

# Regional Resilience and the Global Environment

Multiple Scales of Environmental Discourse in Rural Development Policy



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# DERREG

## Developing Europe's Rural Regions in the Era of Globalization

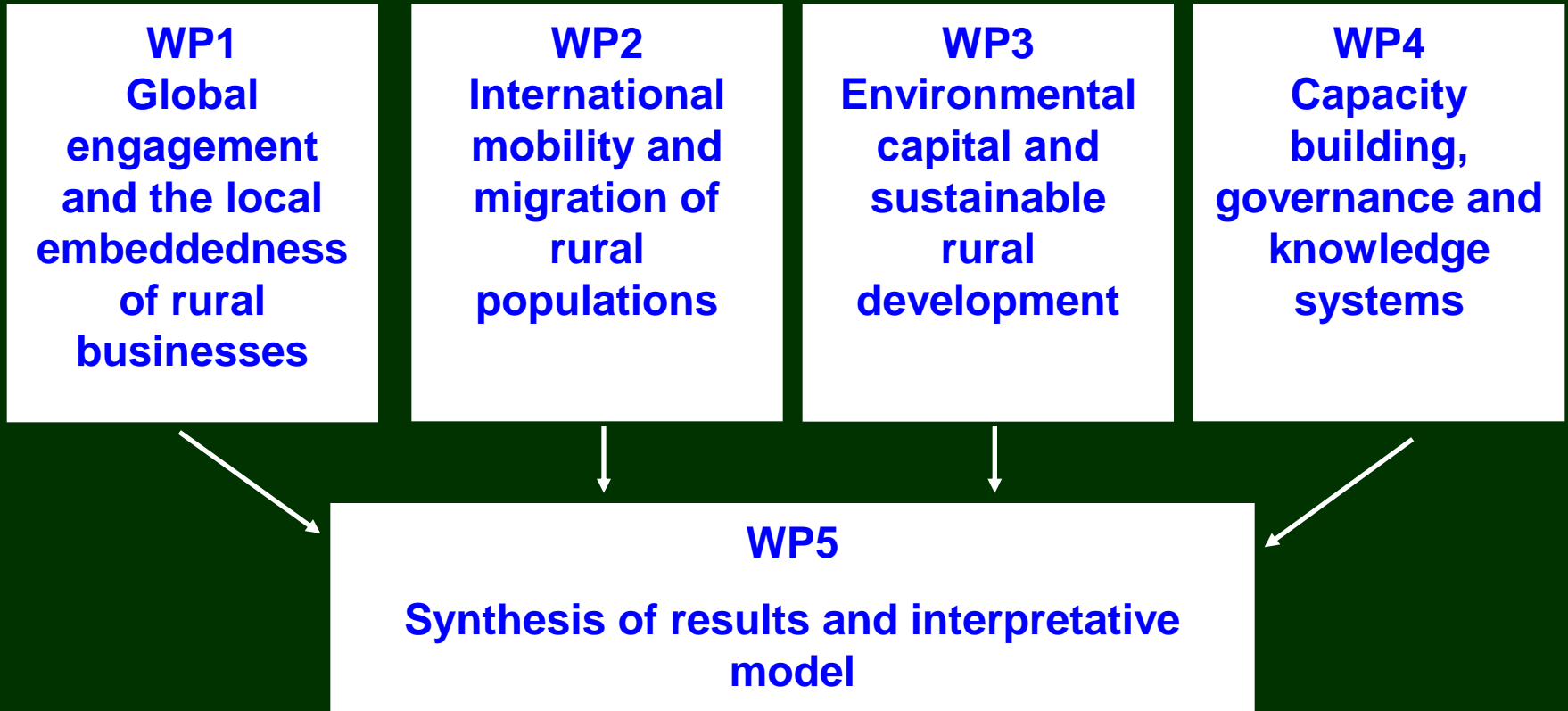
- January 2009 – December 2011
- Aberystwyth University; Leibniz-IfL; Mendel University; NeVork; NUI Galway; Nordregio; Universitat des Saarlandes; Univerza v Ljubljana; Wageningen Universiteit
- Helping rural regions better anticipate and respond to the challenges of globalization



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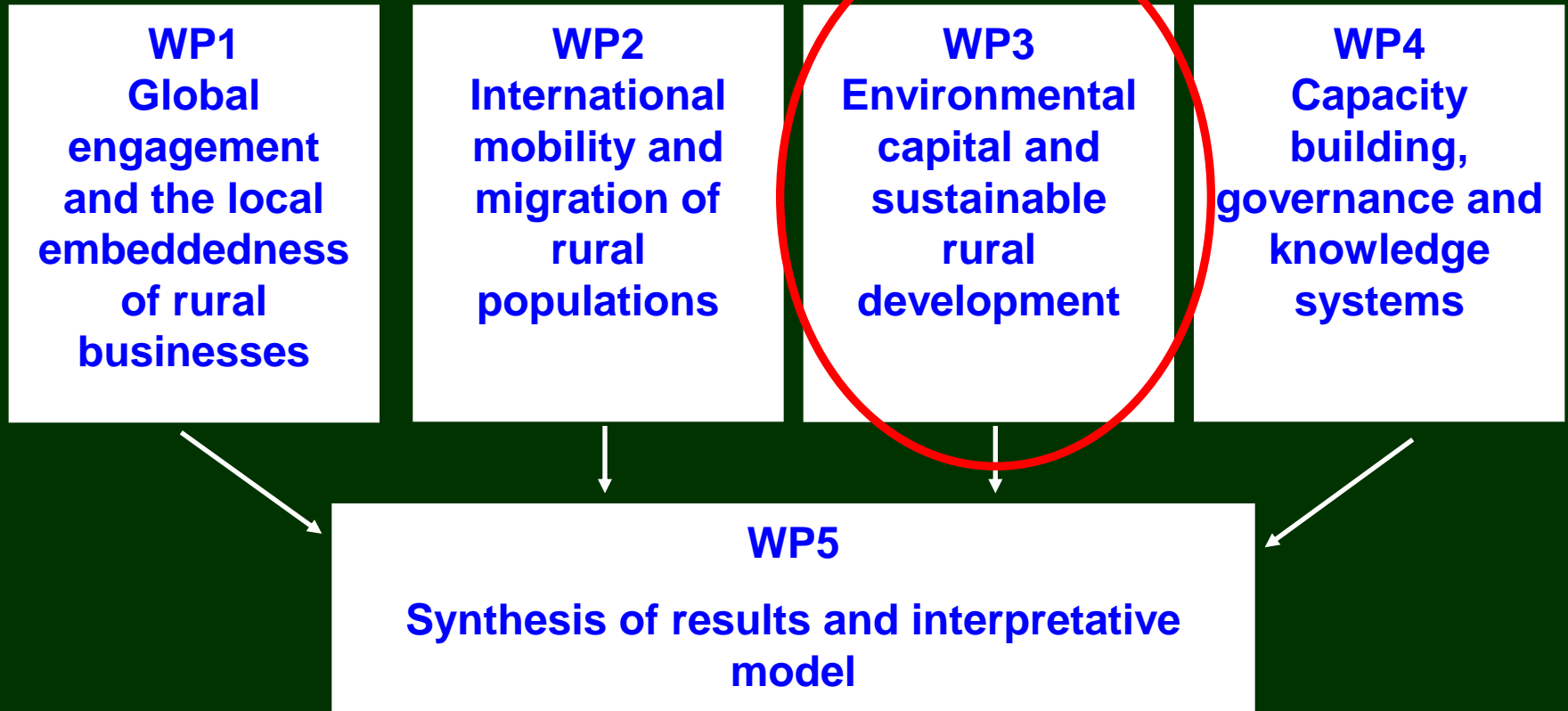
# DERREG

## Four thematic work packages



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# Globalization and the Environment

“a multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social [and economic] interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant”

Steger (2003) *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, p 13

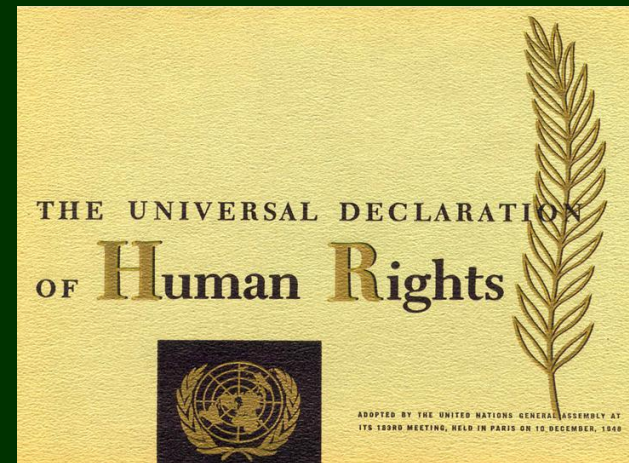
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# Global Consciousness

- Global poverty campaigns
- Universal human rights
- Global environmental discourse and movement







# Global Nature

“What were once many apparently separate activities are now regarded as interconnected components of a single global crisis of the natural world ... This global nature has resulted from fusing various social practices that are remaking space. These include images of the earth from space and especially the Apollo 17 photograph of the ‘whole earth’ taken in 1972, transport policies, deforestation, energy use, media images of threatened iconic environments which are often markets of global threats, dramatic environmental protest, scientific papers on climate change, the ending of the cold war, NGO campaigns, records of extreme weather events, pronouncements by global public figures, global conferences such as Rio and Kyoto, and so on.”

John Urry (2003) *Global Complexity*, pp 6-7

# Global Nature

- Holistic but also composite
- ‘Think Global, Act Local’
- International treaties and agencies
- Expectations of change in individual behaviour and regional policies and economic practices

# Global Nature and Rural Development

- Scrutiny of environmental impact of traditional rural industries (e.g. mining, quarrying, industrialized agriculture)
- Infrastructural projects (e.g. new roads & airports) have been discredited for contributing to global carbon emissions
- Local conflicts over forestry, mining and pipelines amplified into global causes
- Sustainable development in rural areas has been identified as part of the solution to global environmental crises

# OECD 녹색성장전략 워크숍

Workshop on Green Growth Strategy



# Global Nature and Rural Development

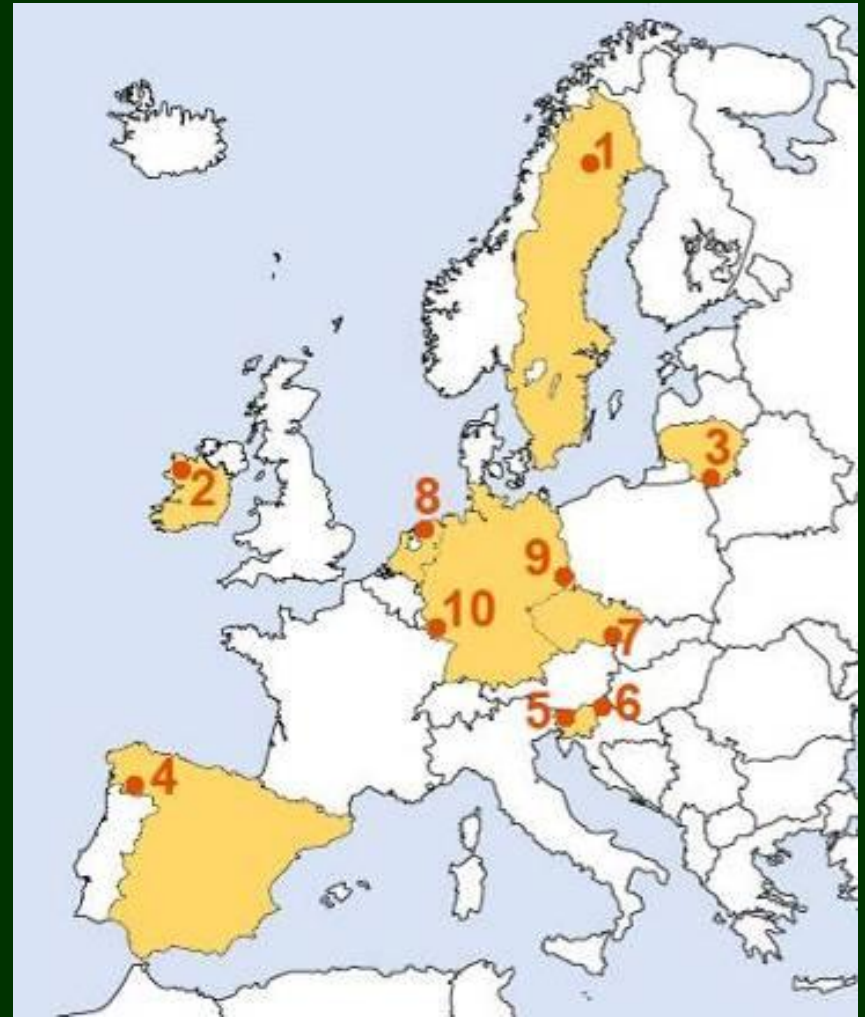
- Global environmental discourse frames rural regional development
- But its impact is mediated by processes of dissemination, translation, negotiation and contestation
- Regional development strategies involve squaring local economic development and global environmental concerns, and balancing claims about local and global environmental impacts
- The relational reproduction of globalization (Massey, 2005)

# The Global Countryside

“Through these entanglements, intersections and entrapments, the experience of globalization changes rural places, but it never eradicates the local. Rather, the networks, flows and actors introduced by globalization processes fuse and combine with extant local entities to produce new hybrid formations. In this way, places in the emergent global countryside retain their local distinctiveness, but they are also different to how they were before.”

Woods (2007), in *Progress in Human Geography*, p 500

- Dissemination
- Translation
- Negotiation



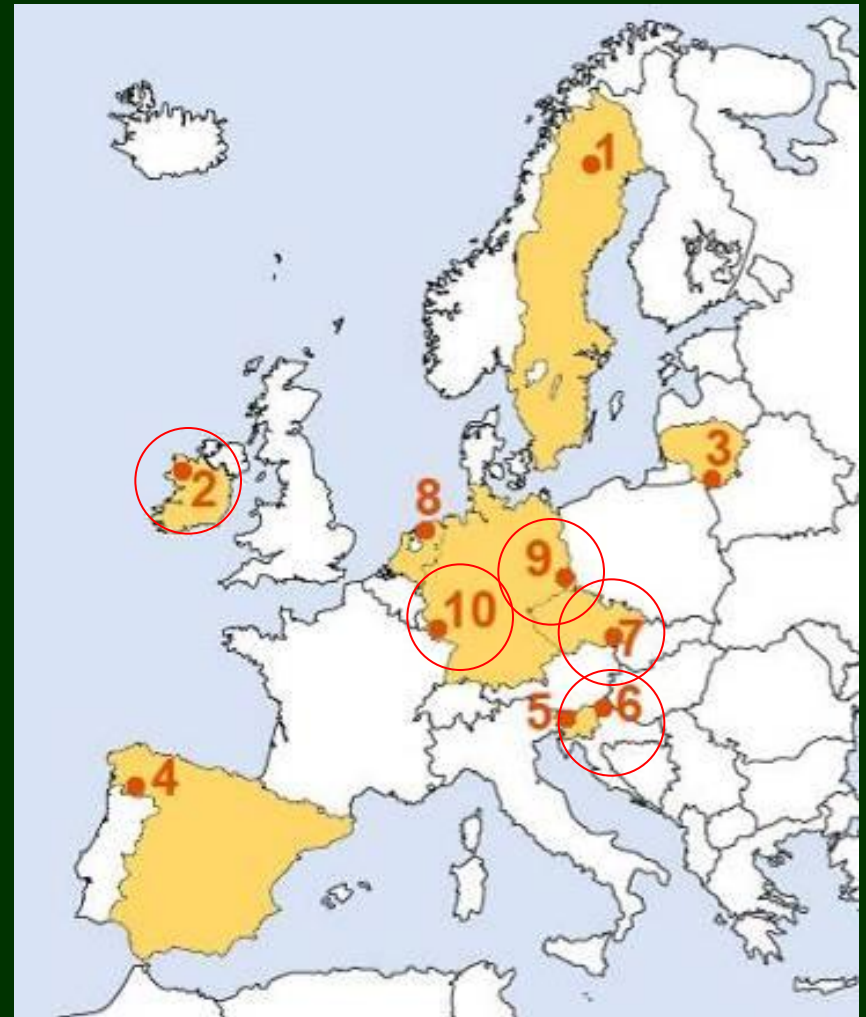


- **Dissemination**

- **Translation**

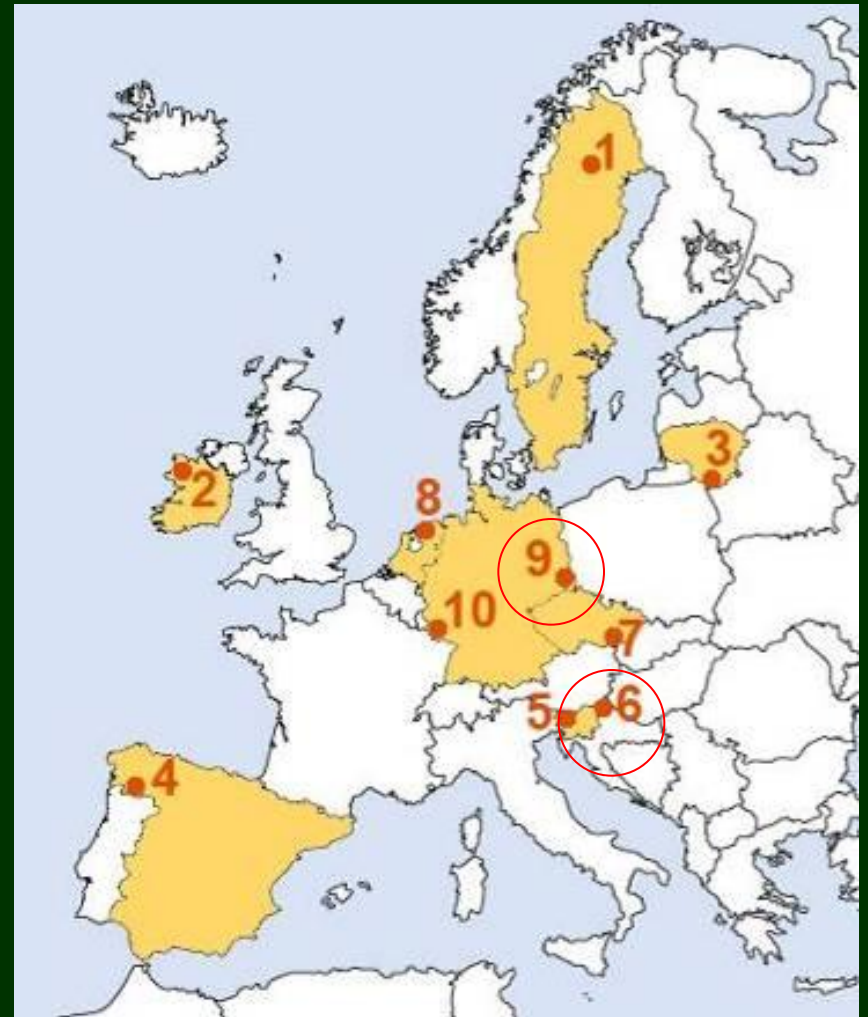
- **Negotiation**

- County Roscommon, Ireland (2)
- Pomurska, Slovenia (6)
- South Moravia, Czech Rep (7)
- Eastern Saxony, Germany (9)
- Saarland, Germany (10)



- Dissemination
- Translation
- **Negotiation**

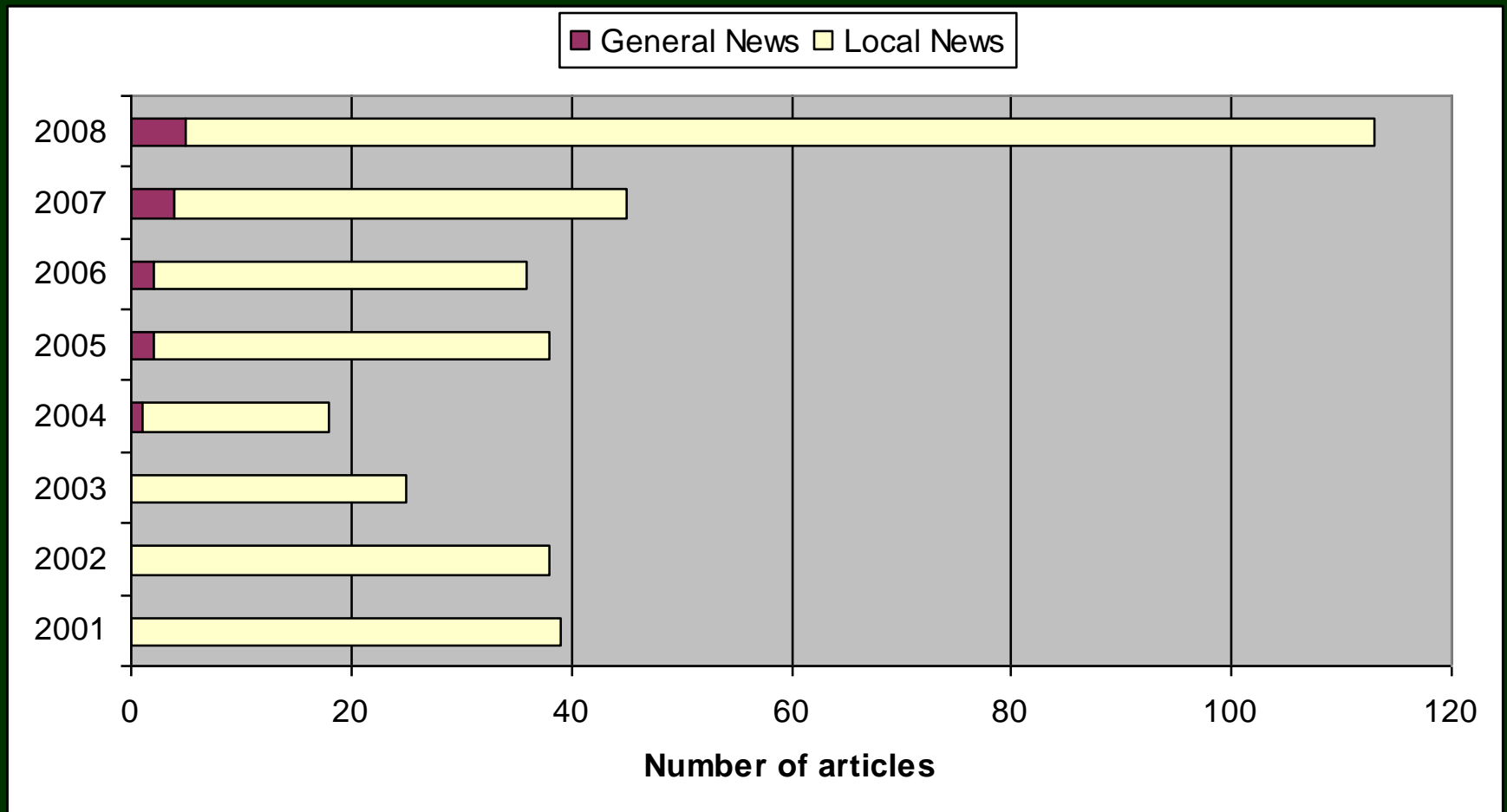
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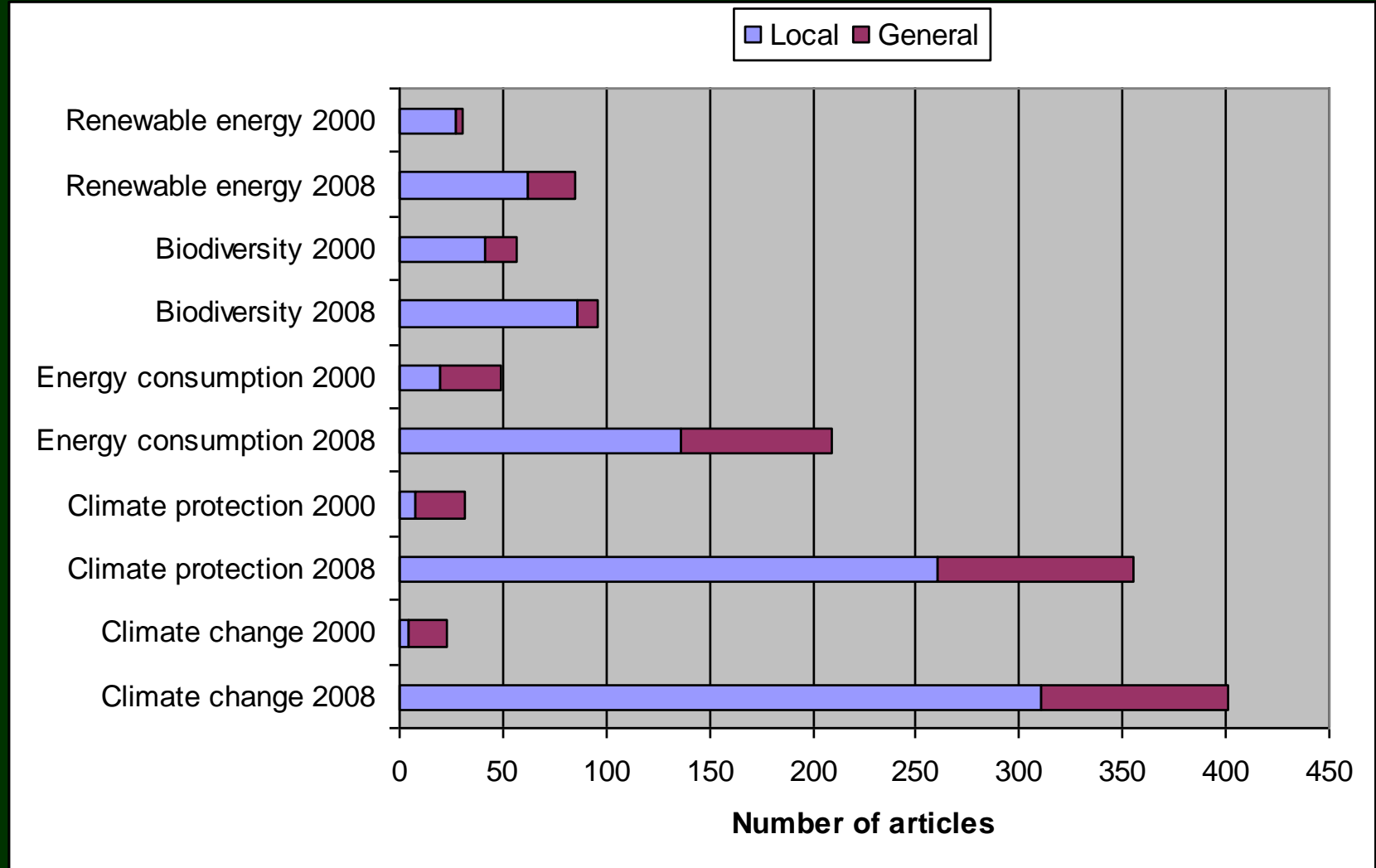
# Dissemination

- How global and regional environmental messages and concerns are disseminated through the media
- Focus on the regional media
- Variations in the regional media between case studies

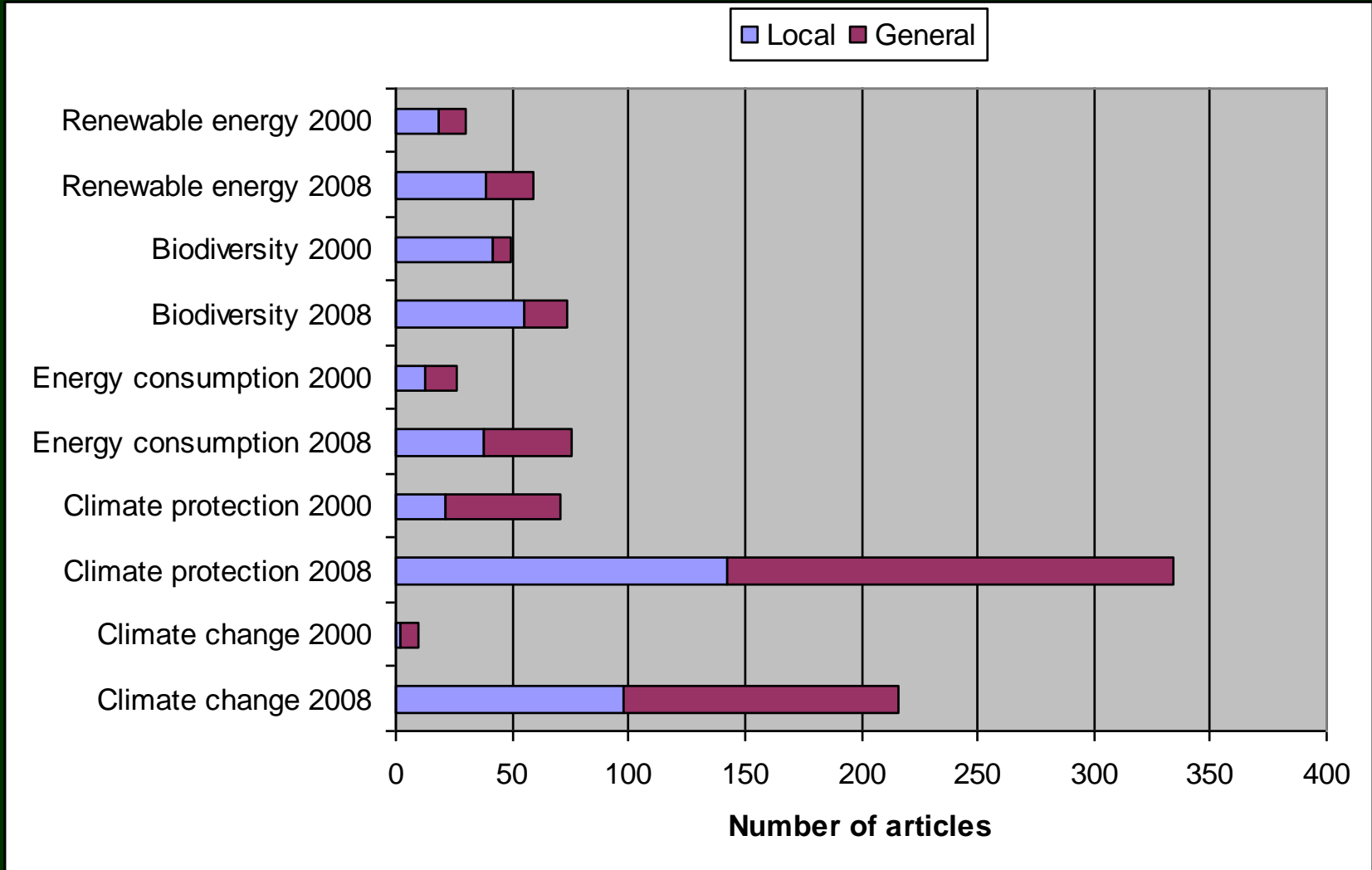
# Environment-related articles in regional newspapers in County Roscommon



# Environment-related articles in *Sächsische Zeitung*, Saxony



# Environment-related articles in *Saarbrucker Zeitung*, Saarland



# Translation

- Translation of global and local environmental discourses into regional development strategies
- Universal inclusion of sustainability in strategies examined
- Near-consensus that sustainability and economic development can be mutually accommodated
- Acknowledgement of global issues in framing policies, but limited direct reference
- Local environmental concerns more important drivers

# Translation

- Mediation by assessment of local problems, opportunities and pressures
- Regional actors placed at forefront of shaping strategies
- Few stakeholders interviewed identified international or national agencies as key actors
- Influence of national & transnational environmental groups dismissed
- Local campaign groups identified as key actors in several case study regions



# Wind power in Saxony

## 2002 Regional Development Strategy:

- Core to plans for expanding renewable energy generation

## 2009 Revision:

- Wind power discussed in entirely negative terms & policies for renewable energy broadened beyond wind



# Translation

- Regional actors both localizing environmental concerns and contesting elements of global discourse
- Most claim to have got the balance right
- Dissenting voices in two case study regions
  - Pomurska (Slovenia) – Policy not gone far enough in incorporating environmental concerns
  - Eastern Saxony – Argued that economy still took priority and that environmental concerns were limited economic development

# Eastern Saxony

“When you are looking at the tasks then I have to say that ... environment is subordinate. Economic efficiency is most important and all things that can be turned for account are realized.”

Environmental NGO stakeholder

“To my point of view ... If someone just mentions nature protection, then everybody will be angry because we have the most dense network of Natura 2000 areas in Saxony and thus – this is the public opinion – economic development is limited.”

Business stakeholder

# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony

- Mining and power-generation central to economy in C20
- Lausitz district major source of brown coal in GDR
- Late 1980s – Over 300 million tons of brown coal produced annually from 33 open pits
- Strip mining caused environmental degradation
- ‘The Black Triangle’



# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony

- Brown coal industry dismantled after German reunification
- Combination of local, national and international pressures
- 2002 Regional Plan for Upper Lausitz and Lower Silesia assumed that brown coal mining would be phased out
- Economic development through sustainable tourism and renewable energy
- ‘Energy Region Lausitz’



# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony

- Resilience of coal industry
- 60 million tons per year (16.3 million tons from Nochten mine in eastern Saxony)
- 3 power stations producing 6500 MW of electricity
- Mines & power stations both operated by Vattenfall, employing 7,000 workers



# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony

- Support for mining from local stakeholders
- Planning and regulation considered to mitigate local environmental impacts
- Not qualified to assess global impacts
- Opposition from local and international groups, including Greenpeace
- Global concerns discursively marginalized



# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony



- Wind power stations met by local opposition
- Revision of Regional Plan in 2009 marked a clear reversal of policy on wind-power
- “the existing designated privileged areas for wind energy are sufficient to implement the Programme for Climate Protection”

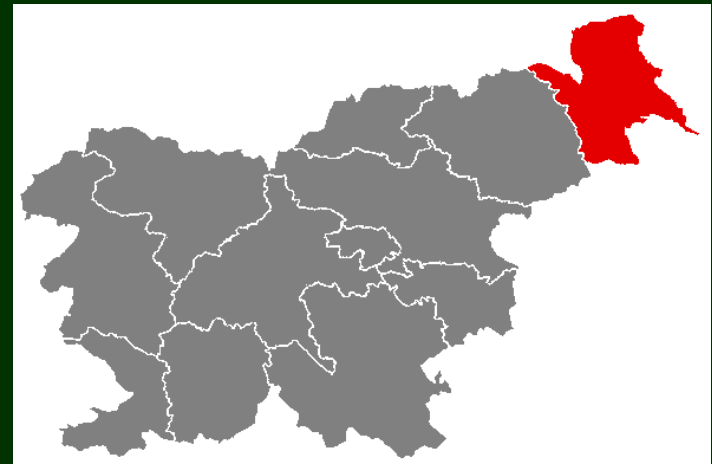


# Negotiation 1 – Eastern Saxony

- Renegotiation of global discourse of climate change by intervention of local actors
- From an environmental imperative offering opportunities for sustainable economic development
- To a marginal factor in a broader conception of sustainable development configured around regional environmental concerns, with a stronger economic emphasis

# Negotiation 2 - Pomurska

- Poorest region in Slovenia
- Peripheral location
- Economy dominated by farming, food-processing and textiles
- Closure of largest employer (Mura clothing factory) in 2009 with loss of 2,600 jobs



# Negotiation 2 - Pomurska



- Exceptional natural environment
- Goricko Landscape Park designated on IUCN model in 2004
- Natura 2000 sites cover 43% of region
- Potential for sustainable development, especially sustainable tourism

# Negotiation 2 - Pomurska

- Regional strategy making global connections
- Regional environment having international appeal in attracting foreign tourists
- Sustainable tourism as a model limiting both local environmental impacts and global environmental footprint



# Negotiation 2 - Pomurska

- Realization of these goals frustrated by limited regional capacity to act
- Restricted engagement of local communities in environment planning
- Lack of awareness of sustainable development among public
- Limited engagement with sustainable development in national & regional policies
- Centralized state with no effective regional authority for Pomurska through which alternative agendas might be advanced

# Conclusions

- Divergence of outcomes pointing to significance of regional differentiation and mediation
- Global discourses calling for action are mediated and adapted to local environmental situations and concerns
- Dissemination through regional media frames debate and influences development of regional policies and plans
- Implementation of regional initiatives involves negotiations with local actors for whom global concerns may feel less pressing than local economic needs
- Sustainable development as the regionally differentiated outcome of the negotiated and contested reproduction of the global through the local