few positive examples so far, partially broader adaptation in Austria
- National Parks (UK): high correlation only in theory, practice often rather vague
- Parchi Naturali Regionali (Italy): theoretically strong, but often rather weak in practice
- Biosphere Reserves: strong correlation of concepts, many positive examples of successful application

Designing future pathways

a. Stakeholder involvement and participation
- Understand dynamics of stakeholder involvement and governance
- Negotiate appropriate forms of participation
- Test and make use of suitable instruments: e.g. community appraisals, future workshops
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b. Future topics
- Address topics of future relevance, e.g., biodiversity, sustainable tourism, renewable energies, climate change
- Initiate projects for practical demonstration (test beds)
- Develop models of visionary quality for the future

c. Communication of ideas and experiences
- Establish networks for cooperation, joint learning and innovation (learning regions)
- Connect with other national and international partners to exchange ideas and experiences (e.g., Alparc)
d. Inter- and transdisciplinary research

- Support development of models by inter- and transdisciplinary research
- Thereby integrate real-world perspective
- Obtain better understanding and create more useful and accepted solutions in the region

Merci beaucoup!
Thank you very much!
Mille grazie!
Tussen tack!
Tack sa mycket!
Bedankt!
Vielen Dank!

Further information under:
www.raumentwicklung.uni-oldenburg.de