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**CONTEMPORARY VIEWS ON SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
OF RURAL LANDSCAPES**

**WSPÓŁCZESNE POGLĄDY NA TEMAT PARTYCYPACJI SPOŁECZNEJ
W KONTEKŚCIE ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU
KRAJOBRAZÓW WIEJSKICH**

Key words: sustainable development, social participation, neoendogenous development model, rural areas, cultural landscape

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, partycypacja społeczna, model rozwoju neoendogennego, obszary wiejskie, krajobraz kulturowy

Abstract

The equal treatment of environmental, social and economic problems in the concept of sustainable development is often understood improperly as the need to subordinate economic development to the demands of the environmental protection. This concept should take individuals and social groups into account, too. The article is a summary of views on the social participation in the context of the sustainable development concept. Its implementation should be based on neoendogenous mechanisms of development. Their essence is the stakeholders' participation in forming and applying the development strategy in cooperation with other social actors, both local and external partners. Social capital resources are an important source of development potentials. The development of the whole country is not possible without the participation of local communities. The chances of creating conditions for sustainable development will be very difficult despite the available grants, funds and programs.

Streszczenie

Równoważne traktowanie problemów środowiskowych, społecznych i ekonomicznych w koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju jest często błędnie interpretowane, jako konieczność podporządkowania rozwoju gospodarczego wymogom ochrony środowiska. Koncepcja ta powinna brać pod uwagę także potrzeby jednostek i grup ludzkich. Artykuł stanowi zestawienie poglądów na temat partycypacji społecznej w kontekście koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju. Jej realizacja powinna opierać się na neoendogennych mechanizmach rozwojowych. Ich istotą jest uczestnictwo interesariuszy w formułowaniu i aplikacji strategii rozwojowej we współpracy z lokalnymi i zewnętrznymi aktorami społecznymi. Zasoby kapitału społecznego stanowią ważne źródło potencjałów rozwojowych. Bez partycypacji i aktywności społeczności lokalnych rozwój całego kraju nie jest możliwy, a szanse na stworzenie warunków zrównoważonego rozwoju będą bardzo trudne do efektywnego wykorzystania, mimo dostępnych dotacji, funduszy i programów.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development is regarded currently as the most desirable type of socio-economic development which defines the relationship between man and the environment in a different way than previously (Trzepacz, 2012a). It was established in opposition to the traditional concept of the development based on a program of economic growth. The concept of sustainable development is a criticism of the current model of human development which leads to immoderate exploitation of natural resources and to environmental degradation (Pawłowski, 2006, 2008).

The concept of sustainable development is the legal footing of the European Union and every activity must be carried out according to its policies. It is a universal course of actions which should be present in all strategies (Trzepacz, 2012a). The great value of the concept of sustainable development is emphasized by the fact that it has become well-known, accepted and implemented. Almost all important national and international documents relate to this concept (Kronenberg, Bergier 2010), and it is a constitutional principle in Poland (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No 78, item 483). Despite broad criticism of the idea (Skowroński, 2006; Sztumski, 2008; Redclift, 2009; Kronenber, Bergier, 2010; Wojtoń, 2011; Andrejczuk, 2013), according to P. Trzepacz (2012a), sustainable development should not be considered as an abstract idea, because it is a set of specific guidelines for modeling the socio-economic development. Taking this concept on board as a strategic goal in the various planning documents (strategies, programs, policies) developed at the local, regional and national level, is a very important form of implementation of this development concept (Kronenberg, Bergier 2010). It is a base for constructing solutions aiming to eliminate specific development problems (Trzepacz, 2012b).

The sustainable development concept has customarily been examined in relation to three planes of discussion, i.e., ecological, social and economic (Pawłowski, 2009). Therefore, simultaneous integration and harmonization of activities in the ecological, socio-political and economic sphere on a global scale is an imperative for sustainable development (Gawor, 2006). In practice, however, many communities interpret the equal treatment of environmental, social and economic problems as the need to subordinate economic development to the demands of the environmental protection. According to J. Prandecki (2011), it is a wrong attitude.

The aim of this work is to present the views on the importance of social participation in implementing the sustainable development concept. According to the author, it is crucial to maintain such parameters of economic and social development that prevent social dissatisfaction and unsatisfied needs of individuals and groups of people. In this case, the development would not be sustainable either, even if the environmental conservation standards were high (Kielczewski, 2009).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE REGIONAL SCALE

Sustainable development on a regional scale means such utilization of regional resources that will provide increase of the local community's well-being at the same time ensuring the development of opportunities for future generations (intergenerational equity) and communities in other regions (intragenerational equity) (Kielczewski, 2009). According to D. Kielczewski (2009), there is not one, but a number of regional models of sustainable development. The specific features of the region should be taken into account when building a strategy for its sustainable development. They also diversify regions' different ways to stability of sustainability. Therefore, a number of factors should be included in an integrated way while building a strategy of sustainable development of a region (tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Factors important in building the regional sustainable development strategy

Factors	Characteristics
ecological	potential and actual trends of using environmental resources and values, methods and level of rationality in environmental management, environmental risks, the level and needs of conservancy, including the needs connected with environmental values restoration, the character of ecological processes, environmental interregional involvement
eco-political	whether there is a need of keeping a specific type of strategy for the environment due to the highly transformed and degraded areas or areas with high conservation values
political	the character, scope and privileges of the authority, the manner of its practice and the level of social acceptance of the authority
economic	marketization of the economy, capital involved, demand, traditions of entrepreneurship, personal income and corporate profits, employment
social	lifestyles and values, demography, regional identity, culture level
technical and technological	technical and technological level, innovation level and directions
interregional	interaction between regions
associated with the conflict areas	conflicts between the economic, social, political and environmental objectives

Source: made by the author on the base D. Kielczewski, 2009.

Among the above-mentioned factors there are social factors which include lifestyles and values, demography, regional identity and culture level. A. Olech's research results (2012) indicate that residents of rural communities are characterized by the highest activity in public affairs. Therefore, it can be concluded that rural areas are characterized by greater potential when it comes to patterning sustainable development. According to H. Podedworna (2008), sustainable development of rural areas is also a strategy of introducing social changes. The strategy prefers a bottom-up approach, exploitation of the resources available in the local environment, and the

activities of the rural residents whom the changes relate to. The development should be based on internal resources and use the available external resources skillfully. K. Wiktorowski (2011) believes that so far, when dealing with the problem of regional development, the attention has been paid to issues related to innovation, knowledge management and human capital as the determinants of the regional competitiveness. Distinctly less attention has been paid to the importance of the factors largely endogenous to the region (i.e. regional identity, work traditions and work culture, religion and environmental conditions, particularly the landscape beauty and the conditions of the environment) in creating competitiveness which, consequently, creates the standard of living in the region. In his opinion, it depends on people's attitudes towards the local and regional identity whether its social values will be retained or blurred in the process of homogenization and assimilation. Understanding and teaching regional traditions and culture is one of the most important pillars of maintaining regional identity. It is one of the conditions of building a civil society – one of the basic criteria of effective implementation of sustainable development.

NEOENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The implementation of sustainable development demands the empowerment of local communities and the local government development. The local government is considered one of the pillars of democracy and civil society in Europe, and it means the empowerment of the communities' responsibilities for their own future and living conditions (Podedworna, 2008). In the concept of sustainable development, man is regarded as the central entity – his/her health and quality of life are the primary objective of development (Trzepacz, 2012b).

More and more attention is paid to the so-called soft factors of development, i.e. social capital and cultural resources, by recognizing and emphasizing the importance of local actors, resources and potentials in initiating the development enterprises and consolidating their consequences. This way of thinking is connected with arising a neoendogenous rural development model based on the following foundations (Lowe et al., 1995):

- the specific resources of every region (natural, human, cultural) are the key of sustainable development,
- local initiatives and enterprise are the driving forces of development,
- the creation of diversified service economy in rural areas is the primary function of its development,
- limited ability of participation in economic activity and in development projects of the social groups are the main problems of rural development,
- forming skills, creating institutions and adequate infrastructure as well as overcoming social exclusion are the main goal of rural development.

According to M. Woolcock and D. Narayan (2000), overcoming the social division and building the social consistency and confidence are essential for economic development compatible with the sustainable development idea. As pointed out by M. Klekotko (2008), the concept of sustainable development draws attention to the subjectivity of the local community and its right to participate in the progress. This concept should be based on neoendogenous mechanisms of development. Their essence is the stakeholders' participation in the forming and applying the development strategy in cooperation with other social actors, both local and external partners.

Neoendogenous development model has been devised by C. Ray (2006). He believes that there is a problem with a lack of development because of overriding the local factor. He also emphasizes that there is a need of devising such a model of development in which local and supra-local forces would be maintained in balance. This concept highlights the connection between local resources (they are the base of development) and external resources, such as regional, national or global financial instruments or expertise. It refers to the classical concept of endogenous development which assumed that the condition of development is separating from external influences and building the development strategy on internal factors and mechanisms. Therefore, endogenous development was an alternative of the exogenous development controlled from the outside and being usually the result of the government's intervention. However, according to C. Ray (2006: 281), *even the most endogenous initiative will sooner or later need financial support or some other type of assistance of supra-local organizations*. In addition, in the modern world, local communities come into many interactions with their supra-local environment. Thus, a neoendogenous development model (Ray, 2006) premises a bottom-up development based on local resources and mechanisms, but (as indicated by the prefix neo-) with the support of various supra-local factors. These factors may be used by the community as a source of external development resources. This model is primarily a response to the results of The European Union policy and other changes which have been taking place in Europe since the 1970s of the twentieth century (inter alia, the decentralization of national states, regionalism, environmental movement, the renaissance of localism). These changes necessitate a new attitude to the European rural development issues (Klekotko, 2012).

C. Ray's (2006) neoendogenous development model is based on the premise that there are three types of knowledge necessary for constructing strategies of changes:

- expertise (managerial and administrative knowledge) – connected with the processes of decision-making and enforcement of public power; it is based on individual or group experiences,
- scientific knowledge – being a result of research; it is created by scientists and then spread within society,
- local knowledge – settled in the social, cultural and economic local context, being a result of long-term experience.

In the model in question, both the scientific and the local knowledge are of great importance. The expert knowledge plays an important role as well. It is a tool of integrating the two other types of knowledge and of organizing cooperation between different social actors. According to T. Adamski (2008), the sustainable development strategy is based on the interaction between external actors (experts, scientists, specialists) who provide mainly the scientific knowledge, and local actors (they represent the local knowledge which is firmly settled in the specifics of a particular community). Only a skillful construction of a bridge between general foundations of projects designed by specialists and specificity of a particular place can bring a real and sustainable development of rural areas. It may also improve the quality of life of their residents. The local knowledge should interact with the global scientific knowledge. They should use each other to ensure the sustainable adaptation to natural and socio-economic conditions which are constantly changing. Thus, the idea of sustainable development revalues the importance of the local knowledge. Civil society has to ensure the participation of all social actors and the integration of all types of knowledge (scientific, expert and social) in the process of wielding authority and defining the objectives of progress. This means that no one can be excluded from participation in the global progress¹. Civil society is regarded as one of the dimensions of sustainable development, its purpose and standard, as well as a factor which simplifies the implementation of the sustainable development strategy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

According to L. Juroszek (2008), the involvement of the rural population in development activities is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Citizens' involvement in the management of social affairs they are members of, are referred to as social participation. In the broad sense, the social participation is the base of civil society whose members voluntarily take part in public activities. In the narrower sense, it is a public-private partnership between the local authorities and residents which should lead to taking action for local development (Hausner, 1999). According to P. Trzepacz (2012b), social participation can be considered one of the bases of sustainable development.

Man's participation in the matters that concern him/her is among the fundamental human rights that build the democratic system. Indirect involvement through elected parliamentary and government representatives is not enough to provide people with a sense of real influence on the society they are members of. Therefore, according to K. Pawłowska (2010), the development of democracy leading to the ideal of civil society cannot rely only on indirect form of citizens' influence on the state. The forms of direct democracy are also needed. It is creation of means and surfaces of the agreement between public authorities and the society in specific cases belonging

¹ It is a condition necessary for the implementation of the social equity and social sustainability.

to different areas of life. Some forms of participation are mandatory and guaranteed by law, others are a non-compulsory offer addressed by local authorities to the public, while others are enforced by citizens in the way of protest, strike or other form of opposition (Pawłowska, 2010).

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which was signed on 25 June 1998, commonly known as the Aarhus Convention, guarantees stakeholders the possibility of participation in decision-making². It was ratified by Poland on 21 December 2001. The need to involve the society in decision-making also stems from rule No 10 of sustainable development³.

The sense of subjectivity is essential in participation. The village community is an important actor of the local scene and the subject of a collective action. It can initiate and accelerate the development process. Subjectivity should be understood as an active influence of people on the form of institutions and social structures, pliability, susceptibility to changes of these structures and institutions as a result of human activities. Otherwise it can be concluded that it is the society's ability to an independent transformation. Residents are more active in their locality if they feel they are the subject of the action. Also this activity is voluntary. Participation is essential for local development because of the fact that it is difficult to speak of an effective local problem solving without the participation of the residents of a particular area. Forcing the cut and dried patterns of development can only bring short-term effects, or be counter-productive and destructive for the local community. Residents should take an active part in the efforts which improve their living conditions. Waiting for help from the outside leads to inaction and creates demanding attitudes. However, it does not mean that local communities are to be left alone. The local activity should have the support from external resources in order to be effective. The fact that the sustainable activity should depend largely on the residents' will and it should be connected with the value systems recognized by them, is also highlighted by B. M. Dobrzańska (2007). The residents determine largely what sustainable development is. The idea of sustainability is the general outline of the long-term maintenance of certain necessary and desired characteristics of people, people's organizations and communities, and the surrounding environment.

As observed by M. Kramarz and P. Topiński (1997), activity at the local level is not just a plunge in localism and isolation in the narrow border of a region. Integration

² The term "public concerned" is used in this convention to determine this group of the community which is affected by the consequences of environmental decision-making or has an interest in it. The term "stakeholders" is nowadays widely used in literature to determine the social side of the participation. These are the entities (individuals, groups, institutions, organizations) which are connected with the situation in the way that the decisions taken in this situation have a significant impact on the lives (interests) of the entities. Therefore, stakeholders have the right to express opinions and to participate in decision-making too (Pawłowska et al., 2012).

³ The principles of sustainable development have been adopted in the Declaration on Environment and Development at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

with the supra environment, and striving for participation in the regional, national and international structures is necessary for a community's development. Residents' participation in cooperating for the local development is generally not spontaneous. Usually this may require stimulation by the local authorities through (Hausner, 1999):

- identifying significant local problems,
- recognition of the residents' preferences related to methods of solving the problems, and their personal readiness for involvement in activities,
- identification of local leaders who are ready to encourage other citizens to activity,
- indicating to residents different possible ways of solving the problems, their causes and estimated results.

It is possible to involve the residents in cooperative specific problem-solving through obtaining their approval of this kind of action.

As noted by J. Hausner (1999), the cooperation of local authorities with NGOs is one of the most effective forms of social participation. NGOs are very important because of the fact that they concentrate the most active and involved residents and work the closest to them. Because of that, they have the best understanding of the residents' needs and problems, they are the representative of the local community, they know its needs, aspirations and expectations. NGOs are like a "conveyor belt" through which information flows both from residents to local authority as well as the other way round. They should have (as the representative of the local community) an opportunity to express their views on the matters which are important for the community, and to co-participate in making decisions which are crucial to the residents by the local authorities.

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to L. Juroszek (2008), the social capital is another essential factor which promotes sustainable development⁴. It involves the local community and allows its agreement and achieving the goals connected with the development of all groups that comprise the social capital cooperatively. Social capital resources which occur in the local community are an important and usable source of development potentials. They can largely increase the efficiency of various projects. A. Kozak (2008) notes that the deficit of social capital in rural areas is a serious problem. Therefore, taking action for the development of human potential is in the local authorities'

⁴ The concept of social capital is a concept on the border of economics and sociology. This term was introduced in sociological literature in the 1970s of the twentieth century by Pierre Bourdieu and then distributed by James Coleman. Both names are connected at the same time with two different schools of understanding and defining the concept. In this work, the author understands it as a capital whose value is based on mutual social relations and trust of individuals who realize that they can achieve more benefits (from an economic and social point of view).

interest. The key role in engaging local communities in combined operations can be performed by the local leaders. M. Mularska (2008) emphasizes that the higher identification with the place of residence, the greater tendency of individuals to take action for the good of their local community. It is a result of the fact that the acceptance of the place of residence affects the resident's views and encourages to taking an active part in local life. S. Ratajski (2009) also notes that people are the most important capital. Their creativity, attitudes, sensitivity to values and production capacity are a potential for development. Therefore, raising public awareness becomes an urgent need.

The material space has a substantial impact on the development of interpersonal relationships and emotional ties with the place of residence. It is very crucial for forming the local identity which is substantial in constructing modern democratic societies (Ratajski, 2009). The belief that there might be a special emotional tie between man and the place of his/her life (attitudes of belonging and attachment) is the basis of the idea of familiarity described by K. Pawłowska (2002). This tie gives an individual a sense of familiarity – the awareness of "being at home", whilst the place is provided a place-oriented host. According to K. Pawłowska (2002), what we consider our own is our concern and our efforts, but what we think is others' or nobody's is left in the lurch.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A THREAT TO RURAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPE?

As mentioned above, there is a need of integration of the three types of knowledge (expert, scientific and local) in the neoendogenous development model. According to M. Angiel and M. Pietrzak (2009), because of current transformations of the village and landscape changes caused by that fact, it may be said that the level of inhabitants' knowledge of the cultural landscape is often infinitesimal. Villagers contribute in a large part to the destruction of the harmonious cultural landscape of the Polish countryside. The transformation of the cultural landscape of the village is primarily associated with:

- changes in the spatial dispersion of villages and a scatter of housing,
- functional changes of the countryside,
- abandonment of the existing architecture for random architecture, both in the form and in the proportions of buildings.

These transformations are the result of ignorance and inability to use the patterns known to the residents but discarded and replaced by foreign standards, rather than being developed. This causes unifying the landscape and loss of the identity. In addition, aesthetic landscape does not mean tangible and beneficial for the residents "quality of life". There is also a belief that "at home" you are allowed to build "as you want" and "manage" without respecting the landscape values.

The local authorities are also responsible in a particular way for the quality of the landscape. Their decisions and actions have an impact on the landscape

condition and appearance. Unfortunately, the state of knowledge of the landscape at this management level is not satisfying. The research conducted by E. Raszeja (2012) showed, inter alia, that according to the local government, landscape conservation issues are not related to the spacial management or investment movement, and there is a lack of awareness of the impact of decisions made at the local level on the quality of the landscape and the responsibility for the inhabited space. As mentioned by U. Myga-Piątek (2010), sustainable development is necessary for the proper condition of the landscape. It is possible primarily by using common education about landscape and social participation. These two operations should be inseparable. Landscape education is essential for understanding landscape values and its appreciation. Social participation ensures active and effective landscaping. The problem is not just a lack of effective tools for landscaping and financial restrictions, but also insufficient preparation of people involved in the landscape conservation, planning and management and low public awareness in this regard (Raszeja, 2012).

SUMMARY

The aforementioned views indicate that the concept of sustainable development should be based on neoendogenous mechanisms of development. Their essence is that stakeholders should participate in formulating and applying the development strategy in cooperation with other social actors, both local and external partners. It should be emphasized, as O. Kotowska (2008) finds, that the development of the whole country is not possible without the participation of local communities and activity. Without this participation the chances of creating conditions for sustainable development will be very difficult despite the available grants, funds and programs. It is necessary to mobilize people and stimulate human activity in all spheres of local development (Mularska, 2008). According to the *Polish Sustainable Development Strategy 2025*, the activity of every citizen is a condition for a successful implementation of sustainable development. Every citizen should be well-educated, well-organized, raised in respect for tradition, culture, nature, as well as the views and work of another citizen. The consequences of the institutional and centralized planning system towards the local system are a handicap for the implementation of the sustainable development. This system has weakened traditional and spontaneous local actions (Mularska, 2008). In the previous political system the Polish society did not develop a culture of discussion, compromise skills or respect of experts' opinions (Gonda-Soroczyńska, 2008). According to K. Prandecki (2011), a change of social attitudes must be the means of achieving sustainable development. It is particularly important in democratic systems where people can have a significant impact on the shape of the state policy. The success of sustainable development depends on social acceptance.

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