Multi-stakeholder initiatives and grassroots participation

Case study of the unfolding of the LEADER programme in Croatia

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Introduction
Theoretical framework

• How is an MSI implemented and promoted through the State?

• To which extent does it (succeed in being inclusive of, and actually) engage with the grassroots, the (weak) local actors?

• MSIs – multistakeholder initiatives
  • LAGs as publicly funded MSIs

• Value regime as political arena that reaches a certain stability when “three interrelated dimensions are aligned:
  • Economic models of value creation and distribution (...); normative and cultural value (...); and governance mechanisms.” (Levy et al., 2015, p.6).

• Regimes as stabilized configurations that privilege certain technologies and actors
Research design

- Interpretivist-constructivist research paradigm
- Longitudinal case study

Posture of an embedded action researcher
Data collection

- Data collection from at least two (out of three) representative groups working on LEADER on the level of European Union, the State and organization,

- We triangulated interview data with other types of data such as communications, minute meetings, reports, legislations and operational handbooks;

- Semi structured interview around role of the actors, description of other actors working with them, anecdotal evidence and project management documentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Relevant academic publications</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2009</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Newspaper and web articles on projects related to LEADER initiatives (COAST project)</td>
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<td>2009-2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diaries of LAG manager Minute meetings</td>
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<td>2014-2019</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Diaries of LAG manager Minute meetings Social media communication</td>
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</table>
Data analysis

Operationalization of the value regime concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NGO REGIME</th>
<th>STATE LED REGIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key actors</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td>Public authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accumulation regime</td>
<td>Small scale</td>
<td>Large scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normative/cultural</td>
<td>3rd way (hybrid, multi-actors)</td>
<td>From all state to all market</td>
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<td>dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance / organization</td>
<td>Project based – efficiency – formalization and participation</td>
<td>Informal arrangements (friendship) and bureaucratic rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defining actor typology

- Supporting actors
  - MANAGING AUTHORITY
  - PAYING AGENCY
  - NATIONAL MULTISTAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS
  - LAGs (local multistakeholder organizations)
- Key actors
  - FRAMING
  - CONTROLLING
  - IMPLEMENTING
- Actor role
  - BENEFITING
In this country everybody knows everybody, or we are cousins

National civil sector verbatim, 2017
The case of LEADER in Croatia
At that time it seemed to me that (...) with the rural development schemes we might have difficulties to implement. My first task, to be quite honest with you, was to negotiate the money. And nothing else was important.
Findings
Conclusion

Through the process of europeanization the dominant regime loses its space in favour of the counter hegemony in the « war on position ». The civil society networks occupy a part of the territory subdividing it between the LAGs.

LAGs as MSIs at least at the formal level succeed in engaging with the weak local actors, the grassroots due to the hegemony imposed by the European Union to the Member State.
Thank you for your attention

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