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## **New Tendencies and Strategies in Land Development in Bavaria**

### **China and Deutschland: rural areas face similar problems and challenges**

The “Munich Symposia on Land Management and Land Development” at the Technical University Munich have for a long time been an indicator of the tendencies and strategies of land development in Germany and Bavaria. Every year since their start in 1998 the technical elite of land development and land consolidation from the academic world and practice in Germany and neighbouring countries as well as the leading agricultural and local government politicians have gathered together under the auspices of my Institute for Land Management in order to discuss current and futures challenges for rural areas and the small country towns, communities and villages. The theme this year was: The order of the day: (new) creation of value in rural areas.

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Why did we choose this topic? The answer is: because rural areas in Germany and Bavaria are confronted with serious and indeed with increasingly economic and many other problems and challenges, which – and you my dear Colleagues in China will surely be able to confirm this – are quite similar to those in China. That is why our joint seminar makes so much sense, that is why academic cooperation in depth, as is firmly agreed between the Renmin University and the Technical University Munich, has such significance. It is to be wished that this cooperation receives support from the highest political and technical instances in both countries. In any case we already today know that we have on our side the MLR in Peking and the Hanns Seidel Foundation in Munich and China. This support was recently confirmed at the colloquium to celebrate my birthday in Munich by the former Minister of State Herr Zehetmair. I should like to thank him for this in name also of my Chinese partners and colleagues! We all know that both sides, above all the people in rural areas, profit from this cooperation.

Why are we so convinced about this? Because there are already practical successes. To the Sino-German success stories belong joint village and land development projects such as in Nan Zhang Lou (Shandong Province), in Zitong (Chongqing Province) and soon in Tongxi (Ninxiang Province). Next to all necessary theories nothing is more convincing than local concrete practical experience (“seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times”). Common learning processes come here together, whereby each side learns from the experiences of the other.

It may be that the German partners, by virtue of their historical development, have more matured theories, planning models and instruments for example of landscape planning and integrated land consolidation. In return the Chinese experts are able to report on many successful land rehabilitation schemes and substantially completed organic material cycles in villages.

## **What are the central challenges for rural areas in Germany and Bavaria?**

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When a speaker brings out the highlights in new tendencies and strategies in rural development in Germany and Bavaria, he must first cast a look at the new

challenges facing rural areas. A description of the situation and analysis of the problems would take too long (I point the interested reader to the web site and particularly to a perusal of the collection of material of my Institute). Instead I invite you to compare the challenges which we face in Germany with those faced in China.

If I had to prepare a hit list of the challenges for rural areas in Europe, Germany and Bavaria, it would read as follows:

1. Topic No. 1 is the unfavourable demographic development in our towns, as well as in many rural areas, and in most rural villages. "Many children" as a village characteristic belongs to the past! Instead an aging population in the villages and too few children as well as the disappearance of persons engaged in non-agricultural employment who have migrated to jobs in urban centres (where daily commuting is not possible), lead to a continual weakening of village life. This can be seen in the endangering of the social, educational and technical infrastructure and finally in massive losses in the financial power and attractiveness of the communities. In addition or in consequence the village centre empty as a result of structural changes in trade, business, crafts and lack of demand from well-to-do inhabitants. House and buildings in village centres become dilapidated and stand empty. As a result village centres become unattractive for inhabitants, business people and visitors. A vicious circle starts. The situation becomes worse. A massive loss in property values in the whole village occurs. It is however completely macabre when, notwithstanding unused houses in the centre, new houses are built on valuable agricultural land on the outskirts and thus use up scarce resources of fields and meadows.

**Inner rather than external development** is therefore the new tendency in Germany and Bavaria. This means for many mayors and heads of local government authorities a rethinking away from expansion to sustainable development (including energy) and thus towards preserving the value of what already exists. For banks and building societies this means a change in their advertising strategy in that they must direct interest away from the dream of a detached house in green surroundings and direct it to the financing of the restoration of empty buildings or at least of the construction of new buildings in the village centre.

We thus fight simultaneously with many problems which are extremely complex and closely interwoven with each other, and which cannot be resolved alone by planning, technical or economic measures. They can be resolved only by changes in the socio-political field and here above all by a changed consciousness on the part of the population about what progress and ensuring the future mean. Building in village and town centres must again become a trend in the context of sustainability.

Whether we manage to reverse the decline in births and of the population is completely uncertain, particularly as there are those who say that that is not so bad or cheekily assert it is even good. In any event we have to come to terms with this phenomenon. Professor Klingholz, a well known German population and spatial scientist from Berlin, expressed the opinion at the Munich Congress 2009 that Germany, because of its advantage in experience and practice in actively dealing with demographic effects on settlements and living space, could even assume a pioneer role in the world. There are in fact in eastern Germany and now increasingly in western Germany successful examples of shrinking? communities.

2. The mega topic No. 2 is the climate change which can no longer be denied. This will possibly bring as yet unforeseeable consequences for rural areas, and particularly for the currently practised agricultural and forestry land use and those involved in it, above all the farmers.

In a recent symposium of the Bavarian Academy for Rural Areas a well known German climate researcher, supported by the Bavarian Environmental State Secretary, prognosed that for example the average temperature in Bavaria will substantially increase over the middle term, with the result that Bavaria will in the future be even more sharply divided into two parts, that is in a northern part with an extreme lack of water and with an increasingly endangered traditional agriculture, and in a southern part with an abundance of water and with a sharply increased danger of flooding. Our Chinese colleagues will think, how similar to China!

In view of the ever more unpredictable natural dangers, agriculture, forestry and water experts work feverishly on scenarios and the strategies and solution

models drawn from them. At the Technical University Munich we have for example also started a research initiative Disaster and Risk Management. The Federal Ministry of Research in Berlin has called for a Federation wide competition among researchers and practitioners for the best ideas and strategies for sustainable land management. The proposals and solutions should also cover the controversial topic of bio-energy renewable raw materials as well as – and this leads very much in the direction of land development – to strategies for strengthening regional material cycles and value creation and to intensify the town-country partnership.

All this takes place because the EU has established binding criteria. Exactly 10 years ago it gave the starting signal in Berlin under the German Presidency for an independent programme for the development of rural areas (the so-called second pillar of the agricultural policy: ELER). This has now spread in answer to climate change as a roof over its expanded agricultural policy. There are the three major topics: climate protection, water management, and maintenance of bio-diversity. For land experts it is uncontroversial that solutions for water management, climate protection and biological diversity are always bound up with a satisfactory resolution of property and land user questions.

Internationally it is noticeable that in the meantime the twin terms *Land and Water Governance* and *Land and Water Management* have come into common parlance. In two research projects in my Institute, one on behalf of the Environment and Water Ministry and the other on behalf of Agricultural and Land Development Ministry, we have done research on both these topics of the future – Sustainable *Land and Water Management*. “*It’s all about Land*” is the saying in the language of the FIG community. This means that we must use the instruments of Land Management more consequentially and with greater virtuosity, in order to resolve the undoubtedly increasing property and use conflicts between private and public interests amicably, in other words more sociably and more environmentally friendly. In China the marvellous concept of harmonious development is used. And that is exactly the point for us, it is not just a matter of words but of concrete convincing examples.

In conclusion I can also say at this point: here also nothing will work with a broad change of approach by land users, local government politicians, business people and consumers! In Germany and Bavaria the civil society as well as increasingly the EU bodies by regulations and local controls watch vigilantly with Argus eyes that land use does not lead to any detriment to valuable land, to bio-diversity or to stable water economy and natural balance. This is why my Institute recently accepted with great pleasure a new research project from the Ministry of Agriculture, which is concerned with the topic *Sustainable Land Use Strategies* – again in the context of the question, what contribution can land management, in particular by means of land consolidation, make to a resolution of the problems. What we want to achieve is the harmonisation of agrarian-economic interests and general interests in greater living and landscape quality in the framework of intelligent land use.

3. The third challenge – not new, but a continuous topic – is the undiminished structural change in agriculture (as well as in certain traditional industries, to which for example porcelain manufacture belongs, which in Bavaria has been a prominent victim of pressure on prices as a result of globalisation). Structural change in agriculture has resulted in a massive reduction in the number of farmers, but not yet in the areas under cultivation. As long as the farmers who left agriculture retired as pensioners, this was not serious. It is however now a serious matter that farmers in active life have to give up because they earn so little in agriculture and want to migrate to the towns. Whereas this did not cause problems in the economically strong 60s and 70s when industry gladly took on the farmers, this is now only in individual cases possible in view of the economic recession and somewhat drastic crisis in the labour market – and moreover only when the farmers possess excellent qualifications.

**Conclusion and tendency** from this challenge: farmers (but also non-agricultural workers) must be more broadly qualified and prepared for diversification, that is, for additional economic occupation above all in the villages. The topics timber, energy and heath offer themselves as chances and as new innovative economic fields. One of the points here is that all inhabitants of rural areas should be able to have a quick connection to the internet. Thus education policy must be accompanied by the previously mentioned

encouragement of regional economies (here I mean above all encouragement of handcraft) and of regional cycles. It is immediately obvious that these cycles cannot be restricted only to the village and rural community level.

4. A new topic comes ever more to the foreground in Europe, Germany and Bavaria with as yet unclarified consequences: it is the topic of the development of large metropolitan regions of world and European importance. In Bavaria these are Munich and Nuremberg. These metropolitan regions demand and claim the uttermost assistance and investment in order to attract globally active new investors. But a location is only attractive when it offers what investors expect: research centres, high quality universities and educational institutions, excellent medical care, "white" industry and jobs and in any event: good air, urbane city centres accessible by foot and high culture of all kinds! All this costs money, requires increased state and municipal investment which is then possibly not available for rural areas. The consequence: people in rural areas all want to move to the towns. The Bavarian Academy for Rural Areas will again host a symposium on this important subject in two months time so as to hinder by increased publicity that rural areas are ultimately on the losing side.

**Conclusion:** Metropolitan regions are on the one hand probably necessary; but their attraction dramatically disappears when the surrounding countryside collapses or becomes unattractive.

### **How do German and Bavarian politicians and the technical world respond to the challenges and tendencies?**

I have just supervised a colleague's doctoral dissertation in which she writes about the increasing rural migration to Dhaka (Bangladesh). Although 35% inhabitants of the newly built peripheral zones are "poor people" from rural areas, they do not appear in the relevant development plans and promotion programmes.

This is not the case in Germany! The EU, Federal and Bavarian State Governments are well aware, frequently supported by scientific studies which

cannot be ignored and by statistical data, of what is going on in the country, particularly in rural areas.

And they try to achieve the impossible, knowing well that it is difficult, but at the same time of extreme importance: they insist on the principle of creating living conditions which as far as possible are of equal quality in town and country. This naturally has consequences for state programmes and investments. Rural development is a typical consequence and benefits from this situation with the support of all Parliaments. It has never cost so much as at the present time!

Bavaria, which is very rural ("Bavaria's villages are the soul of the state"), has gone a step further. The maintenance **Principle (Vorhalteprinzip)** is anchored in the state development programme, the development plan for the whole area of the state, approved by government and parliament. This principle is a response for example to demographic change. It means that even where the number of pupils in a village school sinks below the required minimum number of pupils, the school will not be (immediately) closed and incorporated into the school in the next larger community. The attempt is made to keep the school going.

Theories and instruments of rural development in Germany and Bavaria are no longer completely unknown in China. Much has already been discussed and published (see here the joint Seminars in Qingzhou in 1997, in Peking in 2002 or in Munich in 2007). Many MLR delegations invited by the Hanns Seidel Foundation to Bavaria have moreover seen on the spot what rural development means in Germany. They will undoubtedly have registered that we also only "boil with water in Bavaria". But perhaps they have also taken home as valuable perceptions:

1. The **idea of sustainable rural development is fully accepted by all political parties**. In the context of the economic and investment packet in answer to the financial crisis, emphasis has been placed on intensified investment in rural development, that is – as in China – in rural infrastructure such as roads and water projects, etc., in broadband development, in village and town renewal, in land consolidation etc.
2. The imperative of inter-communal, that is crossing communal boundaries, long term oriented development concepts developed

jointly “bottom up” by inhabitants, communities and technical experts is not only followed but is personally adopted by those concerned. Only after the drawing up of such an overall concept, in which economic, ecological and social aspects are balanced and fused together as equal components, are the individual areas and individual measures, such as land consolidation, village renewal, construction of roads and paths, agricultural cooperation etc worked out. A harmonious development will however only be possible when the communities and authorities work optimally together and the individual measures are coordinated both in substance and in timing, so that conflicts can be recognised early and resolved. Proven methods, instruments and above all competence are needed for this. It is not without reason that in Germany we speak of the “four Cs” (in German actually “four Ks”!) which are necessary for the success of rural development: competence, cooperation, communication and coordination. But they only come into their own when it is possible to arouse and to utilise the self-potential of individuals which is so indispensable, in other words the talents latent in individuals. Here also special methods of reaching out to the citizens and motivating them are required, which an expert in land development must possess.

### **And which new strategies are recommended?**

Returning to this year’s Munich Symposium on Land Management and Land Development and its main messages which are of importance here: economist experts have recently evaluated the high economic and ecological effect of integrated land consolidation for agriculture and society. Experts on regional planning have on the basis of a Federation wide study of model regions drawn up **new strategies** for the development of rural areas. In conjunction with experience from the practice of integrated rural development on the basis of land consolidation and land management over a wide area they represent guides which in principle are relevant for all expert and actors in rural areas, perhaps also for such persons in China.

There are six imperatives for action, which are not completely new, but which have gained in profile and current relevance:

1. **More active shaping of demographic development** (that means above all an appropriate flexible retention of basic infrastructure or adjustment of the infrastructure, to this belongs the technical support of contracting communities).
2. **Shaping and steering of economic structural change** (this means: agriculture by itself is no longer a viable basis for an economic future in rural areas! Something more is needed. This is just what the OECD recommends in its research report "The New Rural Paradigm: Policies and Governance", 2006!).
3. Future oriented, that is **sustainable shaping of villages and community development** with accompanying sensible location and land use management (integrated guiding principles and cooperatively developed development concepts as well as village renewal in the light of demographic trends and consequently sustainable land use concepts as well as a dynamic land management as implementing instruments are required here).
4. **New orientation of active communal economic promotion** (mayors and communal administrations must become ambassadors, managers, facilitators and networkers of their local economy and attract personally targeted environmentally friendly undertakings with jobs. A precondition for this is being able to invest in training and in the provision of highly qualified staff.)
5. **Self-confident development to joint development regions.** This is a matter of developing attractive regional and communal locations and facilities. This leads to the necessary inter-communal cooperation and to a division of labour, resources, and profit, not only within these rural communities but also with the urban centres - in China for example with

the new Small Towns. The principle of equality and reciprocal respect and esteem applies here.

## **Policies are not enough – nothing works without people**

The central message of all messages from the Munich Symposium 2009 was however once again, and I should like to conclude with this:

- Politicians and experts must take to heart: nothing works without motivating people; nothing works without strong local leading personalities. That is the secret of the success of every rural development in Bavaria; this was also in my estimation the secret of success in Nan Zhang Lou and no doubt of other projects in China of which I am not yet aware.

- In Bavaria, still characterised by its western Christian tradition, the philosophy of rural development corresponds to the traditional picture of mankind, according to which each person is in the first instance responsible for himself and his community. This is described as the principle of subsidiarity. This means that the larger entity, as for example the regional, district, provincial state level assist the smaller, thus the people, their families, neighbourhoods, villages, rural communities, only when they are not in a position to develop further by their own efforts.

As I see it, China has long known the way of self development and self responsibility of the villages. The OECD has in respect praised the example of Nan Zhang Lou in its recently published report “Rural Policy Review China“ of 2009.

There can be no doubt, and this is a universal message:

Participating rural development is an effective form of self-help which is decisive for the future of rural areas.

We can thus exchange to our mutual benefit our theories, models, programmes and experiences in this all-decisive aspect of viable rural development.

## **Literature:**

Can be obtained from the author on request; see however also the web pages of the Chair of Land Management, Technical University Munich [www.landentwicklung-muenchen.de](http://www.landentwicklung-muenchen.de) as well as the Bavarian Academy for Rural Areas [www.akademie-bayern.de](http://www.akademie-bayern.de)