

# **Who are the Local Actors in Development**

**Jukka Oksa**

jukka.oksa@uef.fi

**12 February 2010  
University of Eastern Finland  
Karelian Institute**

# The Key Question of Local Development Action

**How to mobilise the limited local resources in such a way that they connect the place to growing wave of development?**

**Local development bloc, network, community**



# The Key Question of Local Development Action

## Tasks of local developer

- To recognise the rising wave
- To understand the possibilities for the future of the place
- To recognise the local resources (and weaknesses)
- To develop a proposal for action programme
- To motivate local actors to co-operate and contribute in joint action programme
- To start and maintain a shared process of learning



# Who is the Local Developer?

## The Question of Agency in Rural Development.

**Social actors in localities are many:  
official representatives of national  
government, national or global voluntary  
organisations,  
local self government, local associations and  
groups, enterprises, households,  
visitors, consumers.**

**Their activities have impact on local  
development, but often they are not  
undertaking the tasks of local development.**

**How should we conceptualise local  
development actors?**

# Who is the Local Developer?

## The Question of Agency in Rural Development.

### *Research history: Different Concepts of Local Developers*

1. **Local Community** united by common fate and objectives, organised in defending local interests.
2. **Local Development Coalition (Bloc)** challenging the old local policy elite.
3. **Local Networks for Development**, using and creating social capital, identities and knowledge resources.
4. **New Communities of Development**, collectively learning agencies, expanding capacity to act.

## 1. Local Community

- common history and local identity, accumulated traditions
- conservative, not flexible
- old power groups are often not sensitive to new needs
- defensive, fear of outside influences and outsiders
- claiming others of problems in development



## 2. Local Development Bloc

**New coalition joining forces and interests.**

**An example: Why some places had so many IT-projects and other did not?**

**Three social groups with different interests created a coalition:**

- Local developers (officers and political activists)**
- Local entrepreneurs (farming, services)**
- New rural inhabitants with education and needs for connections**

**Cooperation outlasting single projects.**

**Challenging the old local hegemonic thinking.**

**Reaching outside the local to new connections.**

### 3. Local Networks

**Local Networks for Development, using and creating social capital, identities and knowledge resources.**

**Example:  
The RESTRIM study.**



# **Local Networks for Development. The RESTRIM Study.**

Jukka Oksa & Esko Lehto  
University of Joensuu, Karelian Institute

20 February 2008

**New Book:**

**Comparing Rural Development. Continuity and Change in the Countryside of Western Europe.**

**Edited by Arnar Árnason, Mark Shucksmith and Jo Vergunst.  
Ashgate 2009**

**Chapter in the in the book, pp. 17-46.**

**Esko Lehto and Jukka Oksa:**

**"Networks for Local Development: Aiming for Visibility, Products and Success."**

# Restrim Finland

Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development



**Restrim**  
*Restructuring in Marginal  
Rural Areas*  
- *The role of social capital in  
rural development*

**Comparative research 2001-2003  
funded by EU Framework Five**

**Focus on relatively successful  
marginal rural localities:**

Skye and Lochalsh (Scotland)

Lake District (Ireland)

Southern Tuscany (Italy)

Mountain Region (Norway)

Leksand and Rättvik (Sweden)

Sotkamo (Finland)

## **Objective of the Restrim project**

To explain why these rural areas have been more successful in diversifying their economies than their neighbours.

What is the meaning and role of social capital in rural development? (*Putnam vs. Bourdieu on Social Capital*)

## **Empirical approach**

Focus to the role of networks and important events in local development.

# Restrim Finland

Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development

Country	Network Case	Location
Ireland	<b><i>Making of Lake District</i></b>	Counties of Mayo and Galway (Ballinrobe town in the middle of the region)
Italy	<b><i>Maremma food and tourism</i></b>	Southern Tuscany, Amiata Grossetano and Colline Interne (regions of 10 municipalities)
Norway	<b><i>Building Mountain Region</i></b>	Edges of the Counties of South-Trøndelag and Hedmark
Sweden	<b><i>Sponsoring Leksand Ice-Hockey</i></b>	Dalarna Region, Leksand municipality
Sweden	<b><i>Summer-time Opera at Dalhalla</i></b>	Dalarna Region, Rättvik municipality

# Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development

Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development

Country	Network Case	Location
Finland	<b><i>Sotkamo Dairy</i></b>	Kainuu Region, Sotkamo municipality
Finland	<b><i>Vuokatti Tourism and Sports</i></b>	Kainuu Region, Sotkamo municipality
United Kingdom	<b><i>Bed &amp; Breakfast Network</i></b>	Scottish Highlands, Isle of Skye, estates of Sconser and Elgol
United Kingdom	<b><i>Horticultural development association</i></b>	Scottish Highlands, Skye & Lochalsh
United Kingdom	<b><i>Local Food Link</i></b>	Scottish Highlands, Skye & Lochalsh
United Kingdom	<b><i>Skye and Lochalsh Marketing Group</i></b>	Scottish Highlands, Skye & Lochalsh
United Kingdom	<b><i>Wind Farm Controversy</i></b>	Scottish Highlands, Isle of Skye, Edinbane



## **Product development: Dalhalla Opera Stage**

**Rättvik summer resident, a retired opera star Margareta Dellefors was looking for a place for open air opera stage in the early 1990s. An emptied lime quarry was to be filled with water. She saw it as a place for opera festival.**

**Local administration regarded this a crazy and unrealistic idea.**

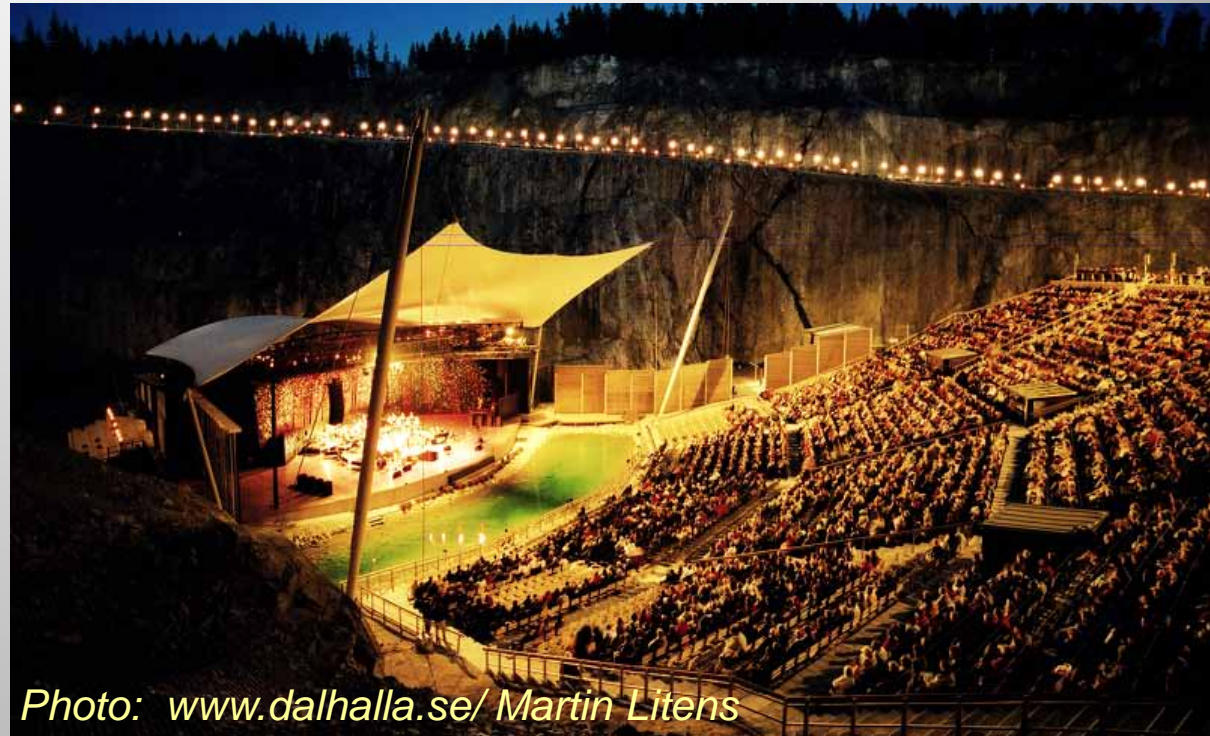
**She used her energy and network connections and organized a test concert in 1993. The invited 200 key person of Swedish cultural life were astonished and convinced. A local association was founded the place was given a new name and identity "Dalhalla".**



*Photo: [www.dalhalla.se/](http://www.dalhalla.se/) Martin Litens*

## Impacts of Dalhalla

- Number of tourist has grown
- Tourist season became longer
- Symbol of modernity



- "Restaurants, shops and other local entrepreneurs talk about "Dalhalla days", when the money comes in.

The first season of 2000 brought about 3000 visitors and the year 2001, if the one day visitors are included, about 112 000.

## **Dalhalla Partnership**



The land is owned by the municipality.

The Friends of Dalhalla Association owns the stage and facilities. Dalhalla Production Company Ltd runs the business.

Friends of Dalhalla has many members outside the region. Many of them have local relatives and friends. Some persons have paid for a permanent and labelled seat.

Every show night about 50 persons are running the practical arrangements (parking, guiding etc.). This work is done by village volunteers, and the compensation is paid to the village associations. They use the funds to improve the village house, playground, sport facilities, etc.



## Organizing around the Success

- **“Food Link”** (Skye & Lochalsh, Scotland): Local logistics innovation in the Food Futures programme.



- **Leksand Stars Ice Hockey team** (Sweden): Threat of disappearing sponsor and lost of the place in the top series, mobilized enterprises to save a successful regional ice-hockey team.

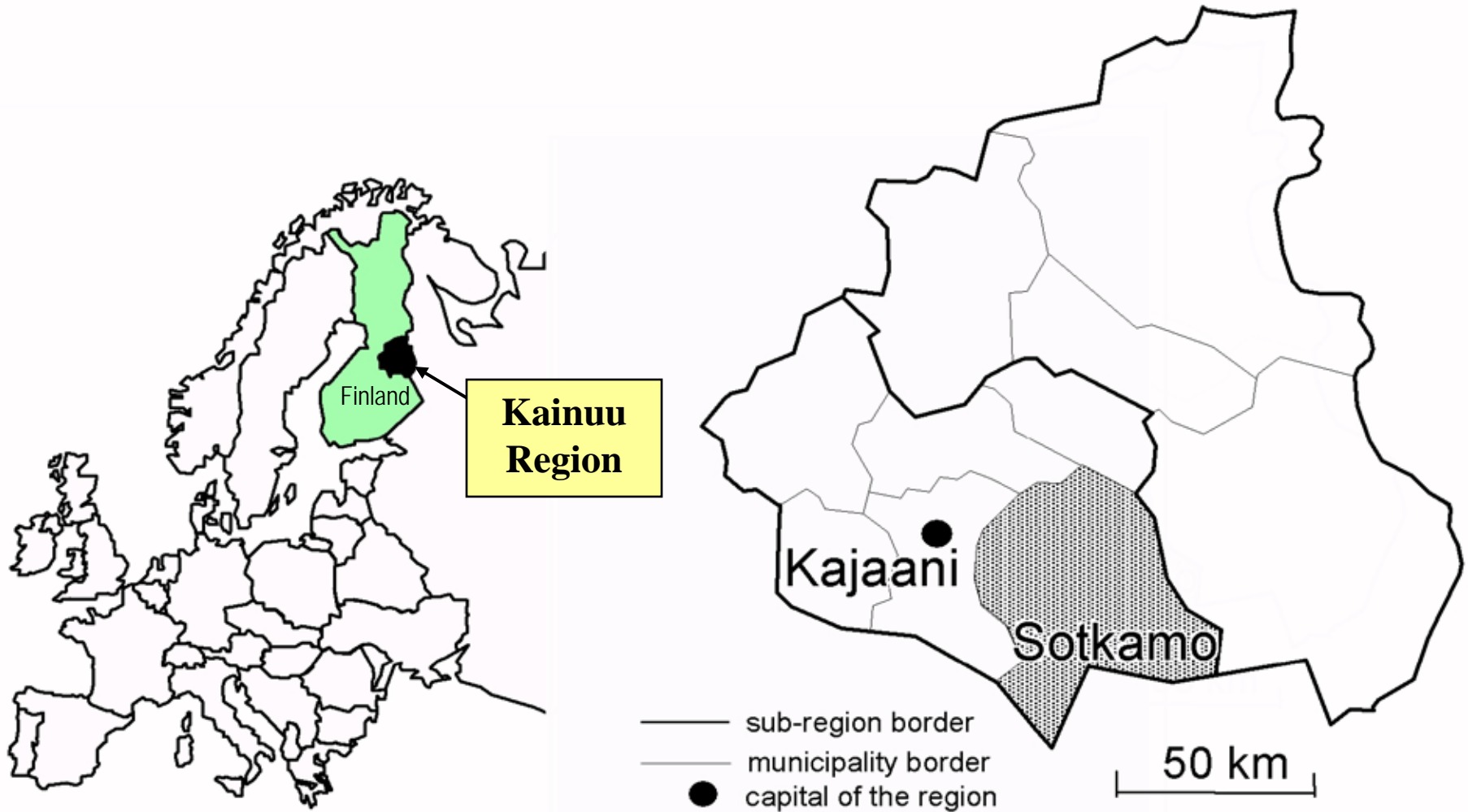


- **Vuokatti** (Finland): Network of winter sports and holiday spa hotel reorganise tourism marketing. The baseball club replaces the municipal enterprise in the marketing of the local tourism.

# Restructuring in Finland

Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development

## Location of Kainuu Region and Sotkamo municipality



# Restrim Finland

Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas. The role of social capital in rural development

## Vuokatti Slopes, Katinkulta Spa and Sotkamon Jymy

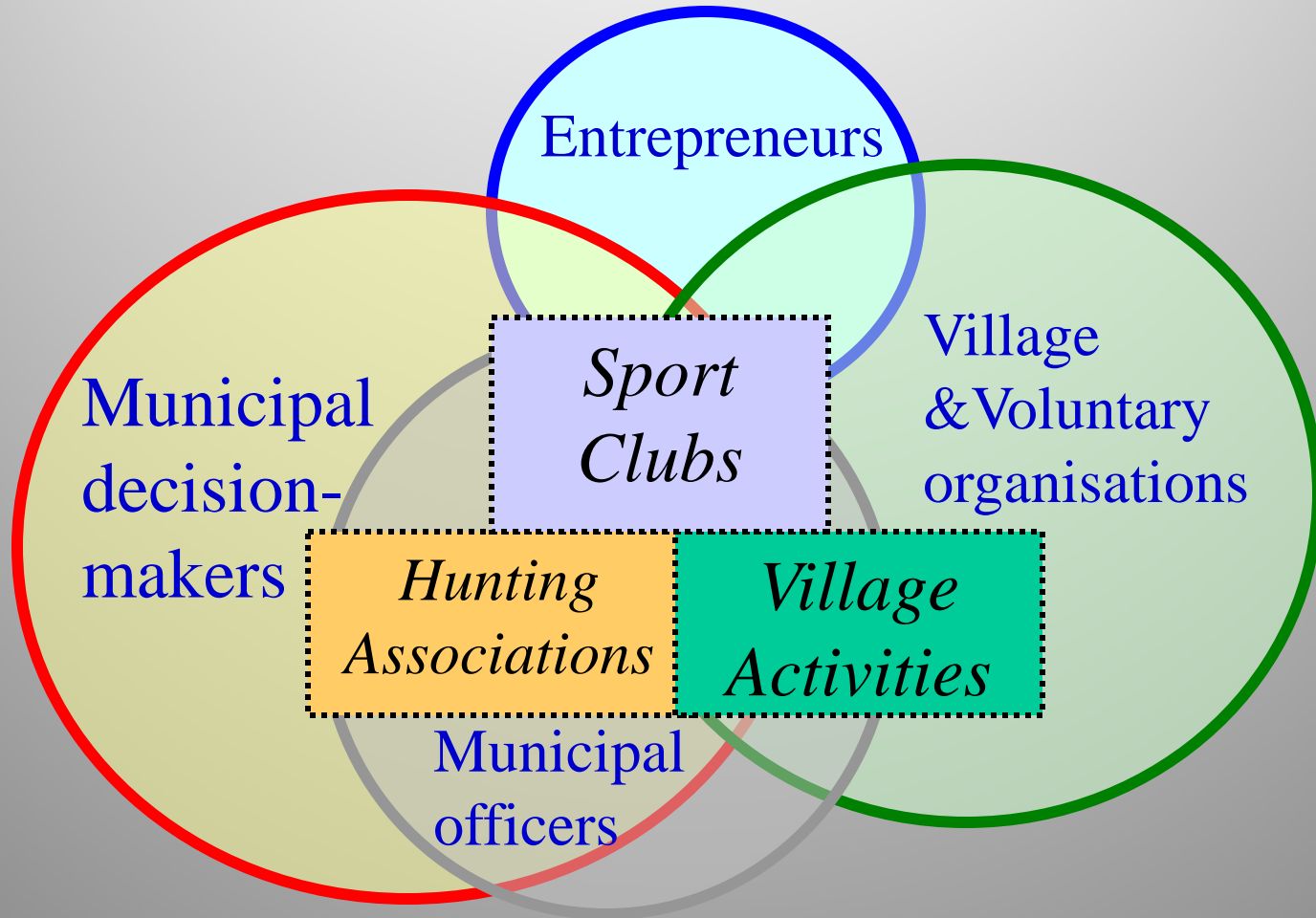


Photo: Holiday Club Katinkulta, brochure





## Networks of Overlapping Memberships in Sotkamo



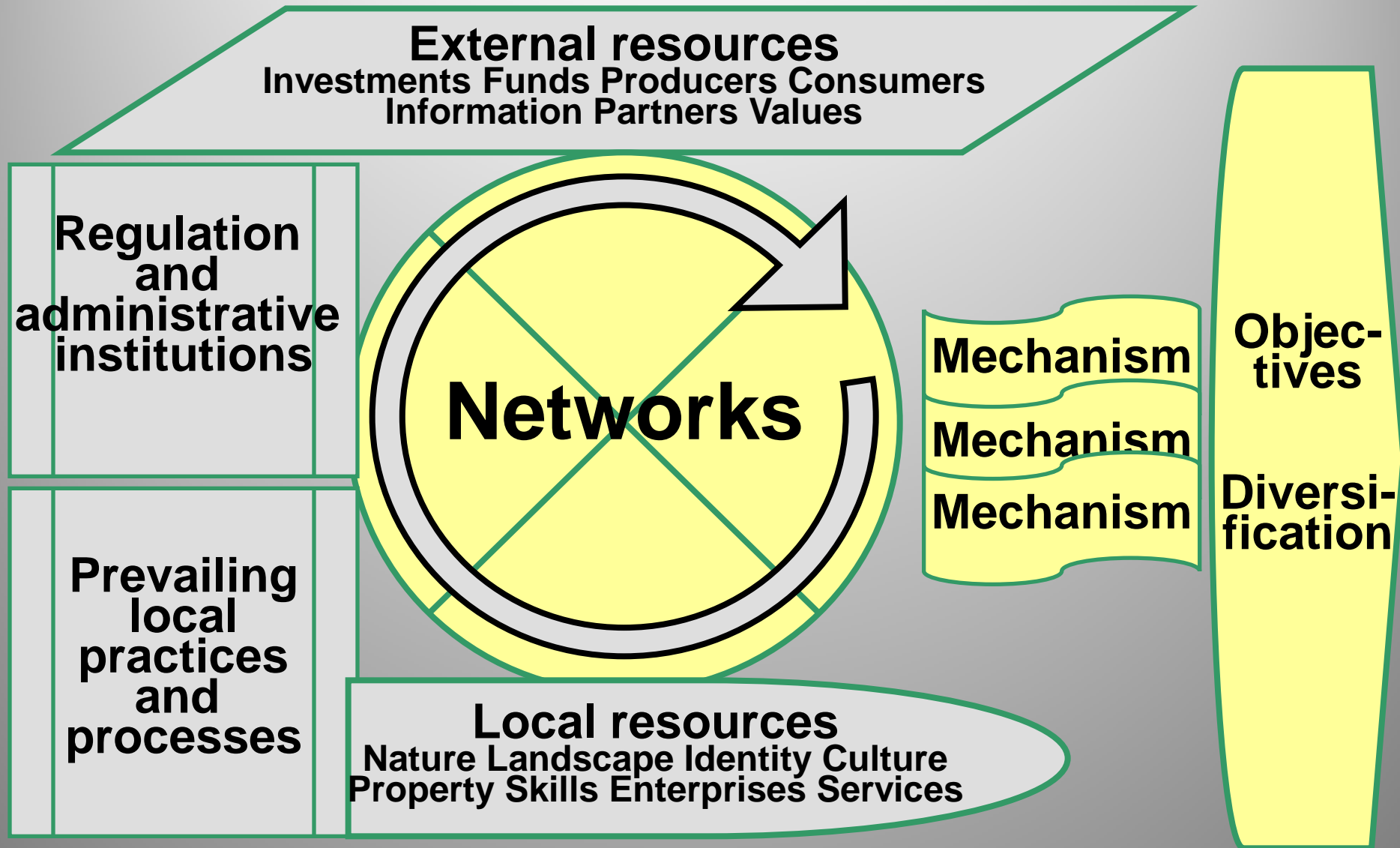
## **Conclusions**

### ***Fields and bridges***

Three kinds of activity fields were recognized:

- 1) The field of politics
- 2) The field of interest organisations and
- 3) The field of hobbies, recreation, and unofficial interactions.

The third category of fields has a special role. It creates bridges between political processes and interest networks. In Sotkamo they have become a starting engine of new development co-operation.



## Key Dimensions of Successful Development Networks

- 1) **Multiplicity of resources reached through the network:** better accessibility and increased possibilities for combining resources (also in regards for *knowledge and identity, bridging*).
- 2) **Thickness of network relationships (trust):** mandate to act and to make decisions in spite of conflicts and different opinions (trust, ability to overcome conflicts, *bonding, field of activity*).
- 3) **Agility of network (learning):** requires open communication, it enables improvement of practices and making of social innovations.

# Limitations of Network Concept: Unanswered Questions

- 1) **Networks consist of active partners. Who are the partners? Who may become partners?**
- 2) **Who runs the Network? How division of labour is becomes decided? How the legitimacy to act in the name of the Network is constructed?**
- 3) **How it is decided what questions are worth discussing in the network? What lessons are worth learning? Where do the objectives and values of the Network come from?**

### **4. New Communities for Development?**

- Concept of new communities (leisure, consumption, voluntary action, short time span, third spaces between public and private).**
- Common objectives, open for newcomers, goal oriented, operating also through and inside networks.**



## Contacts

**Jukka Oksa**

**University of Eastern Finland  
Karelian Institute  
PO Box 111, FIN-80101 Joensuu, Finland  
Phone +358-(0)13-251 2454  
[jukka.oksa@uef.fi](mailto:jukka.oksa@uef.fi)**

**This file is available at  
<http://cc.joensuu.fi/~alma/lue/>**

**More about RESTRIM-study:  
<http://cc.joensuu.fi/~alma/restrim/>**