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Rural and community development in Nigeria: an integrated, synergistic and participatory approach

Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejumudo¹

Abstract

Rural community development programmes in Nigeria have been largely piecemeal, lacking in policy consistency, integration and co-ordination, apart from the regime of mismanagement and corruption, the poor level of commitment to their execution and near absence of evaluation culture. This study which examined the imperative and exigency of an integrated, synergistic and participative approach to rural community development in Nigeria relied on in-depth analysis of valuable secondary sources of data. The study contended that the efficacy of rural community development plans and concerns in Nigeria will require a pragmatic multi-level participatory approach that will be embedded in and linked to Nigeria's sustainable development path. The study concluded with some valuable recommendations including a paradigm shift, a development culture, diversification of the rural economy, true commitment to and support for rural community development programmes by governmental and non-governmental development agencies and actors, community participation and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

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Introduction

Rural community development is a method by which national governments reach out to people at the local level and help them use local initiatives and resources to achieve increased production and higher standards of living. As a conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities recognize their needs and assume increasing responsibilities for solving their problems and improving their socio-economic and cultural conditions thereby enhancing their capacities to participate and contribute fully to national progress and development, it smacks off the participation of the people in efforts to improve their standards of living through a combination of their own initiatives and government assistance. Rural community development is therefore the bilateral efforts of the people and the government or external bodies, with the later complementing the efforts of the former and the former (community) participating fully and willingly. Rural community development that also encompasses a range of approaches and activities seeks to improve the welfare and livelihoods of people living in rural areas and pays attention to social issues particularly at the community level. As a 'heuristic device and an on-going concern involving local aspirations and outside intervention through the redistribution of central resources and the mobilization and utilization of rural resources and rural values, it is expectedly a pragmatic search for new futures and drive that recognize and accommodate partnerships, collaboration and synergy for the transformation of the social, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of rural dwellers.

Despite the utilitarian value of rural community development as a vehicle for actualizing the developmental potentials of developing countries and transitional economies like Nigeria, the approach to rural community development programmes and efforts in Nigeria has arguably been largely piecemeal, lacking in policy consistency, integration, holism and co-ordination, apart from the regime of mismanagement and corruption, the poor level of commitment to their execution and near absence of evaluation culture. These factors have not only undermined and constrained development efforts at the rural level, their enduring visible presence does not only cast doubts on the logic and philosophy behind rural community development policies, programmes and concerns in Nigeria, it equally reawakens the suspicion that development in all its ramifications is not seriously on the agenda of the Nigerian state and its largely visionless leadership. It may therefore not be out of focus and reality to assert that rural community development as a mission is somewhat dubious and the expected foundational vision upon which the so-called mission should be based is arguably hollow. A possible explanation for the superficial tinkering with the critical issues that are germane to the success and efficacy of rural community development policies and programmes is the piecemeal, un-integrated and disconnected approach to rural development in Nigeria. This study which examines the imperative and exigency of a pragmatic integrated, synergistic and participatory approach that should be ingrained in and linked to the country's sustainable development agenda and path utilized the in-depth content analysis method to generate relevant data. The practicability of the above approach will require a paradigm shift, a development culture, diversification of the rural economy, true commitment to and support for rural community development plans and programmes by governmental and non-governmental development agencies and actors, community

participation and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

Rural community development: a conceptual discourse

Rural community development that is typified by the basic principles of self-help, felt need, self-growth, self-reliance and citizens participation denotes change. This means that it involves movement from one point in rural or community life to another point. Secondly, it signifies control that implies change in project goals. Another point is that rural community development usually refers to improvement in the status of the community concerned. While scholars and practitioners have variously defined rural community development, primary attention is drawn to the definition of rural community development by the United States of America and the United Nations. The United States of America posited that rural community development is a method by which national governments reach out to people at the village level and help them use local initiative and resources to achieve increased production and higher standard of living, while the United Nations conceptualized rural community development as the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and to integrate the communities into the life of the nation and enable them contribute fully to national progress.

According to the international conference of social work held in Rio de Janeiro in 1962, rural and community development is the conscious and deliberate effort aimed at helping communities recognize their needs and assume increasing responsibilities for solving their problems thereby increasing their capacities to participate fully in the life of the nation.

This definition connotes the participation of the people in efforts to improve their standard of living through their own initiative and with government assistance through the provision of technical and other services that will encourage initiative; self-help and material help and make these more effective. Rural community development is therefore the bilateral efforts of the people and the government or external bodies, with the latter complementing the efforts of the former and the former (community) participating fully and willingly.

Rogers and Whiting (2007) also posited that rural community development is not only about providing jobs and increased income to rural people; it also concerns improving the quality of rural living through increased and improved community services. Olayinde et al (2009) equally defined rural community development as a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resource productivity with the overall objective of enhancing rural incomes and increasing employment opportunity in the rural communities. Lele (1975) also opined that rural community development has to do with improving the living standards of the mass of low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustaining. It therefore follows that rural development means changing the physical condition on which rural dwellers live by providing infrastructures such as roads, changing customary practices, attitude and general behaviour of the people in the rural areas through the acquisition of new social values guaranteed by an efficiently extended educational programme as Chukwuemeka et al (2002) explicitly emphasized.

Rural community development encompasses a range of approaches and activities that aim to improve the welfare and livelihoods of people living in rural areas. As a branch of community development, these

approaches pay attention to social issues particularly community organizing. Rural community development also focuses on public works like rural roads, electrification and agricultural production. Rural community development is important in developing countries where a large part of the population is engaged in farming. Consequently, a range of community development methods have been created, adopted and used by organizations involved in development initiatives. Most of these efforts to promote rural community development are led by experts from outside the community such as government officials, non-governmental organizations and foreign development advisers. This has generated an age-long debate about the issue of participation with questions concerning the sustainability of these efforts and the extent of the empowerment or otherwise of the rural people taking the front stage in academic discourse.

In his own view, Abakare (1997) saw rural development as the process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increases in rural resource productivity with the overall objectives of enhancing rural income, increasing employment opportunities and upgrading rural communities. This requires the mass participation of the rural population by mobilizing and allocating resources in such a way that a balance between economic and social services and a better standard of living for the rural population is attained (Van der Ploeg and Long, 2004). Stohr and Taylor (1998) equally described rural community development as development from below which involves basic needs orientation, labour-intensity, small scale regional resources base as well as rural-centred forms of development. It can also be seen as not an outside intervention, but the aspiration of local people living in rural areas for taking the challenge themselves and improving their life circumstances and their immediate environment. According to Van der Ploeg et al (2006) rural community development is reconstructing the

eroded economic base of both the rural economy and the farm enterprise. Rural community development is thus considered an integral part and a driving force of the entire development process that cannot be pigeon-holed into a sectoral box' as it includes every sector of the economy and involves all the activities intended to improve directly the living conditions of rural people (UNDP, 2008).

For purpose of this study, rural community development is a 'heuristic device and an on-going concern involving local aspirations and outside intervention through the redistribution of central resources, reduction in comparative disadvantages for competition and adoption of new ways to reinforce, mobilize and utilize rural resources and rural values in a pragmatic search for new futures and drive so as to enable the rural population unlock local resources and attract external ones in a development process that recognize, emphasize and accommodate partnerships, collaboration and synergy for the transformation of the social, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of rural dwellers in order to enhance their living standards in a sustainable manner.

Theoretical framework for rural community development

There exists several theories that represent intellectual attempts and explanatory accounts by scholars of various persuasions for the presence or otherwise of development in different rural communities. The theoretical approaches as identified by various scholars include **modernization** that, according to Moore (1963), is a total transformation of a traditional society into types of technology and associated social organizations that characterize the advanced economically prosperous

and relatively politically stable nations of the western world. One of the supporters of the modernization approach is Neil Smelser. Smelser (1963) developed a model of modernization based on the structural differentiation of institutions. According to Smelser, 'a developed economy and society is characterised as a highly differentiated structure and an underdeveloped one as relatively lacking in differentiation, hence, change centres on the process of differentiation itself. Another approach is **transformation** that is aimed at transforming the rural areas through the introduction of rural development programmes. The Gezira Scheme in Sudan is an example of the transformation approach. The scheme is based on large-scale irrigation from the Blue Nile and the mechanization of production of long-staple cotton for export. The scheme covered 2million acres operated by the Sudan Gezira Board. There were 70,000 tenants and the Board employed 10, 000 staff of all grades. Another transformation approach example is given by Aziz (1978), in the case of China. China has only 8% of the World cultivable land, but 20% of the world population, and yet it has managed without any significant external assistance to provide adequate food for its over 1 billion people. The communes are multipurpose political, administrative and organizational units covering the full range of economic and social activities (Aziz, 1978).

Other approaches are the **improvement approach** which the World Bank actively advocates throughout the developing countries and it is aimed at a progressive improvement of agriculture through various forms of assistance and a type of rural development strategy would provide the means with which to explore the productive reserves of the farming population (World Bank, 2005), the **comprehensive approach** that involves detailed planning based on a careful definition of the needs and resources of the target population and the setting up of appropriate

institutions for implementing rural development and the **mobilization approach** that entails the process of pooling together, harvesting, activating, actualizing and utilizing potential human and material resources for the purpose of development (Obanure, 1988).

For purpose of this study, an integrated, synergistic and participatory theoretical approach was adopted. This approach that encapsulates elements of the modernization, transformation, improvement, comprehensive and mobilization models overcomes and transcends the shortcomings and inadequacies of any of the above single approaches has more utilitarian value. This position derives from the fact that it combines the strengths and advantages of the central administrative and local heuristic systemic types of rural community development and benefits from the more sophisticated strategic, institutional, planning and human resource strategies of the top-down and the local initiatives, people-centred, participatory and mobilization attributes of the bottom-up approaches. In sum, this theoretical framework combines both top-down and bottom-up perspectives and is typified by central planning and local initiatives.

Rural community development approach in Nigeria

By and large, Nigeria is a rural society because a great percentage of Nigerians dwell in the rural areas. Rural development approach in Nigeria had been largely pursued on a somewhat piece-meal, un-integrated, short-term and perhaps disjointed fashion. This approach is therefore hardly focused in terms of adequate planning, appropriate strategies and programmes, proper monitoring and evaluation so as to be directed at bringing the poor and the rural people into the

mainstream of the country's development process. The rural development and antipoverty programmes and projects of the Federal Government were largely, although more theoretically, targeted at the rural and urban poor, with emphasis on women and the unemployed youths. Intervention measures introduced were in the form of the provision of basic 'infrastructures to enhance rural development, provision of credit facilities to improve the lot of the rural women and the underprivileged, the encouragement of micro enterprises and training programmes for the unemployed youths.

Development efforts in Nigeria have hitherto been influenced by one basic philosophical view which sees the rural sector and agriculture as sources of surpluses which must feed the nation's urban industrialization-led development strategy. However, the confusion that accompanies such negative development philosophy manifest itself in the failure of the development strategy to recognize the linkages between rural development and the development of the total national economy. The 1954 federal constitution, for instance, placed rural development as a residual item and it was therefore treated as a residual item and a regional responsibility, just like agriculture.

During this period of internal self-government which lasted till 1968, the various regional governments based their development plans on the false assumptions that the planners and policy makers have adequate knowledge of the problems of the rural people. Some of the schemes undertaken during this period include the Farm Settlement/School Leavers Farm by the three regional governments (East, West and North), the tree crop plantations (developed through the Development Corporations) of the Eastern and Western Nigerian governments and the Small Farmer Credit Scheme. From the Western Nigeria White Paper on Integrated Rural Development Plan in 1963, the main elements of the

plan was to settle school leavers in farm settlements, provide school uniforms through a system of cooperative tailoring societies, spinning mill and rural weaving programmes. The failures of these schemes and the reasons for their failure have become common knowledge to require any further elucidation.

The post-1975 period witnessed series of rather panic measures including the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Agriculture Development Projects (ADPs), River Basin and Rural Development Authorities (RBDA) and the Green Revolution Programme embarked upon by the Federal Government. Of all these, the ADPs received the best attention and a systematic approach to project planning, while the other schemes mentioned above remained as political slogans. The ADPs were of three types – (i) the pilot enclave ADPs of Funtua , Gausau and Gombe, Lafia and Ayagba, Bida, Ilorin Oyo North and Ekiti Akoko; (ii) the statewide ADPs in Bauchi, Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna of the early eighties and (iii) the phased statewide ADPs in Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Imo, Plateau and Ogun states. The main objectives of the ADPs have been to increase production of food and fibre as well as producer incomes. The distinguishing characteristics of the ADPs included an input and credit supply system through a network of farm service centres to ensure that no farmer travels more than 5-15 kilometers to purchase needed farm inputs; massive rural feeder road network that should open up new areas for cultivation and facilitate rapid evacuation of farm produce and prompt delivery of inputs. Other aspects were a revitalized extension and training system backed up by timely input supply and adaptive research services; joint state-federal collaboration from project identification stage right through project implementation; and solid project management together with built-in project monitoring and evaluation.

As a strategy, ADPs placed greater emphasis on adaptive farm research which recognized the technical problems of establishing intensive permanent agricultural system in the main tropics, reduced emphasis on the use of heavy machinery which is destructive in terms of soil fertility and often economically inappropriate. ADPs also demonstrated to the Nigerian nation that projects can be conceptualized, actualized, targeted and costed, and objectives achieved. Although the ADPs represented an innovative approach to rural development both in the supply of farm inputs and infrastructural support and in the efforts to revamp and revitalize extension services within project areas and crops that were not traditionally grown in certain areas, or at best grown for family consumption. All the same, the efforts were still bedeviled by governmental red-tapism, institutional lapses and operational maladies.

A number of states and Shell had also initiated a variety of new schemes to deal with new and old problems. For example, Lagos State government embarked on the Agricultural Input Credit Scheme to promote mechanized farming; Niger State introduced Back-to-Land and the Small Scale Farmers programmes to guarantee loans to various categories of farmers; Rivers state introduced School-to-Land programme designed to reduce unemployment among school leavers as well as act as a catalyst to revolutionize agriculture; Oyo state introduced the integrated self-employment schemes designed to solve the unemployment problem of the school leavers and graduates respectively in the state. All the same, because the ADP's were panic measures not based on any development ideology, they were abandoned like their predecessor OFN and Green Revolution.

Another supposedly bold effort at achieving rural development in Nigeria is the establishment of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) through Decree No. 4 of 1987. The directorate

was to administer half of the total savings accruing to the federal government as a result of the 80% withdrawal of petroleum subsidy by the Babangida-led administration. This fund was meant for the development of agriculture and infrastructure throughout rural Nigeria. The directorate which was responsible to the president of the Republic had a chairman (military personnel) and a board of not more than seven members-all appointed by the President. An equivalent of national directorate was created in each state within the office of the military governor. The latter was the chairman of the state directorate, although he may appoint a Director or Coordinator for the day-to-day administration of the state directorates. The Board of each state comprised from eight to fifteen persons, all appointed by the Governor to represent public and private interest. Rural development committees were also constituted under the chairmanship of the local government council chairmen. In addition, rural communities were to be encouraged to form village, community or town improvement/development unions or associations under their own democratically elected leaders to serve as the apex organization for mobilizing their communities for the successful participatory implementation of all rural development programs as initiated by the Directorate, each tier of government or by the communities themselves.

On the whole, the functions of the Directorate included the identification and support of local community organizations for rural development activities; the identification and support of high food and fiber production; the creation of national rural feeder road network (through construction, improvement and maintenance activities); rural water supply program; and liaison with appropriate federal, state and local government councils for the provision of water, health facilities, electricity, communication services and the like. The Directorate was also

expected to enlighten the rural communities to give them a sense of belonging to the country. Local governments were equally expected to provide 20 percent of matching grants for any activity of the Directorate in their domain. The efficacy of the operations, activities, programmes and projects of the Directorate were nevertheless constrained by a number of problems. One of the problems was securing the adequate funds which the directorate was promised by the federal government and therefore constituted the basis of the estimates. It is strange that only 69 percent of its expected revenues from government were made available in the first year of operation. It seems as if the federal government's economic and fiscal problems arising from the international oil-glut and high debt-servicing ratio (pegged then at 30 percent) affected its commitments to the Directorate.

A second problem is that of accurate reporting and monitoring of the activities of the Directorate at the local level. The old game of State governments using false figures to secure greater discretionary funds from the federal government was resuscitated. Poor quality roads were constructed to impress the Directorate's Monitoring and Evaluation Department's team that visited from Lagos. Some of the roads were washed away by the first rains and at least two states claimed that they constructed roads with the Directorate's funds which were known to have been constructed several years earlier by other agencies like the UNICEF in Gongola State and by the Kano State Water Board in the case of Kano State. In some cases, state directorates simply retouched roads which they claimed to have constructed. Similarly, some of the water pumps constructed by the Directorate are known to be of poor quality and difficult to maintain by the local people. A third problem is the low level of involvement of local people with respect to the Directorate's program contrary to its enabling decree. Community organizations and

town unions were equally encouraged, but the central idea was securing matching grants from Lagos.

Worse still, most of the completed projects were conceived, designed and executed without consulting the local communities that were supposed to benefit. Even local government administrations were not put in the picture and this resulted in delays in the execution of some of the projects, while those that were successfully commissioned like bore holes caved in the next day. In fact, such boreholes got grounded early and the maintenance was difficult and costly. Even officials of the Directorate were themselves skeptical about the possibility of attaining the target. Perhaps, one of the most perceptive comments on the operation of the Directorate was made by the then Commissioner for Rural Development in Ondo State, Chief Toyin Kolawole. He lamented that federal trunk roads in his state were in such a bad shape (Federal Government, 1987). If the federal government, the richest of all the tiers of government in the country had problems maintaining its relatively fewer roads, what hope is there that an agency responsible to the head of that same federal government will be able to achieve its goals in the long-run?

Besides, the Directorate system was largely bureaucratic since the federal government, acting with and through the state governments, was expected to develop and promote rural infrastructural development throughout the country. The strengths of the approach are that it placed rural neglect high on the political agenda and attempted to create an intergovernmental administrative framework to tackle the problem. However, institutionally, the approach adopted to rectify this neglect was highly problematic principally because it was dominated by the idea that money is the key to resolving the rural infrastructural problem. In addition, the high reliance placed on the effectiveness of a hierarchical

system issuing orders from Lagos and constructing infrastructures for 70 million people as at then was both theoretically and pragmatically lacking in efficacy. For instance, no mechanisms existed to ensure that funds promised to the directorate will be paid to it at all either in part or in full. Again, the reporting system in a country as large as Nigeria is bound to be weak (inspite of the use of inspectors form Lagos) and the tendency as in all other bureaucratic organizations is for goal displacement to occur through self-seeking activities of key officials within the hierarchy.

Another danger that the directorate model posed was that a lot of money may be allocated nationally to rural improvement and transformation without a substantial amount of such monies reaching the rural areas. This is one characteristic problem that had afflicted national programs like the National Youth Service Corps; Operation Feed the Nation, Rice Task force, Green Revolution, Universal Primary Education and Basic Health Schemes and it is perceptually and experimentally difficult to see how this instant case should have been different. Thus, while the establishment of DFRRRI represents a complementary but distinctive organizational intervention strategy for the development of rural infrastructures by the federal government, it operated under fundamental weaknesses. For example, Ogwumike (1995) asserted that DFRRRI programmes did have some positive impact on agricultural productivity, unemployment and infrastructural development in Nigeria.

An equally somewhat commendable step in the area of rural development efforts was the local government institution. In all emergent states or nations, local government administration has been adopted as the main instrument for the acceleration and sustenance of rural community development. Most rural development efforts in

Nigeria were aimed at reducing the level of rural poverty and rural unemployment, integrating rural dwellers into the nation's socio-political and economic process through enhanced political awareness, recognizing the rural resident first and foremost as an individual citizen like his urban counterparts, improving the incomes of rural people who were engaged in agriculture and rural non-farming activities and improving the quality of life of the people through the provision of basic amenities. Essentially, local government is widely acknowledged as a viable instrument for rural community development and for the delivery of social services to the people. In fact, the 1976 local government reforms was presumably aimed at decentralizing some significant functions of the state governments at the local levels in order to harness local resources for a meaningful development, while the 1985 local government reforms underscored the importance of rural development and directed state governments to establish rural development departments.

Several policy actions including the direct transfer of statutory grants to local government rather than through the state government, reduction of state control on local governments and local election (Gboyega, 2008) were taken to make local governments play a key role in the development process, but these alone could not improve the effectiveness of local governments without the resolution of the other weighty problematic issues of structure, financial control by state governments and in particular the funding of primary education. The first was the revitalization of local government nationally in 1976 with the intention of using them as a veritable institution for the provision and maintenance of rural infrastructures. The second initiated in 1986 involved the creation of a directorate at the federal level charged with

the responsibility of developing rural infrastructures throughout Nigeria. The local government option is also flawed by the fact that they were not accountable to the local citizens who also constitute their public. Their activities were, in fact, contingent on constraints imposed by the state governments and its functionaries rather than directly by the people they were meant to serve. Moreover, government efforts on infrastructural development at the local level in Nigeria have been heavily skewed in favour of the few urban centers since the post-colonial dispensation.

Despite the probable fact that the provision and maintenance of rural infrastructure was the sole essence of local government reforms in Nigeria, the environment for the generation and sustenance of the capacity needed for the grassroots administration to perform the expected role has been largely stifled. After all, in the 'foreword' to the federal government's guidelines for local governments, the basic document for the 1976 reform, the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Shehu Yar'adua, observed that the reforms would mean nothing if they did not include the certainty that as from now, every stratum of the Nigerian society would benefit from the continued prosperity of this country through the availability of amenities such as electricity, adequate water supply, improved transportation, health facilities and so on. Even the recommendations made by the report of the national survey for the creation of a "Special National Rural Development Fund" at the federal level to correct glaring imbalances in rural basic needs throughout Nigeria to be administered by the Central Bank through federal and state agencies did not seem to have significantly influenced subsequent developments in the area of genuine rural development in Nigeria.

The introduction of the Family Economic Advancement Programme

(FEAP) in 1997, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) in 1999, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAG) in 2000 and bogus 7 Point Agenda of 2007 supposedly meant to enhance the productive capacity of the rural areas and encourage the establishment of productive cottage industries and the development of locally designed and fabricated machinery and equipment for the cottage industries have not also produced the desired results or closed the glaringly worrisome gaps in the rural development initiatives and efforts in Nigeria. Generally, the major strategies for promoting rural community development in Nigeria were the exclusive reliance on the natural forces of economic growth; specific programmes to increase earning opportunities for the poor and social programmes targeted at the poor (Psacharopoulos, 1990). Each of these proposals holds varying prospects for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

The different rural development policy instruments, programmes and strategies adopted and applied in Nigeria so far have been piecemeal, lacking in integration, relevance and co-ordination, poor participation, apart from the regime of mismanagement and corruption, the poor level of commitment to their execution and near absence of evaluation culture. In fact, two factors that have consistently constrained rural development policies and programmes of successive governments since independence is the non-involvement of the rural masses in policy formulation and implementation and the failure to align policy objectives and instruments with the actual needs, aspirations and priorities of the rural population. Essentially, there is poor fit between policies, programmes and their beneficiaries, crippling problem of deliberate proliferation and contradiction and scourge of large scale corruption

impacting largely on the cosmetic but poorly designed programmes and their seeming intended goals and objectives. The above factors actually stifled the efficacy of rural community development efforts in Nigeria so much so, that there has been an environment of policy and activity disconnection between and among the genre of rural community development programmes initiated and executed by different governmental dispensations under different nomenclature with no fundamental improvements. The trend therefore smacks off a superficial tinkering with the issues that are central to a sustainable, integrated synergistic and participatory approach to rural community development in Nigeria. Arguably, sustainable rural community development has never been on the agenda of the various successive governments in Nigeria.

An integrated, synergistic and participatory approach to community development in Nigeria

An integrated, synergistic and participatory approach to rural community development in Nigeria will encapsulate a blend of bottom-up and top-bottom planning, beneficiary consultation, public/ private partnership as well as community development support as a panacea to the conventional problems of programme and project relevance and sustainability. It also involves synergy in the roles and relationships of the key players in the five central elements of service delivery-resources, information, decision making, delivery mechanisms, and accountability. Additionally, the approach is people-centred, responsive, multi-level, economically, socially, institutionally and environmentally sustainable. It is also dynamic and a pragmatic multi asset- based covering the human, physical, financial, natural and social elements. The above approach can be contrasted with the present strategy of rural community

development in Nigeria that mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment that is lacking in integration, policy consistency, participation, fundamental logic of development, resource management and institutional capacity as well as the interplay between central and state intervention and local initiatives and aspirations.

This integrated, synergistic and participatory approach will produce rural development policies that will establish strategic objectives, channel resources, convey information, mediate social, economic and political interests with the participation of the national and sub-national levels of government and significant others including private and non-governmental organizations and communities. This envisaged approach will reduce conflict, divergence of interests, dissipation of energy and dysfunctionality, especially as rural development policies and concerns tend to fail because the central bureaucratic system imposes top-down control and objectives throughout the development process. The above reality may be an explanation for the failure of rural development efforts to sufficiently promote the reconfiguration of local resources, which is better achieved through bottom-up processes and the local heuristic system, the tendency for disconnection between the two basic socio-political systems of rural community development and the failure of rural development policies, programmes, projects, initiatives and activities in Nigeria.

This approach underscores the need to create and develop new resource bases and a collaborative response to the continually emerging needs, aspirations, interests and demands of the local rural people. While the approach is not a divorce from the deterministic nature of the older

specific theoretical perspectives ranging from the modernization to the mobilization types, since rural community development is usually constructed on the basis of existing production structures as Murdoch (2000) rightly articulated, it seeks to redefine the fundamental logic of development and build institutions in an integrated fashion which has the capacity to break the vicious circle of policy failures and fill the institutional, knowledge, synergistic and collaboration gaps between central policies and rural localities and realities. A blend of endogenous and exogenous development initiatives (with emphasis on the former) are therefore encouraged by the above approach to rural community development. The endogenous development perspective and alternative that is based on local actors, resources and capacities, posit that improvements in the socio-economic well being of disadvantaged areas can best be brought about by recognizing and animating the collective resources of the territory itself (Ray, 2000), particularly as development has qualitative, structural, quantitative and monetary indicators and not just social, cultural, political and ecological values as well as social costs and long term effects (Bassand et al, 1996 and Lowe et al, 1998) .

A key characteristic feature of the endogenous model of rural community development is the notion that the specific resources (natural, human and cultural) of an area hold the key to its sustainable development, despite the limited capacity of areas and social groups to participate in economic and development activities. Other components include the setting of development activity within a territorial rather than sectoral framework, with the scale of the territory being smaller than the nation-state, the re-orientation of economic and other development activities to maximize the retention of benefits within the local territory by valorizing and exploiting local resources (physical and human) and contextualized development that focus on the needs,

capacities and perspectives of local people such that a local area should acquire the capacity to assume some responsibility for bringing about its own socio-economic development.

Central to the endogenous model is collaborative arrangements and participation by public bodies and private or voluntary sectors that has been increasingly recognized and accepted as an efficacious management mechanism. Here, the partners pool their resources in the pursuit of a common policy objective and in this instant case, the socio economic regeneration of the local territory and cultivate consensual strategies so as to integrate their separate responsibilities or contributions. After all, development is not just about increasing goods and services provided and consumed by society; it also involves enabling communities to have greater control over their relationship with the environment and other communities. As a consequence, empowerment, capacity building, carefully designed social animation and the provision of suitable training and development institutions through central policies are key elements of the endogenous system.

Although the integrated, synergistic and participatory approach to rural community development combines endogenous and exogenous elements with major emphasis on the former, endogenous development differs from the exogenous type because it is seen not only as an economic concept, but also as a process dealing with the total human condition and it accepts numerous possible conceptions of development and pitches the objectives and paths on an appropriate local level and represents a significant change from investment on physical capital to investment in developing the knowledge, the skills and the entrepreneurial abilities of the local population. Rural areas may, in fact, possess a growth potential of their own just waiting to be unlocked,

therefore promoting bottom-up endogenous development, yet since it does not often address the important question of local circuits of production and consumption, endogenous and exogenous concerns can be integrated such that it combines the strengths and advantages of the central administrative and local heuristic systemic types of rural community development and resultantly benefit from the more sophisticated conceptual, strategic, institutional, planning and human resource strategies of the top-down and the local initiatives, people-centred, participatory and mobilization attributes of the bottom-up approaches (Long, 1977).

In so far as the endogenous and exogenous approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive or antagonistic, there is an exigency of a theoretical solution to bridge the perceived divide in order to harness the rural development potentials as Cooke and Morgan (2006); Amin and Thrift (2007) and Murdoch (2007) patently noted. This synthesis between endogenous (local, bottom-up) and exogenous (extra-local, top-down) links is inevitable in order to foster learning and innovation processes (OECD, 1993 and 1996). The central issue in the integrated, synergistic and participatory approach is the balance of 'internal' and 'external' elements that focus attention on mixtures of 'local-internal' and 'non-local-external' economic linkages in order to facilitate greater innovation, creative change and improved rural community development.

In consonance with the integrated approach canvassed in this study, rural community development efforts, policies, programmes, strategies and activities are to be initiated, developed, executed, monitored and evaluated in an holistic and integrated fashion such that different administrative regimes, rather than disconnect from the previous

policies and programmes and introduce new ones with superficially different nomenclature, they should seek to correct the existing weaknesses and close the identified gaps by reworking and retooling the policies and programmes. This middle-of-the-road complementary approach between the rational and incremental policy-making types will enhance their capacity to efficaciously tackle the rural community development problems and meet the challenges in order to engender true development that will uplift the standards of the rural people and integrate them into the mainstream of the country's development process. Additionally, the federal government is expected to establish the central policy framework for sustainable rural community development programmes, activities and concerns in Nigeria.

The framework will serve as a guide to the different levels of government in designing and initiating rural community development programmes that will be based on clearly generated, analyzed and articulated needs and concerns of the various rural people that are an outgrowth of collaborative discussions between each level of government and the rural beneficiaries or users of the final products and services. There should also be multi-level governmental co-operation and collaboration at the institutional, organizational and planning levels such that each level will have insight into the focus of one another in the context of rural community development programmes and projects, at least to forge synergy and eliminate unnecessary duplication of efforts and wastages. The adoption and application of the integrated approach will therefore efficaciously produce a synergistic response to the continually emerging germane and targeted needs, aspirations, interests and demands of the local rural people that is a desideratum for the creation of a sustainable path which is a sine qua non for rural community development in Nigeria.

Summary/Conclusive Remarks

Rural community development has been recognized and accepted as a veritable instrument for actualizing the development potentials of developing and transitional economies like Nigeria. This recognition is not unconnected with the reasoning and fact that rural community development as a concept and practice is an integral part of the generic development path and agenda. In fact, as a conscious and deliberate device aimed at facilitating the process of modernization and transformation in the rural communities through mobilization strategies that will engender true participation by governmental and non-governmental bodies and actors, rural community development is a change agent and a 'heuristic device involving local initiatives and aspirations as well as outside intervention through the redistribution of central resources and the adoption of new ways to reinforce, mobilize and utilize rural resources and rural values so as to enable the rural population unlock local resources and attract external ones in a development process that recognize, emphasize and accommodate partnerships, collaboration and synergy for the transformation of the social, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of rural dwellers. In the face of the critical role that rural community development plays in the development process globally, it is disappointing and worrisome that rural community development efforts in Nigeria have been largely plagued by patent sundry and dysfunctional factors including piecemeal approach, policy disconnect and inconsistency, lack of integration and co-ordination, regime of mismanagement and corruption, poor level of commitment to the execution of and the near absence of evaluation of rural community development programmes. This yawning gap and missing link in a genuine sustainable development path that is not on the leadership and

governance agenda in Nigeria demands, as a matter of exigency, a paradigm shift, a development culture, an integrated, synergistic and participatory approach, community participation, true commitment to and support for appropriate execution, monitoring and evaluation of rural community development plans and programmes.

Recommendations

An integrated, synergistic and participatory approach to rural community development in Nigeria requires a re-orientation and change in mentality, attitude and practice which seeks to identify how local development or the reconfiguration of rural resources can be facilitated and supported by the central, state and local governments in collaboration with non-governmental organizations for the benefit of rural localities, an ingrained development culture which has to evolve over time and permeate the multi-level governmental and the non-governmental institutions and agencies, diversification of the rural economy through pragmatic socio-economic policies. This approach will create opportunities for additional employment, enhancement of social services and the improvement of the quality of life of the rural people, true and genuine commitment to and support for rural community development policies, programmes, projects and efforts, community participation and appropriate monitoring and evaluation with sound principles of planning, relevance, objectivity, verifiability, co-operation, specificity, continuity, quantitateness, feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

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Slovenian members of the european parliament: between the national and the european political space

Matevž Tomšič²

Abstract

In his article, the author analyses the profile of Slovenian members of the European parliament (MEP), i.e. their political position, cultural character, and mode of behaviour. He perceives MEPs as element that links national and European political space. They are both representatives of national interests at the EU level and creators of common European policies. To perform their role successfully, integration in both political realms is necessary. The author claims that regarding their cultural profile, they are more similar to the representatives in the EP from other EU countries than their colleagues in the national parliament.

Key words: representatives, cultural profile, European Parliament, Slovenia

Povzetek

Avtor se v svojem članku ukvarja z analizo profila slovenskih predstavnikov v Evropskem parlamentu (EP), tj. njihovega političnega

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položaja, kulturnih značilnosti in načina obnašanja. Pri tem smatra slovenske poslance v EP kot element povezovanja nacionalnega in evropskega političnega prostora. Le-ti so na eni strani zastopniki nacionalnih interesov na nivoju Evropske unije, na drugi strani pa oblikovalci skupnih evropskih politik. Za to, da bi lahko uspešno opravljali svojo vlogo, morajo biti integrirani v dogajanje na obeh političnih ravneh. Avtor trdi, da so glede na kulturni profil slovenski 'evroposlanci' bolj podobni svojim kolegom v EP kot pa zastopnikom v nacionalnem parlamentu.

Ključne besede: poslanci, kulturni profil, Evropski parlament, Slovenija

Parliamentarism in the European Union

Parliament is without any doubts the institution that lies in the core of the system of modern democracy. It is perceived by democratic theory as key locus of democratic political life where most important political interests are represented by the elected people who through their mutual dialog articulate political course of society. However, in the last decades there has been certain shift of governance from classical political institutions like parliament to specialised expert and administrative bodies (van Kersbergen and van Waarden, 2004) that brought to certain decrease of importance of its political role. As stated by Tom Burns: "Today in western Europe, parliaments and elective assemblies on all levels have substantial difficulties in dealing with the growing complexity, highly technical character and the rapidity of many developments in modern society. There is a structural deficit between societal conditions and forces, on the one hand, and government institutions and capabilities, on the other" (Burns, 1999:167). Despite that, there hasn't been yet invented an institution that would better

perform the role of national political representation and legislation-maker.

Since the European Union has been developing into a direction of a more integrated form of political entity, the issue of democracy at the Union's level is becoming increasingly relevant. In recent years has gain on importance the notion of a need for establishment of mechanisms and institutions of efficient and democratic governance on supra-national level that would be able to handle with problems brought by the processes of globalisation, especially in a sense of provision of global public goods (see, for example, Griffin, 2003). In the case of the European Union, this is of special importance, since it stopped function as an inter-state association but became as political formation with institutions, activities and authorities on its own. What is often stressed is so called 'democratic deficit' (see Norton, 1996), meaning the lack of many features we associate with democratic governance (Horeth, 1999:249) like involvement of citizens in the political processes at the Union's level and their influence on European affairs. One of the main targets of criticism of process of European integration was its centralistic or top-down nature (see, for, example, Siedentop, 2001) what lead to the perception of it as a elite project or enterprise (see, for example, Bretherton and Vogler, 1999; Wood, 2002). The same elite-centeredness is argued to be characteristic also for the process of accession of former communist countries from East-Central Europe (see Raik, 2002).

European Parliament is the only political body on the EU level whose members are democratically elected by direct universal suffrage. The elections for the EP have being held since 1979. The Parliament is elected every five years. After the last round of the EU enlargement, the number of the members of the EP raised to 732.

Given the unique nature of the EP in terms of its democratic legitimacy, debates on democracy at the EU level and its alleged 'democratic deficit' are often related to the status of this institution. Usually it is argued that the EP 'weight' in European political setting is inferior in relation to the Commission and the Council of Ministers. It is true that it does not perform tasks analogous to the functions typical for national legislative bodies. For instance, the very role of legislature as traditional domain of parliaments is at the EU level shared between the Parliament and the Commission. However, importance of its role in relation to other EU institutions has been increasing, meaning that they have to take into account position of the Parliament (or its majority) on increasing number of issues (see, for example, Anderson, 2003; Schusterschitz and Kotz, 2007). Its voice is starting to matter also on the selection of members of the Commission. For example, during the selection of the Commission in Jose Manuel Barosso's first mandate, its president had to remove certain candidates who were found by the parliamentary majority as unacceptable due to its problematic statements on certain issues. Some commentators perceived these developments as the becoming of 'real' political dynamics at the EU level.

The countries of East-Central Europe joined the EU at the moment of comprehensive (re)construction of European political and institutional setting. It is becoming obvious that integration is not something self-evident and even less inevitable, thus it is necessary to rethink many issues related to political and cultural situation in Europe. This would probably mean also the new role of the EP in terms of its position in Union's institutional constellation as well as in conducting debates on the future of European polity. The same holds for the role of national parliaments. It is interesting to see how relations between actors form

‘old’ and ‘new’ EU members would affect these developments in European parliamentary life.

The main aim of this article is to analyse the profile of Slovenian members of the European parliament, i.e. their political position, cultural character, and mode of behaviour. MEPs can be seen as element that links national and European political space. They are both representatives of national interests at EU level and creators of common European policies. To perform their role in a successful way, integration in both political realms is necessary. The presupposition is that their cultural profile differs from the profile of representatives at the national level.

Slovenian road to the European Union

After the collapse of the communist regime, Slovenia started to build its parliamentary life as a key element of pluralisation which was part of a wider process of political modernisation of society. Slovenians had to address several dilemmas regarding their institutional setting. Slovenia decided on the parliamentary system (Zajc 2004), which is often perceived as more suitable for new democracies, i.e. countries without strong civic and democratic traditions, due to its consensual nature where political power is more dispersed and shared between different actors (Lijphart 1984, 1999).

EU membership became an ultimate strategic goal even before Slovenia achieved formal independence. It was declared as ‘an important step forward in the creation of a democratic, stable, strong, economically successful and well-organised country’ (Fink-Hafner and Lajh 2005: 53).

The decision for Slovenia to join the European Union was reached with a wide political consensus which meant that 'all major EU-related topics in Slovenia were defined as national projects' (Krašovec and Lajh 2009: 501).

Like other candidate countries, Slovenia had to accept the conditions set by the European Union. It had to adjust its legislation to the *acquis communautaire*: the Union's legislative setting. Its implementation was continuously monitored by the European Commission via its specialised bodies (Tomšič and Prijon, 2012: 98). Slovenia began its accession negotiations in 1998 and they came to a close in 2002.³ The most difficult were the chapters on finances and agriculture. However, it was one of the candidate countries where the negotiation process involved the least delays. In addition, Slovenia had to meet certain demands in order to overcome the objections of some EU member countries, particularly Italy. The most controversial was the so-called 'Spanish compromise' (reached during the Spanish presidency of the EU) that allowed citizens of EU member countries to own Slovenian real estate. The Slovenian government of Prime Minister Janez Drnovšek accepted this deal, despite strong resistance from the political opposition and general public. Finally, in order to formally join the European Union, Slovenia had to amend its Constitution in order renounce part of its own sovereignty. With these constitutional amendments made in March 2004, the National Assembly facilitated the transfer of certain sovereign rights concerning the adoption of legal acts and decisions to the

³ This took place at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen where it was officially announced that Slovenia, together with Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Cyprus, were ready to join the EU in 2004.

European Union.

Due to this wide consensus on the EU as a main political goal, Slovenian political elites are thus, at least on the declarative level, strongly devoted to a pro-European orientation (Tomšič 2006, Krašovec and Lajh 2008, 2009). In 1997 all parliamentary parties accept one, despite their other differences and conflicts, decided to sign an *Agreement on Co-operation in the Accession Process with the EU*. The only parliamentary party that is sceptical of Slovenian membership in the European Union is the Slovenian National Party, whereas all other parties from both right and left political camps unambiguously support this. In this regard, there is strong concordance between the political elite and the vast majority of citizens. Regarding publicly declared support for the Union, Slovenia is thus one the most euro-enthusiastic new EU members.⁴ Unlike the national elite, local-level political elites have, as stated by Hughes et al. (2002),⁵ a more pragmatic and less normative attitude toward the EU and are relatively disinterested in issues related to the integration process as well as poorly informed about it. This could be a potential source of Euroscepticism, based on the benefits of integration being less than expected. However, the result of this concordance between elites and the wider public was the 2003 referendum which showed almost 90% support for Slovenia's integration into the European Union. The referendum was won on the basis of a well-organised and synchronised

⁴ In other EU members, there are some important political parties that nurture relatively strong Eurosceptic sentiments like the Citizens Democratic Party in the Czech Republic or Law and Order in Poland.

⁵ In their study, they analysed the attitudes of local-level elites in three Central and Eastern European countries (Slovenia, Hungary and Estonia) to European integration.

campaign of EU accession proponents that was in stark contrast to the opponents' campaign which was poorly organised and came across as representing a narrow set of interests (Lajh and Krašovec 2007).

Pro-EU attitudes are on declarative level still maintained by all relevant political parties, although the crisis brought some increase of Euro-scepticism, particularly in the circles related to political left. This is manifested especially in rejection of European policies and strategies for resolving of financial crisis, blaming the austerity measures backed by the EU for worsening of the social situation.

During the accession process, most major political parties in candidate countries responded to EU leverage by adopting agendas consistent with the conditions for membership (Vachudova 2005, 2008). They became integrated in political associations with different ideological profiles at the European level. The SDP, SPP and NSi became members of the European People's Party (EPP), the LDS and Zares became members of the European Liberals and Democrats (ELDR/ALDE), while the SD joined the Party of European Socialists (PES).⁶ Integration into the European institutional framework caused only a slight modification to the Slovenian party system. There were only minor changes to the programmes of political parties which have primarily seen Europe as something positive, although usually in a general fashion (the

⁶ The LDS became a full member of the ELDR/ALDE in 1998; the SD of the PES in 2003; the SDP, SPP and NSi of the EPP in 2004, and Zares of the ELDR/ALDE in 2008. Besides these, there is another party that is not formally represented in the national parliament, namely, the Youth Party of Slovenia that is still integrated into the European political space as a full member of the European Green Party since 2006.

importance of the EU *per se*) or using the EU in an instrumental manner (stressing EU norms and standards). Some party programmes include a chapter devoted to EU issues which does not, however, hold a prominent position in the programme's structure, while others mention the EU only occasionally. After the first few years, it is still quite difficult to detect a particular party's standpoint on the European issue (Krašovec and Lajh 2009: 503). As for organisational changes and their impacts on party programmes, there have hardly been any since only a minor change took place, usually by strengthening the role of the Secretary for International Co-operation. Yet in all the parties that have managed to win a seat in the European Parliament and incorporated MEPs *ex officio* into party governing bodies, this has so far not led to any redistribution of power since most Slovenian MEPs were already members of the relevant party bodies (ibid. 499).

Similar observations can be made regarding the form of the national party system as a whole, where there were only some insignificant impacts (Tomšič and Prijon, 2012: 99). Only one Eurosceptic political party has been formed, and has not been very exposed, while among parliamentary parties, as mentioned, only one minor populist parliamentary party has deplored the deficit of the 'Euro-realistic' rhetoric in pro-EU feelings (Fink-Hafner and Krašovec in Deželan 2007: 14-15). With regard to patterns of party competition, issues associated with the European Union were marginalised, especially in the period before the country's full membership in the EU, due to a specific agreement of the European Parliament's political parties stating they would not politicise European affairs at home. However, integration in the European party structure has resulted in some change in the ideological profile of political parties. This particularly applies to the Slovenian Democratic Party that was originally (when founded) a party

with a social democratic orientation (its original name was the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia), although with strong anti-communist sentiments. The incongruence between the 'leftist' name of the party and its 'rightist' perception in public opinion was resolved by a shift in ideological orientation towards the centre-right (also concerning economic issues) as well a change of its international political alliance resulting in the party's inclusion in the European People's Party as the association of European conservative and Christian democratic parties.

Slovenia joined the European Union on 1 May 2004⁷ and thus acquired the right to participate in elections to the European Parliament. The first time Slovenian citizens could exercise their right to vote at a European level was in June 2004. For the seven seats of the EP reserved for Slovenia thirteen political parties and lists contested. There were 1.628.918 citizens with this right to vote; although the total number of votes received was 461.879 (28.35%)⁸ (see Table 1). The second European elections in Slovenia took place on 7 June 2009, with a total of 1.699.755 citizens having voting rights. For the eight seats of the EP⁹ reserved for Slovenia 12 political parties and lists contested. The total number of votes received was 482,136 (28.33%).¹⁰

⁷ Negotiations to join the EU started in March 1998 and ended in December 2002 in Denmark. On 16 April 2003 the Treaty of Accession to the European Union was signed.

⁸ Republika Slovenija: Volitve v Evropski parlament 2004. Link: <http://volitve.gov.si/ep2004/>

⁹ At the time of the elections, Slovenia had seven seats in the EP but this number was increased to eight after ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

¹⁰ Republika Slovenija: Volitve v Evropski parlament 2009. Accessed at: <http://volitve.gov.si/ep2009/>

TABLE 1: Official results for Slovenia at the European elections in 2004 and 2009.

(Source: Republic of Slovenia: Elections to the European Parliament)

	PARTY	VOTES IN 2004	%	VOTES IN 2009	%
1.	Nova Slovenija - Krščansko ljudska stranka (New Slovenia - Christian People's Party, Nsi)	102.753	23.57	76.866	16.58
2.	Liberalna demokracija Slovenije in Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, LDS and Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia, DPPS)	95.489	21.9	53.212	11.48
3.	Slovenska demokratska stranka (Slovenian Democratic Party, SDP)	76.945	17.65	123.563	26.66
4.	Združena lista socialnih demokratov/Socialni demokrati (United List of Social Democrats (after 2009 Social Democrats), (UL after SD)	61.672	14.15	85.407	18.43
5.	Slovenska ljudska stranka (Slovenian People's Party, SPP)	36.662	8.41	16.601	3.58
6.	Slovenska nacionalna stranka (Slovenian National Party, SNP)	21.883	5.02	13.227	2.85
7.	ZARES – nova politika (ZARES – New Politics)			45.238	9.76
8.	Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije (Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia, DPPS**			33.292	7.18

* The party was established after the 2004 elections

** The party ran at the 2004 elections in coalition with the LDS

The two European elections so far have brought victory to centre-right parties. In 2004, they won four out of seven Slovenian seats in the European Parliament¹¹ and in 2009 four out of eight seats.¹² The results of the 2004 European elections somewhat heralded subsequent political developments, i.e. the victory of the 'right' in national parliamentary elections a couple of months later. The campaign before the European election became highly 'nationalised', meaning the strong prevalence of national issues over those related to the EU. This victory led to a major change in the constellation of political forces since, after 12 years of rule of centre-left governments (with a short half-year break in 2000), parties of the centre-right (with the assistance of the Democratic Party of Pensioners – DeSUS) assumed positions of power. However, the left returned to power positions after the victory of the so-called 'leftist trio' at the 2008 elections (again with the assistance of DeSUS).

In following chapter, a case study of Slovenian members of the European parliament is presented, with its main finding on Slovenian and European parliamentary culture, interactions between representatives in the EP and cultural characteristics of Slovenian MEPs, particularly in terms of their compatibility with colleagues from 'old' democracies.

¹¹ Two seats were won by NSi (the actual winner of the elections since it received the largest share of votes), the LDS and the SDS and one by the ZLSD (now the SD).

¹² Three seats were won by the SDS (the winner of the elections), two by the SD and one by the NSi, LDS and Zares. Both political camps thus won the same number of parliamentary seats but the sum of votes for the parties of the centre-right camp of the SDS, NSi and SLS was more than for the three parties of the centre-left camp of the SD, Zares and LDS (43% vs. 39%).

Characteritics of Slovenian members of the European Parliament

Topics and indicators

The study of Slovenian members of the European parliament was conducted in a framework of the project *Eastern Enlargement – Western Enlargement: Cultural Encounters in the European Economy and Society after the Accession* that took place in years 2004-7.¹³ In this study which deals with analysis of the characteristics of Slovenian representatives in the EP, we carried out seven interviews, four with Slovenian members of the EP, one with a former member of parliamentary delegation in the European Parliament (all of them are from different political parties),

¹³ The project *Eastern Enlargement – Western Enlargement: Cultural Encounters in the European Economy and Society after the Accession* (its acronym is DioscURI), coordinated by Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (Wien) and Central European University (Budapest), was a part of the EU Commision's 6th Framework Programme.

The primary objective of the DIOSCURI project was to explore the dynamics of cultural exchange between “East” and “West” in the European economy, including identifying the main types of cultural encounters between the two halves of Europe during and after the Enlargement, mapping the major cultural gaps and strategies to bridge them, and describing the fields in which the new entrants can contribute to the rejuvenation of economic cultures in the Union.

The main focus of the analysis was on four countries of East-Central Europe: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, and on four South-East European countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia. DIOSCURI focused on three research fields: entrepreneurship, governance and economic knowledge.

and two with assistants of MEPs.¹⁴

The content of the interview consists of three (sub)topics relevant for the study on Slovenian representatives in the EP: parliamentary culture (comparison of Slovenian and European parliamentary culture regarding issues like the prevailing values and modes of conduct, level of hierarchy, trust, and preparedness for cooperation), contacts and communication (possible intercultural problems in communication between parliamentarians from different countries and the possibility of mutual learning), and cultural profile of MEPs (competence of Slovenian MEP, their identity and political loyalty, and their integration into political networks – both national and international).

¹⁴ We had considerable difficulties getting the interviews done. We contacted all Slovenian MEPs in the March 2005. Couple of them rejected the participation at the start and couple of them have been delaying with the answers. As we have been told the main reason is their very tight schedule. Our problem is very small number of Slovenian members of the European Parliament (only seven). Till now, only four of them sent us filled questionnaires by e-mail. Considering this, we decided to extend the target group for the interviews, contacting people who are not themselves parliamentary representatives but who are, nevertheless, familiar with the work of Slovenian and European Parliament, like assistants of the parliamentarians and party officials, responsible for international cooperation.

The contents of the interviews

In this section, we present the insights of the interviews, i.e. the key information on the three sub-topics (parliamentary culture, contacts and communication, and cultural profile of MEPs) provided by the interviewees.

The first sub-topic deals with different aspects of 'general' *parliamentary culture*. The interviewed were asked to compare Slovenian and European parliamentary culture, i.e. values, attitudes and way of conduct from Slovenian Parliament on one hand and European Parliament and national parliaments of other EU countries on the other. They compared items like the relation between executive and legislative branch of government, level of hierarchy, prevailing type of communication (formal or informal), willingness for cooperation (especially between representatives from different political camps), and level of trust between MPs. They stated some practices that are common in Slovenian parliament but wouldn't be appropriate in the EP (and vice versa). They informed us also about their perception of changes in Slovenian parliamentary life in the last period and possible influence of EU integration process in this matter.

The interviewed find the Slovenian Parliament, regarding its prevailing cultural climate and way on conduct, more close to the parliaments of other post-socialist EU member-states than to the parliaments of established Western democracies with long parliamentary traditions as well as the European Parliament.¹⁵

¹⁵ As stated by one of the interviewees: "We are closer to the younger

In structural terms, EP is becoming rather similar to national parliaments. Executive branch is dominant in relation to the parliament both in Slovenia and in the EU. EP is perceived as more tolerant place with less pronounced political differences than SP. Hierarchy between MPs is about the same everywhere. MPs practice both formal and informal communication. There is more communication (especially informal one) in the EP. In the EP, there is more cooperation, especially between people from different political camps.¹⁶

Trust between representatives is also higher in the EP than in the SP. Autonomy of the MEPs in their initiatives is perceived as rather high (for some higher than is the case in the SP). Our interviewees don't notice any huge change in Slovenian parliamentary practice after the accession (one them says that there is more contacts with other parliamentarians). They think that Slovenian MEPs could have some impact on Slovenian parliamentary life (due to their international experience), especially on the long run, but is a question if they are considered enough by domestic political actors.

The second sub-topic deals with *interactions between Slovenian*

democracies that were formed after the year 1990. Otherwise, as I see things, in Slovenian Parliament, at least in the last period, debates are often on a very low level. This does not happen in the European Parliament which is really a kind of 'temple' of democracy." (Interviewee no. 3)

¹⁶ As stated by one of the interviewees: "Communication between parliamentarians seems to me more intensive and relaxed in the EP as well as in other parliaments as it is the case in our parliament – with exception of communication within parliamentary groups." (Interviewee no. 4)

representatives and their colleagues from other EU countries. The interviewees told us about the language they use in everyday communication on EU level; about possible problems in their encounters with their colleagues (deriving from intercultural differences like different values, attitudes, communication codes); about their possible surprises from these encounters; and about the possibility of mutual learning by parliamentarians (and which country should Slovenia take as example regarding its parliamentary life).

Slovenian MEPs speak several languages. In the official events, they use Slovenian. With their colleagues with other MEPs, they communicate mostly in English, French and German. They do perceive some differences of cultural origin between people from different EU members (one mentions national stereotypes) but do not recall problems on that matter.¹⁷

Generally, they find exchange of experience between MPs from different countries as useful. In terms of parliamentary practice, Slovenia could, according to them, learn about mutual tolerance toward people from different political and ideological camps.¹⁸ Some claim that Slovenia should take useful examples from different countries and create its own parliamentary tradition.

¹⁷ One of them said: "Yes, I see differences but they do not grow into problems because in this case representatives simply don't hang together. In the public speech, politeness prevails." (Interviewee no. 2)

¹⁸ As stated by one of the interviewees: "Slovenian parliamentarians could learn from Europeans the mutual cooperation regardless political 'color'. What matters is quality of proposal and not who is its author." (Interviewee no. 7)

The last subtopic deals with *cultural profile* of Slovenian representatives in the EP. The interviewed were asked to give their perception on competence of Slovenian MEPs (professional profile, political experience), their identity (national vs. European identity, differences between different political group in this regard), loyalty (are they representatives of national interests of their country or political interests of their group) and integration in domestic and international policy networks. They informed us also on their opinions on future political development of the EU, especially with respect to the role of the EP (and also national parliaments).

Our interviewees find competence of Slovenian MEPs as comparable to their colleagues from other European countries (but they have, as stated by one, less political experience because it is their first mandate as MEP). Primary identity of the MEPs is still national one which is, however, not inconsistent with European identity and general pro-European orientation. There are differences between political groups in this regard. While extreme-rightist parties are strongly nationalistic, the main political groups (conservatives, liberals, social democrats) are generally pro-European. It depends also on the country.¹⁹

Political loyalty of the MEPs is share, i.e. it belongs both to their country and their political association. Our interviewees don't state some significant conflict of loyalty in this respect. But some of them prefer

¹⁹ "According to my observations, Slovenian MEPs feel Slovenian and Europeans in rather equal way. Identity of the MEPs depends on party affiliation in their home country. For example, British conservatives feel much more British than Europeans what does not hold for other parties and for conservatives from other countries." (Interviewee no. 5)

national interests at least in some situations.²⁰ In case of collision of interests, they try to reach an acceptable compromise that would respect both political platform of parliamentary group as well as the interests of the MEPs' home countries. Some of the interviewed state that it is sometimes hard for Slovenian MEPs to establish what in fact the national interest of Slovenia on particular matter is, due to a lack of consensus at the national level.²¹

It is said that the MEPs are, beside their active engagement in their European political groups, involved also in Slovenian national politics. Some of them hold rather strong positions in their political parties. However, for some their influence in this regard is rather questionable. Generally, the interviewed support further integration of the EU which however shouldn't bring some strong centralisation. They think that the role of the EP will increase while the role of the national parliaments will not lose importance.

²⁰ "As concerns legislative proposals which have direct consequences for Slovenia and its interests, Slovenian MEPs are united. In this case Slovenian interests prevail over interests of political group. We try to resolve the problem of compatibility of interests by persuading of colleagues from other countries in correctness of Slovenian arguments and trying to get support for them within political group." (Interviewee no. 1)

²¹ "In one year, we probably voted on couple of hundreds of different acts, directives, declarations; in very few occasions we knew in advance what is the prevailing position of Slovenia on particular matter. " (Interviewee no. 2)

Main characteristics and patterns

We can find out that the parliamentary culture in Slovenia still differs from the one in established democracies with long tradition of parliamentarism, and also from the E which is based on norms and principles of these democracies. There is a lack of tolerance for political and ideological differences what is related to insufficient willingness for listening opposing views and cooperation across party lines, i.e. with people with different political orientation. This is what Slovenia could learn from its European partners. In this respect, situation is more similar to other new EU countries from East-Central Europe what is understandable considering cultural closeness and similar political traditions. Comparing the EU with the SP and also other national parliaments, there is more relaxed climate in the first, with more trust and communication between them. This could be explained by the fact that the EP still does not have the political role comparable to those of national parliaments, thus tensions deriving from the decision-making process (where the key issues are discussed and voted) are not so strong. There is also much less 'historical burden', i.e. conflicts and animosities typical for certain political traditions that characterise political (and also parliamentary) life in some countries. The last holds for Slovenia who has tradition of strong ideological polarisation (so called Kulturkampf) between political camps that had in some periods very poisonous effects of political and social climate (Dolenc, 1996). Some elements of this polarisation that still in place in present time have been manifesting also in relations and practice of Slovenian parliamentarianism.

However, Slovenian MEPs are, in general, quite comparable with their colleagues, also those from established Western democracies. They have no problems in communication and establishing contacts. They notice

only minor differences of cultural nature between MEPs from different EU countries. However, there were no significant problems on this basis, meaning there is enough cultural compatibility in the EU legislature. *Obviously there is a cultural similarity between MEPs from Slovenia and the EU countries.* Majority of them share both national and European identity, which are, as it seems, mostly compatible. The same holds for the relationship between representation of national interests and interests of political groups. These interests are compatible in most cases, when not they are usually being resolved through dialog.

It seems that cultural differences between parliaments of the EU member countries and between them and the EP are more pronounced than differences within EP, i.e. between MEPs from different EU countries. Reason for this could be the selection of people who run for office in the EP that is made by political parties. At least bigger and more 'serious' parties put on their candidate lists for European elections people who are internationally comparable and sympathetic for European idea what is not always the case for national elections. These are in most cases people with international experience, if not international prestige. Another reason is exposure of MEPs from different countries to common institutional framework with its rules, norms and principles. As claimed by neoinstitutionalist approach (see March and Olsen, 1995), normative structure of particular institutional environment strongly affect mental and behavioural patterns of individuals. People who are engaged in the same institution thus tend to evolve similar (or at least compatible) habits and modes of conduct.

The role in domestic political life differs considerably between Slovenian MEPs. Two of them from the period 2004-2009 were leaders of (main oppositional) political parties and two vice-presidents (of main parties of

government coalition), and while others did not occupy any high positions in their parties. However, even their positions differed. One of them, a former primer minister is still very influential in his party, another one, also a former high ranking functionary, ceased being involved in party politics, while the third one, a former journalist, has never before been active in politics. Five out of eight current MEPs are former ministers (one even former prime minister). In general, we can thus say that Slovenian MEPs rank rather high (at least in formal terms) in domestic politics. But this is a result of specific internal relations in some political parties.

The respondents were rather supportive to further integration of the EU. However, we have to mention that most of the interviews were conducted before some events (especially rejection of European constitution on referenda in France and Netherlands) occurred that put under question the course of the integration. It would be interested to hear their opinion on these matters – have they perhaps changed their assessment on development of the EU?

We can see that Slovenian MEPs, regarding their experience, competence, character and prestige, stand out from general political structure in the country. Before they become elected in the EP, they had successful carrier in politics or in some other field (business, journalism). In this regard, they more resemble representatives in the EP from other EU countries (including the ones from 'old' democracies) than their colleagues in national parliament. Another is In this way, they could represent a link between national and European level of policy-making and well as agents of 'Europeisation' of Slovenian political space.

Discussion

Political and parliamentary life in post-communist Slovenia was often characterised by strong ideological polarisation and animosities between political camps. So called Kulturkampf that appeared already in the mid-nineteenth century, referring to the conflict between religious and secular forces for ideological hegemony was in some way in place also in recent period, importantly determining dynamics of political life. Ideological confrontation was focusing on topic like the role of Catholic Church and the especially the attitude towards the past, meaning both the period of the Second World War and the communist period. This period is, due to numerous tragic events (occupation, civil war, post-war killings and court show-trials, dispossessions and persecution of political opponents), the source of numerous trauma and resentments among Slovenians. Ideologically based struggles have been often conditioned by the interests of their protagonists and can thus serve as the means to (de)legitimise existing relations of powers and organise material resources (Tomšič, 2000). Such circumstances represent considerable problem for a successful social transformation because, on one hand, the energy needed to solve the burning economic and social issues is being wasted, and on the other hand, the split between the holders of the opposing ideological options is on the increase the possibilities to reach compromises.

After the 2004 parliamentary elections it appeared that political polarisation would ease, with the issue of a socio-economic regulation gaining in importance (Adam and Tomšič, 2012: 61). The campaign before these elections campaign was evidently less burdened 'old' ideological issues. In front are coming issues related to socio-economic regulation of society like liberalisation of economy, reform of taxation, reform of welfare

state etc. This turn toward 'issues of the future' has to be welcomed since it leads politics in more productive and development-oriented direction. It can be argued that this trend is at least partly conditioned by Slovenia's accession to European Union.²² The most of the issues that are at the top of Slovenian political agenda are not unique but the ones all European societies are dealing with. In this sense, integration into European political space brought more awareness for key problems of social and economic development facing European societies.

We can expect that participation of Slovenian representatives in the European Parliament would have positive contribution for this matter, since it is becoming not only a forum for discussions of European policies but an increasingly important player in the process of creation and implementation of these policies. The problem is that problems facing the Union (slow economic growth, lagging behind USA and some other countries in terms of competitiveness and technological development) coincide with uncertain future of European integration. This means that decision-makers have dual role: not only creation of specific policies but also determination of the very nature of Europe as political entity. The later has to be carried out in inclusive way, with equal participation of all member-countries and thoroughly discussed in bodies like the European Parliament where people from the Eastern part of the Union should contribute their share.

²² However, in the last years, animosities and conflicts between the political camps soon regained considerable strength. The most evident example of such ideological activities was the decision of municipal authorities in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana to name a future street after the former Yugoslav communist leader Josip Broz Tito that met with strong resistance from the centre-right opposition and a considerable section of the public, accusing the mayor and his followers of trying to rehabilitate the communist regime.

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Preučevanje socialnega kapitala na podeželju: študija primera Slovenske Istre

Examining social capital on the countryside: case study of Slovenian Istria

Dane Podmenik²³

Povzetek

Prispevek predstavlja poskus merjenja in vrednotenja zalog socialnega kapitala na podeželju Slovenske Istre. Na podlagi opravljene terenska raziskava lahko zaključimo, da med »obmestnim« in »zalednim« tipom ne prihaja do opaznejših razlik v zalogah socialnega kapitala, lahko pa zaznamo razlike, ki so pogojene s starostjo in izobrazbo anketirancev. Med starejšimi je več vezivnega kapitala, med mlajšimi ter višje izobraženimi pa več premostitvenega socialnega kapitala. Prav zaloge le tega, ki ga mnogi avtorji vidijo kot generator razvoja, so na obravnavanem območju nižje kot na državni ravni. V okviru (neo)endogenega koncepta razvoja podeželja, socialni kapital predstavlja temelj za »opolnomočenje« prebivalcev podeželja, da nastopijo kot aktivni deležniki. Tukaj pomembno vlogo igrajo Lokalno akcijske skupine oz. program LEADER ter nevladne organizacije. Podatki in izkušnje kažejo, da dosedanje izvajanje programa LEADER, z vidika krepitve zalog socialnega kapitala, ni najbolj učinkovito. Prav tako je (razvojno) delovanje nevladnih organizacij zelo omejeno. V prihodnje bo potrebno vlagati predvsem v graditev razvojnega povezovanje med različnimi

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deležniki in privabljanju mladih (izobraženih) na podeželje.

Ključne besede: socialni kapital, (neoendogeni) razvoj podeželja, Slovenska Istra, nevladne organizacije, Lokalno akcijske skupine, program LEADER

Abstract

The paper presents the attempt of measurement and valuation of stocks of social capital in rural areas of Slovene Istria. The field research we conducted has shown that there are no noticeable differences in the stocks of social capital between the "peri-urban" and the "hinterland" type of the rural area in Slovenian Istria, but we were able to detect differences in the structure of social capital, which are dependent on the age and the education of the respondents. Bonding capital is more prevalent among the older population, while bridging capital predominates among the younger population with higher education. And it is exactly the stocks of the latter, which are seen by many authors as the generator of development, that are lower in the investigated area when compared to the national level. In the framework of the neo-endogenous concept of rural development, (the bridging) social capital represents the foundation for the "empowerment" of the rural population, so that they can emerge as active stakeholders. Here an important role is played by Local Action Groups/ Programme LEADER and non-governmental organizations. The data and experience show that the implementation of the LEADER program, in terms of strengthening the stock of social capital, is not effective enough. Also (development) operation of NGOs is very limited. In the future it will be necessary to invest in strengthening development integration between different stakeholders and attracting young people in rural areas.

Key words: social capital, (neoendogenous) rural development, Slovenian Istria, non-governmental organizations, Programme LEADER, Local Action Groups

Uvod

Socialni kapital je zadnji dve desetletji predmet intenzivnega preučevanja raziskovalcev iz različnih strok in kot tak predstavlja multidisciplinaren fenomen ter uporabno »orodje« za preučevanje in pojasnjevanje družbenih procesov in razvoja na mikro, mezo in makro ravneh. V prispevku izhajamo iz ugotovitve Putnama (1993), enega od najpomembnejših avtorjev tega področja, da je socialni kapital »javno dobro« in deluje kot generator družbenega ter ekonomskega razvoja.

V slovenskem prostoru se z raziskovanjem socialnega kapitala ukvarjajo številni avtorji, predvsem iz sociološke stroke. Pri preučevanju zalog socialnega kapitala v Sloveniji so ugotovili, da se v evropskem kontekstu Slovenija uvršča med države s srednjo stopnjo socialnega kapitala (ob Italiji, Slovaški, Estoniji, in nekaterih drugih državah), vendar je za Slovenijo značilna nizka stopnja premostitvenega socialnega kapitala, kar predstavlja enega od ključnih razvojnih problemov (Adam in Rončević, 2004). Na polju proučevanja vloge socialnega kapitala v okviru razvoja podeželja, lahko izpostavimo dela avtoric Potočnik Slavičeve, Rodele in Černič Isteničeve, ki jih konkretnije predstavljamo v nadaljevanju. Tukaj lahko izpostavimo manko empiričnih raziskav usmerjenih v (neposredno) merjenje ter vrednotenje zalog socialnega kapitala na podeželju. Da bi se bilo potrebno intenzivneje posvetiti tovrstnim raziskavam, poudarjata tudi Černič Isteničeva in Mavrijeva (2012).

V opisani luči pričujoči prispevek prinaša nov doprinos na polju

raziskovanja socialnega kapitala na podeželju v Sloveniji. Glavni cilj raziskave je bil, predvsem z uporabo neposrednih metod merjenja, poizkusiti ovrednotiti stopnjo socialnega kapitala na podeželju Slovenske Istre. V ta namen so bile med lokalnim prebivalstvom izvedene terenske ankete, v katere smo vključili izbrane kazalnike socialnega kapitala (zaupanje, medsosedske stiki, članstvo in neplačano delo v nevladnih organizacijah). Naj na tem mestu izpostavimo, da prihaja pri merjenju socialnega kapitala razlik v metodoloških pristopih, kot tudi do razlik pri izboru kazalnikov, kar je, kot trdi Fukuyama, (2001) ena od največjih pomanjkljivosti koncepta socialnega kapitala. Pomanjkljive in neenotne operacionalizacije tega koncepta zavirajo razvoj raziskav na tem področju (Van der Gaag in Snijders, 2005). Zato smo se v naši raziskavi odločili, da pri naboru kazalnikov sledimo najbolj uveljavljenim oz. t.i. »standardnim« kazalnikom merjena socialnega kapitala. Ti so: a) generalizirano zaupanje, b) članstvo v prostovoljnih organizacijah in mrežah ter c) aktivna participacija (Adam, 2007).

Poleg »splošne« slike o prisotnosti socialnega kapitala med prebivalci podeželja Slovenske Istre, nas je zanimalo tudi ali prihaja do razlik v zalogah socialnega kapitala med (moderniziranimi) obmestnimi območji in od obalnih središč bolj oddaljenimi zalednimi območji. Ugotavljali smo še vpliv demografskih lastnosti anketiranih (starosti in izobrazbe) na zaloge socialnega kapitala. V naslednjem koraku raziskave smo s pomočjo dosegljivih sekundarnih statističnih podatkov opravili primerjavo zalog socialnega kapitala med preučevanim območjem in celotno Slovenijo. V okviru vedno bolj uveljavljajočega se koncepta (neo)endogenega razvoja podeželja, igrajo zelo pomembno vlogo Lokalno akcijske skupine (LAS) oz. program LEADER²⁴ ter nevladne organizacije (Potočnik, 2008).

²⁴ Program LEADER se uvršča v t.i. 4. os programa razvoja podeželja EU in se v

Eden od ključnih ciljev programa LEADER je krepitev socialnega kapitala, z namenom aktivacije različnih lokalnih akterjev in soupravljanja posameznih podeželskih območij po načelu »od spodaj navzgor«. Nevladne organizacije po Putnamu (1993) predstavljajo enega ključnih indikatorjev zalog povezovalnega socialnega kapitala. V nadaljevanju tako predstavljamo ključne dileme in izzive, ki se pojavljajo pri izvajanju programa LEADER in delovanju NVO na obravnavnem območju.

Ob koncu prispevka se osredotočamo aktualne procese v povezavi s problematiko pomanjkljivih zalog (premostitvenega) socialnega kapitala na območju Slovenske Istre.

Kratka predstavitev koncepta socialnega kapitala

Kot teoretsko-analitično razlagalni koncept se je socialni kapital uveljavil različnih področjih proučevanja družbenega delovanja: od politike in državljanstva preko organizacij in podjetništva do ekonomskega razvoja (podeželja). Vendar je za koncept socialnega kapitala značilna odsotnost enotnih definicij in načinov merjenja oz. kazalnikov. Operacionalizacija in merjenje sta po mnenju različnih avtorjev dve od največjih pomanjkljivosti aplikacije koncepta socialnega kapitala. Na primer Haeubererjeva (2011) ugotavlja, da je pojem socialnega kapitala nejasno definiran in zaradi tega ne dopušča enopomenske operacionalizacije ter posledično empiričnega preverjanja. Koncepti posameznih avtorjev so po njenem mnenju definirani preozko in prevodnost med posameznimi koncepti otežujejo tudi razlike v izhodiščnih perspektivah. Tako operacionalizacije koncepta socialnega kapitala in merski instrumenti ostajajo neenotni, kljub dolgemu časovnemu obdobju v katerem se koncept socialnega kapitala obravnava. Na ta problem opozarjata Van

Sloveniji izvaja od leta 2008 (MKO, 2012).

der Gaag in Snijders, (2005) in ugotavljata, da umanjkanje primerljivih meritev zavira razvoj raziskav socialnega kapitala.

Eno ključnih dihotomij v konceptualizaciji socialnega kapitala predstavljata dva različna pogleda, od katerih prvi (strogo ekonomski) opredeljuje socialni kapitala za sredstvo, koristno pri doseganju individualnih (profitnih) ciljev, drugi pa vidi njegovo primarno vlogo v uresničevanju širših družbenih ciljev oz. razvoja (Woolcok, 2001, Adam in Rončević 2004). Fukuyama (2001) je definiral socialni kapital za neformalno normo, ki spodbuja sodelovanje oziroma kooperacijo dveh ali več posameznikov. Adam in Rončević (2004) poudarjata, da socialni kapital predstavlja vključenost posameznika ali skupine v družbene vezi in omrežja in tako nastopa kot prevodnik, saj le posedovanje znanja in kompetenc (na individualni ravni) ni zadostno za optimalno realizacijo določenih razvojnih ciljev. V primerjavi z ostalimi kapitali, se zaloge socialnega z (upo)rabo ne zmanjšujejo oz. se celo krepijo (Putnam, 2000).

Kot smo že omenili se v našem prispevku naslanjamo na Putnamovo definicijo socialnega kapitala (1993) za »javno dobro«, kar pa seveda nujno ne izključuje koristi, ki jih socialni kapital prinaša tudi posamezniku. Avtor socialni kapital opredeli kot skupek institucij, odnosov, vedenj in vrednot, ki usmerjajo interakcije med ljudmi in tako lahko pripomorejo k doseganju skupnih ciljev in napredka. V tem kontekstu konceptualni okvir socialnega kapitala sestavljajo naslednje glavne prvine: zaupanje, vzajemnost oz. solidarnost, pravila in norme ter družbena omrežja (Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993; Pretty and Ward 2001). Putnam je utemeljil razliko med vezivno (bounding) in premostitveno (bridging) obliko socialnega kapitala: vezivni socialni kapital nastaja v družinah, med prijatelji in drugimi bližnjimi osebami; premostitveni socialni kapital pa povezuje bolj oddaljene posameznike –

znance in druge osebe izven primarnega socialnega kroga. Vezivni socialni kapital povezuje ljudi z podobnimi družinskimi in socialnimi značilnostmi, premostitveni socialni kapital pa povezuje ljudi z različnimi socialnimi značilnostmi (Putnam, 2000). Na eni strani vezivni socialni kapital deluje predvsem kot »varnostna mreža«, ki ščiti oz. daje oporo članom ožje skupnosti pred socialno in ekonomsko izključenostjo. Tukaj velja dodati, da lahko vezivni kapital zaradi svoje narave krepi izključevanje (drugačnih) in homofobijo ter ovira socio-ekonomski napredek. Na drugi strani pa premostitveni socialni kapital deluje izrazito povezujoče in nastopa kot »generator« razvoja. V literaturi se pojavlja še tretji tip socialnega kapitala in sicer povezovalni, ki se nanaša na krepitev povezovanja z zunanjimi viri in centri moči (Woolcock, 2001).

Eno od pomembnih vprašanj ali socialni kapital prispeva k (trajnostnemu) razvoju posameznih skupnosti, regij ter držav in ali je na podlagi stopenj oz. zalog socialnega kapitala mogoče (vsaj do neke mere) razložiti razlike v razvoju in blagostanju med posameznimi državami oz. regijami? Več raziskav kaže, da je prispevek socialnega kapitala k (trajnostnemu) razvoju zelo pomemben. Yokohama in Sakurai (2006) sta opravila pregled vrste raziskav, ki so bile v zadnjih letih opravljene na podlagi različnih metod ter kazalnikov in večina jih je potrdila (pomemben) prispevek socialnega kapitala k trajnostnemu razvoju. Knack in Keefer (1997) na vzorcu 29 držav izpostavljata, da so zaupanje in družbene norme močnejše v državah z višjimi in pravičnejše porazdeljenimi dohodki. Adam in Rončević (2004) poudarjata, da se v Evropi manjše in razvojno uspešne države (zlasti skandinavske) uvrščajo v skupino z visoko stopnjo socialnega kapitala in obstaja statistično značilna povezanost med stopnjo socialnega kapitala in razvojno uspešnostjo.

Socialni kapital in (neoendogeni) razvoj podeželja

Na podeželju, predvsem v srednji in vzhodni Evropi, smo v zadnjih desetletjih priče tektonskim ekonomskim, socialnim ter demografskim spremembam, ki se, kot ugotavlja Barbič (1991) izražajo v t.i. prestrukturiranju ruralnosti in posledično sprožajo števila razvojna vprašanja.

Pri proučevanju podeželja in pri oblikovanju razvojnih politik se je pozornost preusmerila od tradicionalističnega eksogenega pristopa - v okviru katerega je (pasivno) podeželje odvisno predvsem od zunanjih dejavnikov oz. akterjev, k konceptu (neo)endogenega razvoja. Ta temelji na aktivaciji lokalnih in endogenih kapitalov ter akterjev, ki v sodelovanju z zunanjimi deležniki oz. centri moči predstavljajo ključni element in temelj razvoja podeželja. S procesom decentralizacije in (delnim) prenosom moči na lokalno raven, kjer politike aktivno (so)oblikujejo t.i. nove neodegenene oblike združevanja (npr. lokalno akcijske skupine oz. LAS v okviru izvajanja programa LEADER) podeželje pridobiva možnost in hkrati prevzema odgovornost za lastni razvoj (Ray, 2001, Potočnik-Slavič, 2008).

V okviru tega globalno-lokalnega modela ima socialni kapital (poleg človeškega) ključno vlogo (Cabus in Vanhaverbeke, 2003), ker predstavlja predpogoj za aktiviranje endogenih potencialov (Potočnik-Slavič, 2008). Wiesinger (2007) izpostavlja, da ima socialni kapital zelo pomembno vlogo predvsem v srednje in vzhodnoevropskih državah pri prenovi ter vzpostavljanju zaupanja in lokalne identitete po političnih spremembah ter propadu nekdanjih socialističnih kolektivnih institucij na podeželju. Izpostavlja tudi, da bi pomembnost socialnega kapitala morala biti prepoznana s strani političnih določevalcev, kot ključna dimenzija razvoja podeželja.

Iz raziskav usmerjenih v preučevanje socialnega kapitala na podeželju in

primerjav z urbanimi območji lahko izluščimo, da na eni strani prihaja do močnih (neformalnih in formalnih) stikov ter povezanosti znotraj podeželskih skupnosti, kar se izkazuje v večjih zalogah vezivnega kapitala, na drugi strani pa do večje »izoliranosti« in posledično nižjih zalog premostitvenega kapitala (Onyx in Bullen 2000, Alan in sod., 2004). Na tem mestu velja poudariti, da prihaja do različnih pogledov na pomen (močnega) vezivnega kapitala za podeželske skupnosti in njihov razvoj. Pojavljajo se pogledi, da se močnejše povezane skupnosti bolj zavedajo lastne identitete (Cote, 2001) in učinkoviteje spopadajo z revščino ter izkoriščajo nove priložnosti (Woolcock, 2001). Drugi avtorji pa opozarjajo, da močna povezanost znotraj zaprtih skupnosti sicer koristi ožjemu krogu ljudi, a (lahko) povzroča zavrnitev prišlekov in inovacij ter vodi v socialno izključenost vseh tistih, ki niso sposobni ali voljni sprejeti lokalnih norm (Portes in Landolt, 1996, Schuller, 2001, Wiesinger, 2007). Florida (2002) pa je še bolj radikalno kritičen do tesnih povezav, ker jev močnih vezeh vidi (razvojno) destruktivnost, nasprotno pa ima šibke vezi za ključno spodbudo kreativnosti. Tako (sub)urbana področja povezuje z višjo tolerantnostjo in odprtostjo do »drugačnosti«, kar pomembno bolj privlači pripadnike t.i. kreativnega razred, ki predstavljajo enega od ključnih generatorjev razvoja. »Zaprtost« lahko pomembno vpliva na odseljevanje (izobraženih in kreativnih) oseb s podeželja in posledično vodi v strukturne probleme (Ibid., 2002). Na tem mestu velja omeniti še študijo v kateri je, na vzorcu 54 evropskih regij, opravljena primerjava vpliva vezivnega in premostitvenega socialnega kapitala na ekonomski razvoj. Avtorja sta prišla do izsledkov, da ima premostitveni tip socialnega kapitala pozitiven, vezivni tip pa negativen vpliv na ekonomski razvoj (Beugelsdijk in Smulders, 2004).

Ko se osredotočamo na raziskovanje socialnega kapitala na slovenskem podeželju, je treba izpostaviti dela Slavič-Potočnikove, Rodele in Černič

Isteničeve. Prva je v okviru svoje raziskave preučevala zaloge socialnega kapitala in razvojne procese na štirih sondnih območjih. Avtorica se je osredotočila predvsem na formalne oblike povezovanja, med katerimi posebno pozornost namenja društvom, ki jim pripiše velik pomen pri vrednotenju socialnega kapitala in pri razvoju podeželja. Glede na število društev, delež članov, dejavnosti in oblike povezovanja, opredeli naslednje tipe organiziranega socialnega kapitala a) koncentrični v Goriških Brdih, b) nosilno povezovalni v Zgornje Savinjski dolini in c) hierarhični v Suhi Krajini; Za vsa tri navedena območja avtorica poroča, da se okoli 50 % prebivalcev vključuje v lokalna društva, kar lahko v primerjavi s podatki na nacionalni ravni, ocenimo kot visok odstotek. V nasprotju pa na »demografsko izčrpanem področju Brkinov obstajajo le posamezni elementi socialnega kapitala, ki sami zase ne morejo poskrbeti za učinkoviti lokalni razvoj« (Potočnik-Slavič, 2009, 34). Ključne ugotovitve so, da je socialni kapital najbolj razvit v Goriških Brdih in Zgornje Savinjski dolini, manj v Suhi Krajini, v Brkinih pa se podlage za njegov razvoj (pre)počasi formirajo (ibid., 2009).

Rodela v svojih delih oz. raziskavah obravnava predvsem vlogo družbenega učenja in socialnega kapitala na trajnostni razvoja podeželja in soupravljanja naravnih virov. Tukaj se nam zdi smiselno izpostaviti predvsem ključne ugotovitve iz raziskave izvedene na območju Goriškega. Pri zasnovi ideje o ustanovitvi Krajinskega parka Goričko sta ključno vlogo igrala človeški ter socialni kapital v obliki socialnih omrežij in čezmejnega (razvojnega) sodelovanja oz. povezovanja med akterji. Avtorici, kljub izrazito socio-ekonomski podhranjenosti Goriškega, to območje opredelita kot model učeče regije in poudarita pomen uvajanja (razvojnih) ukrepov, usmerjenih v spodbujanje socialnega kapitala, kolektivnega učenja in podjetništva na podeželskih območjih (Rodela in Šmid, 2007).

Črnič Isteničeva se, primarno usmerja v raziskovanje vloge žensk v

razvoju podeželja. Prihaja do sklepa, da imajo ženske zelo pomembno vlogo pri razvoju podeželja in pri krepitvi zalog socialnega kapitala (Černič Istenič, 2004). Pomembne so tudi ugotovitve raziskave socialnega kapitala in razvoja podeželskega turizma na primeru izbranih vasi Občine Cerklje (Černič Istenič in Mavri, 2012). Avtorici izpostavljata, da za razvoj podeželja in turizma ni dovolj le negovanje vezi in povezovanje znotraj vaških oz. lokalnih skupnosti, ampak se morajo le te povezovati tudi navzven, predvsem z nosilci razvojne politike. Zato morajo lokalne skupnosti nujno vlagati v premostitveni socialni kapital, ki je ključ do razvoja podeželja. Opozarjata še na preveč pasivno vlogo občine- tako z vidika krepitve povezovanj znotraj lokalne skupnosti, kot tudi navzven. Ker je problematika nizkih zalog premostitvenega socialnega kapitala prisotna na celotnem slovenskem podeželju, bi nosilci politike razvoja podeželja morali v prihodnje več pozornosti namenjati raziskavam usmerjenim v preučevanje socialnega kapitala na podeželju (Ibid., 2012).

Metodologija

Oris obravnavanega območja

Na začetku te točke velja izpostaviti, da prihaja do različnih (geografskih) interpretacij obsega Slovenske Istre. Medtem ko je njen obseg na jugu, severu in zahodu jasno določen, pa to ne velja za vzhodni (kraški) del (Podmenik, 2012). V našem primeru smo sledili najbolj uveljavljeni definiciji, ki je uporabljena tudi v (uradnih) razvojnih dokumentih (npr. Lokalna razvojna strategija) in tako smo območje opredelili z mejami treh občin- Koper, Izola in Piran. Slovenska Istra se po »standardnih« socio-ekonomskih in tudi drugih razvojnih kazalnikih (npr. indeks človekovega razvoja in indeks razvojne ogroženosti) uvršča med najbolj razvite

(mezo)regije v Sloveniji (ibid, 2012). Vendar pa znotraj območja prihaja do opaznejših socio-ekonomskih in razvojnih razlik, med urbaniziranim ter infrastrukturno in gospodarsko razvitim obalnim delom ter (ruralnim) zaledjem, ki se je predvsem od petdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja dalje ubadal z mnogimi strukturnimi problemi, od množičnega odseljevanja, staranja prebivalstva do zatona najpomembnejše gospodarske panoge kmetijstva.

Od devetdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja je na račun večje »skrbi« politike za razvoj podeželja, predvsem z izgradnjo in izboljšanjem (osnovne) infrastrukture, prišlo do ponovnega zanimanja za poseljevanje, kar se izkazuje tudi v pozitivnejši demografski sliki območja. To je spodbudilo tudi delno oživljanje kmetijstva (vinogradništvo in oljkarstvo). Napisano velja predvsem za obalnim središčem bližje in dostopnejše predele, ki so hkrati tudi bolj zanimivi za poselitev ter nudijo tudi boljše pogoje za kmetijstvo. Med tem pa so bolj odmaknjeni (pretežno kraški) deli zaledja, še vedno v *depriviligiranem* položaju. Tako se lahko poleg navedene (osnovne) delitve med obalnim in zalednim delom, pojavljajo opaznejše razlike tudi znotraj zaledja samega. Kljub temu lahko (v primerjavi z ostalimi ruralnimi območji v Sloveniji) podeželje Slovenske Istre, uvrstimo med ekonomsko dobro stoječa območja.

Z vidika trajnostnega razvoja je problematično predvsem dejstvo, da ne uspe aktivirati (mnogih) endogenih razvojnih potencialov, ki jih vidimo predvsem v ekološkem kmetijstvu, »zelenem« turizmu in zavarovanih območjih. Posledično se to izkazuje v veliki odvisnosti od (obalnih) urbanih središč, kamor dnevno na delo migrira velika večina aktivnega prebivalstva (v našem primeru smo to zabeležili pri več kot 70 % anketirancev). Tako namesto, da bi se zaledna naselja razvijala v smeri multifunkcijskega podeželja, vedno bolj postajajo (modernizirana) »spalna naselja«.

Metoda terenske raziskave in vzorec

Raziskava²⁵ temelji na podatkih pridobljenih z neposrednim oz. osebnim terenskim anketiranjem, pri katerem smo uporabili strukturirani vprašalnik zaprtega tipa. Terensko anketiranje je bilo izvedeno v letu 2010 po gospodinjstvih na podeželju Slovenske Istre. Vzorec so predstavljale vse osebe, z izjemo šolajočega se prebivalstva, s stalnim ali začasnim prebivališčem v enem izmed podeželskih naselij v občinah Koper, Izola in Piran. Skupna velikost vzorca je znašala 301 oz. skoraj 1 % celotnega prebivalstva živečega na podeželju v Slovenski Istri, glede na podatke Popisa prebivalstva iz leta 2002.

Večina anketiranih (dobra tretjina) ima nedokončano ali končano OŠ, približno četrtina je takih s končano tri letno srednjo oz. poklicno šolo in štiriletno srednjo šolo oz. gimnazijo, medtem ko je anketiranih z višjo ali visoko šolo, za dobro desetino. Pri anketi je sodelovalo 142 moških (47 %) in 159 žensk (53 %) in skupno prevladujejo anketiranci, ki so zaposleni (skoraj 60 %). Znotraj te kategorije je bilo za dobro desetino samozaposlenih in za dober odstotek kmetov. Brezposelnih je bilo okoli 5 %, upokojenih pa dobra tretjina anketirancev.

S ciljem raziskati ali prihaja do (opaznejših) razlik v stopnjah socialnega kapitala med (moderniziranimi) obmestnimi ter, od obalnih središč (nekoliko) bolj oddaljenimi območji flišnega gričevja in kraškega roba, smo za »tipizacijo« naselij uporabili »Razvojno-tipološko členitev podeželja²⁶«. Tipologija temelji na devetih kazalnikih- gostota poselitve, delež kmečkega prebivalstva, dohodnina na prebivalca, nadmorska višina

²⁵ Raziskava je bila opravljena v okviru projekta »Krepitev kakovosti življenja na podeželju Slovenske Istre«, ki se je izvajal v okviru Lokalno akcijske skupine Istra (program LEADER).

²⁶ V letu 2005 je bila opisana tipologija posodobljena z uporabo novejših podatkov Popisa prebivalstva 2002 (Klemenčič in sod., 2005) in to »posodobljeno različico« smo uporabili tudi pri naši raziskavi.

in naklon zemljišča, indeks staranja vsega in kmečkega prebivalstva, indeks kmetij z zagotovljenim prevzemnikom ter gibanje števila prebivalstva (Kovačič in sod., 2000). Slovenska Istra se tako deli na naslednje podeželske tipe: a) obmestna območja, b) značilna podeželska območja- ravninska območja in c) območja praznjenja. V našem primeru smo naselja uvrščena v »značilna podeželska območja« in »območja praznjenja« združili v enoten tip, ki smo ga poimenovali »zaledni«. Prostorska enota uporabljena v naši raziskavi je naselje.

Preglednica1: Vzorec terenske raziskave

Podeželski tip	Skupno št. prebivalcev*	Velikost vzorca glede na izobrazbo oz. končano šolanje				Skupna velikost vzorca
		nepopolna OŠ ali zaključena OŠ	nižja ali srednja poklicna šola	srednja strokovna šola ali gimnazija	višja ali visoka šola	
Obmestni	16.913	53	42	49	25	169
Zaledni	13.554	51	35	33	13	132
Skupaj	30.449	104	77	82	38	301

*Vir: *Popis prebivalstva (2002).*

Pri primerjavi rezultatov smo uporabili test Annove, Levenov testa ter Pearsonov korelacijski test, na podlagi katerih smo lahko opredelili ali stopnja izobrazbe ter starost anketirancev (neodvisna spremenljivka) statistično vpliva na zaloge socialnega kapitala in ali znotraj opredeljenih

podeželskih tipov, starostnih ter izobrazbenih razredov prihaja do (relevantnih) statističnih razlik v zalogah socialnega kapitala. Za primerjavo pridobljenih rezultatov terenske raziskave s tistimi na državni ravni, smo uporabili dosegljive sekundarne podatke iz raziskave »Slovensko javno mnenje« (SJM, 2011), »European quality of live survey« (EQLS, 2009) ter podatke Statističnega urada (SURS, 2006). Vrednotenje delovanja Lokalno akcijske skupine Istre, programa LEADER in nevladnih organizacij, smo opravili na obstoječih dosegljivih podatkih in analizah (*Strategija razvoja nevladnega sektorja v Obalno-kraški regiji ter lastnih izkušnjah*)²⁷.

Izbira kazalnikov

Kot smo že uvodoma poudarili, je ena od največjih pomanjkljivosti socialnega kapitala odsotnost enotnih metod raziskovanja oz. merjenja (Fukuyama, 2001) in zato je tudi v našem primeru izbira kazalnikov predstavljala velik izziv. Stone (2001) opozori, da je uporaba neprimernih načinov oz. kazalnikov merjenja povzročila probleme povezane s samim razumevanjem socialnega kapitala in sprožila debate o relevantnosti samega koncepta. V literaturi se pojavljajo različni pristopi merjenja in izbire kazalnikov socialnega kapitala (npr. Narayan and Pritchett 1999, Onyx and Bullen, 2000, Putnam, 2000). Znotraj raziskovalne sfere se prav tako pojavljajo različni pogledi na pomen posameznih kazalnikov, kot primer lahko podamo »generalizirano zaupanje«, katerega pomen nekateri avtorji »precenjujejo«, drugi pa ga niti ne uvrščajo v svoje raziskave (Adam, 2007).

Z namenom uporabnosti ter primerljivosti podatkov (z drugimi študijami)

²⁷ Avtor je kot član Zavoda Eko-Humanitatis vključen oz. deluje pri aktivnostih povezanih z NVO, več projektih v okviru programa LEADER ter ostalih razvojnih aktivnosti na območju (podeželja) Slovenske Istre.

ter upoštevajoč (finančne in časovne) omejitve pri izvedbi raziskave, smo se odločili, da pri naboru kazalnikov sledimo najbolj uveljavljenim oz. t.i. »standardnim« kazalnikom merjena socialnega kapitala, ki jih tvorijo: a) generalizirano zaupanje, b) članstvo v prostovoljnih organizacijah in mrežah ter c) aktivna participacija (Adam, 2007); Za merjenje vezivnega socialnega kapitala uporabili še vprašanje o pogostosti medsosedskih stikov.

Rezultati raziskave

Zaloge socialnega kapitala na podeželju Slovenske Istre

Pri merjenju generaliziranega zaupanja smo anketirancem zastavili vprašanje v kolikšni meri se strinjajo s trditvijo »Večini ljudem večini ljudi se lahko zaupa?« in jim ponudili enajststopenjsko lestvico (0 ne zaupa-10 zelo zaupa). Skupno je stopnja zaupanja razmeroma visoka, saj je okoli 60 % anketirancev podalo odgovorov z vrednostjo šest ali več. Povprečna vrednost na lestvici znaša 5,9. Največ anketiranih (25%) je lastno zaupanje ocenilo z oceno 6. Delež oseb, ki jih lahko označimo kot izrazito nezaupljive (odgovori od 1 do 3) znaša (le) okoli 8 %. Nasprotno pa je delež bolj zaupljivih (ocena od 8 do 10) veliko višji, saj je bilo tovrstnih odgovorov za slabo petino. Zanimiva ugotovitev je, da na sredini lestvice (med ocenami 4 in 7) prevladujejo odgovori anketirank, medtem ko pri skrajnih vrednostih, (tako negativnih kot pozitivnih) prevladujejo odgovori anketirancev. Najvišja stopnja zaupanja je zabeležena pri anketirancih z višje oz. visoko šolsko izobrazbo (povprečna vrednost 6, 2), vendar pa izobrazbena raven anketirancev ni v korelacijskem odnosu z zaupanjem in znotraj izobrazbenih razredov ne prihaja do statističnih razlik, kar velja tudi za starost anketirancev. V stopnji zaupanja med podeželskima tipoma ni razlik, saj so vrednosti praktično enake.

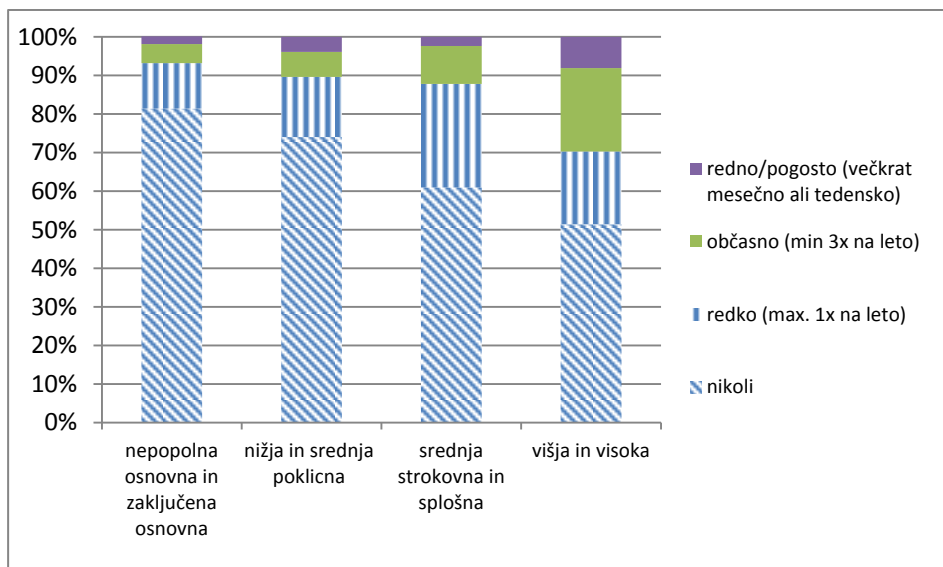
Pri merjenju neformalnih stikov smo anketiranim zastavili vprašanje o pogostosti stikov s sosedi. Tukaj enak delež anketirancev goji občasne (45 %) in redne stike (45 %), približno 8 % jih ima redke stike in manj kot 1 % nima stikov s sosedi. Analiza je pokazala, da se glede na starost anketirancev pojavljalo manjše statistično opazne razlike v pogosti medsosedske stikov ($p=0,04$). Najmanj stikov imajo anketiranci uvrščeni v najmlajšo starostno skupino (20 do 35 let), saj ima med njimi (le) petina redne stike s svojimi sosedi. Zanimivo je tudi to, da sta dva anketiranca iz te skupino edina med vsemi, ki sta odgovorili, da s sosedi nimata stikov. Največ stikov s sosedi gojijo najstarejši anketiranci stari 66 let ali več, saj je med njimi, kar 70 % takih, ki imajo redne oz. pogoste stike. Delež takih, ki imajo s sosedi redke stike je minimalen (2,8 %) in je opazno nižji, kot pri drugih starostnih skupinah. Izobrazba na pogostost stikov nima vpliva. Analiza znotraj podeželskih naselij ni pokazala statističnih razlik.

Petina anketirancev je včlanjena v enega izmed društev oz. nevladnih organizacij (NVO), med katerimi opazno prevladujejo športna in kulturna društva. Med višje oz. visoko izobraženimi je ta delež (v primerjavi z nižje izobraženimi) sicer nekoliko višji (25%), a do opaznih statističnih razlik ne prihaja. Prav tako ni razlik v članstvu glede na starost in podeželski tip. Tukaj je zanimiva ugotovitev, da sta le dva anketiranca včlanjena v več vsebinsko različnih organizacij (gre za športna in kulturna društva).

V naslednjem koraku smo aktivno participacijo merili z vprašanjem o opravljanju prostovoljnega neplačanega dela v društvih oz. nevladnih organizacijah. Velika večina anketiranih (70 %) nikoli ne opravlja tovrstnega dela. Prostovoljno delo redko opravlja slaba petina, občasno slaba desetina in redno (le) dobrih 3 % anketirancev. Pearsonov test je pokazal, da tako starost, kot tudi izobrazba (ta bolj kot prva) vplivata na

pogostost opravljanja prostovoljnega dela. Po Levenovem testu pa lahko trdimo, da znotraj starostnih razredov ($p=0,018$), kot še bolj izobrazbenih razredov ($p=0,00$), prihaja do statističnih razlik v pogostosti opravljanja prostovoljnega dela. Tako količina prostovoljnega pada z nižanjem izobrazbene ravni in naraščanjem starosti anketiranih. Največ prostovoljnega dela opravijo anketiranci stari med 18 in 35 let, med katerimi jih 60 % nikoli ne opravlja prostovoljnega dela, najmanj pa so v tem pogledu aktivni korespondenti uvrščeni v skupino 66 let in več, med katerimi jih 85 % nikoli ne opravlja prostovoljnega dela. Podobno stanje je zabeleženo pri izobrazbi anketirancev. Med anketiranci z višjo oz. visoko izobrazbo je približno polovica takih, ki prostovoljnega dela nikoli ne opravlja, pri anketirancih z najnižjo izobrazbo pa je takih za kar okoli 80 %. Podrobnejši rezultati so prikazani na sliki 1. Dodati velja še (pričakovano) veliko povezanost med članstvom v NVO in opravljanjem prostovoljnega dela. Med tistimi, ki so člani vsaj ene od NVO, jih dobrih 50% opravlja prostovoljno delo, medtem ko je med »nečlani« le okoli 20% takih.

Tabela 1: Opravljanje prostovoljnega neplačanega dela v nevladnih organizacijah glede na izobrazbo anketirancev.



Vir: Terenska raziskava (2010)

Primerjava s podatki na nacionalni ravni

Generalizirano zaupanje

Po Iglič (2004) se je Slovenija, ob prvem merjenju generaliziranega zaupanja pri nas v letu 1990, uvrščala med države z najnižjo stopnjo zaupanja v Evropi (17% oseb je menilo, da se večini ljudi lahko zaupa). Po zadnjih podatkih iz leta 2011 ta stopnja sicer znaša 20%, a je nižja kot v raziskavi opravljeni v letu 2008 in tudi tisti iz leta 1999 (SJM, 2011). Nizko stopnjo generaliziranega zaupanja Adam in Rončević (2003) delno pripisujeta socialistični (pol)preteklosti, kar dokazujejo podatki, da je zaupanje v vzhodnih in srednjih državah precej nižje kot v zahodnih. Tukaj velja dodati, da je v zadnjih letih na ravni EU zabeležen splošni upad zaupanja, kar velja tudi za nekatere zahodne države (Adam, 2007).

Igličeva (2004) poudarja, da zanesljivejše podatke o generaliziranem zaupanju, bolj kot dihotoma lestvica daje enajstopenjska lestvica (0 do 10), ki so jo začeli uporabljati po letu 2000. Avtorica opozori, da se večina Slovencev odloči, da zaupa šele pri vrednosti 7 in da je pri vrednostih 7 in 8 še vedno ena četrtnina takih, ki pri dihotomnem vprašanju o zaupanju odgovorijo z »ne«. Po podatkih Evropske raziskave kakovosti življenja iz leta 2007, je povprečna ocena na lestvici za slovenijo 5,2 (EQLS, 2009). Če omenjene podatke primerjamo s tistimi pridobljenimi v naši raziskavi, lahko zaključimo, da je stopnja generaliziranega zaupanja na podeželju Slovenske Istre (5,9) opazneje višja, kot to velja na ravni Slovenije (5,2). Po Igličevi (2004) je v Sloveniji sicer nekoliko višja stopnja zaupanja zabeležena pri najstarejši starostni skupini (nad 61 let), a opaznejših razlik znotraj starostnih skupin ni zaznati. Nekoliko večje razlike se pojavljajo glede na izobrazbeno raven, kjer izstopajo osebe z visoko izobrazbo. Podobne oz. skoraj identične rezultate je dala tudi naša raziskava.

Članstvo in neplačano delo v prostovoljnih oz. nevladnih organizacijah

Slovenija se v primerjavi z drugimi državami EU, uvršča v skupino držav s povprečno oz. z zadovoljivo stopnjo (aktivne) participacije in neplačanega dela v prostovoljnih organizacijah (Adam in Rončević, 2004, Iglič, 2004). Za Slovenijo lahko ocenimo, da je okoli 50 % prebivalcev (aktivno in pasivno) vključenih v vsaj eno od prostovoljnih organizacij. Po deležu članov v prostovoljnih organizacijah na ravni Slovenije izrazito prevladujejo športna in rekreacijska društva, katerim sledijo verske organizacije, sindikati in organizacije na področju kulture in izobraževanja (SJM, 2011). Ker navedeni podatki upoštevajo tudi članstvo v verskih organizacijah, poklicnih združenjih, političnih strankah ter sindikatih, ki pa so v naši raziskavi izzeti, so z vidika primerjave rezultatov bolj reprezentativni podatki o deležu

prebivalcev vključenih v npr. športno-rekreacijska društva, v katera je v obeh primerih vključenih največ oseb. Na ravni Slovenije je v tovrstna društva skupaj vključenih kar okoli 30 % prebivalcev, od tega je okoli 20% aktivnih in 10% neaktivnih članov. Na podežlju Slovenske Istre ta delež znaša (le) okoli 10%. Manjše razlike se pojavljajo pri članstvu v kulturno-umetniških društvih.

Pri primerjavi opravljanja neplačanega dela v NVO oz. neprofitnih organizacijah, smo na ravni Slovenije uporabili podatke iz leta 2008 (SJM, 2008), na podlagi katerih lahko ocenimo, da okoli 35% Slovencev opravlja tovrstno delo, kar je le nekoliko več, kot smo to zabeležili na podežlju Slovenske Istre (30%). Tukaj velja dodati, da bi šele primerjava o pogostosti opravljenega dela dalo jasnejšo primerjalno sliko. Tako na podežlju Istre skupaj le dobra desetina anketirancev tovrstno delo opravlja občasno ali redno. Kljub »metodološkim« dilemam, lahko zaključimo, da so zaloge premostitvenega kapitala na ravni Slovenije višje kot na obravnavanem območju.

Neformalni stiki

V zadnji točki tega poglavja primerjamo še pogostost neformalnih stikov. Tukaj je potrebno izpostaviti, da se dosegljivi oz. obravnavani podatki za Slovenijo nanašajo na stike s prijatelji, medtem ko smo v našem primeru spraševali izključno po stikih s sosedi. Prav tako smo uporabljene podatke SURS sami Tako podatki niso v celoti primerljivi, saj »prijatelji« (v primerjavi s »sosedi«) lahko predstavljajo širšo skupino oseb in posledično (potencialno) višjo frekvenco stikov.

Na podlagi podatkov predstavljenih v preglednici št. 2 lahko opredelimo, da ima sicer na ravni Slovenije večji delež oseb redne oz. pogoste stike s

prijatelji, a po drugi strani pa se večji delež oseb uvršča v kategoriji z redkimi stiki oz. brez stikov. Tako lahko zaključimo, da so neformalni stiki na podeželju vseeno nekoliko bolj prisotni.

Preglednica 2: Pogostost neformalnih stikov v Sloveniji in na podeželju Slovenske Istre.

	Slovenija* (stiki s prijatelji v %)	Podeželje Slovenska Istra (stiki s sosedi v %)
Redno/pogosto	58	45
Občasno	25	45
Redko	20	8
Nikoli	7	2

Vir: Terenska raziskava (2010), SURS, 2006.*

Vloga programa LEADER in nevladnih organizacij pri krepitvi socialnega kapitala ter razvoju območja

Kot vzorčni neoendogeni model in (potencialno) »zdravilo« za reševanje razvojnih problemov podeželja, nastopa program LEADER, katerega glavna naloga je, da po načelu »spodaj-navzgor« animira in aktivira čim širši krog lokalnih deležnikov, z namenom skupne priprave in uresničevanja lokalnih razvojnih strategij oz. projektov ter posledično spodbujanja trajnostnega razvoja in krepitve kakovosti življenja na podeželju. Na posameznem zaokroženem (podeželskem) območju program LEADER upravljajo javna-zasebna partnerstva, združena v Lokalno akcijske skupine – LAS (High in Gusztav, 2007).

Tako socialni kapital zaradi narave izvajanja programa predstavlja enega od (pred) pogojev za uspešno implementacijo oz. doseganje ciljev

programa. Sucksmith (2000) pri preučevanju delovanja izbranih LAS na območju Velike Britanije opozarja, da prihaja do razkoraka med teorijo in prakso. To podkrepi z ugotovitvami, da nekatere LAS niso vlagale v krepitev kolektivnega socialnega kapitala in razvojnega sodelovanja med različnimi lokalnimi deležniki. Rezultat je, da imajo dostop do sredstev programa predvsem močnejši lokalni deležniki, nasprotno pa tisti z nižjimi zalogami človeškega in socialnega kapitala in marginalizirane skupine v veliko primerih niso aktivno soudeležene. Z vidika razvoja podeželja je tako eno ključnih vprašanj, ali izvajanja programa LEADER resnično prispeva k izgradnji zalog (premostitvenega) socialnega kapitala in kolektivnega razvojnega soupravljanja na obravnavanem območju?

Na prvi pogled, upoštevajoč »pisano« sestavo družbenikov ter formalnih organov LAS Istre²⁸, lahko v primeru Slovenske Istre temu pritrdimo. Vendar pa podrobnejši pregled delovanja LAS Istre in potrjenih oz. izvedenih projektov, kaže, da temu ni prav tako. Kot razvojni akter ima LAS Istra (trenutno) izrazito pasivno vlogo, ki je v veliki meri vezana na potrjevanje projektov v okviru programa LEADER. Aktivnosti LAS Istre so vezane izključno na okvir izpolnjevanja formalno-birokratskih nalog, nujnih za njeno delovanje. LAS Istre tako ne prevzema širše aktivne razvojne vloge, z namenom krepitve zalog (premostitvenega) socialnega kapitala in kolektivnega razvojnega soupravljanja podeželja Slovenske Istre. Pregled potrjenih oz. izvedenih projektov programa LEADER pokaže, da je razvojno sodelovanje med različnimi sektorji in deležniki šibko. Tako v veliki večini primerov ločeno, na eni strani kot nosilci projektov (združeno ali posamezno) nastopajo občine, na drugi strani pa

²⁸ Na območju Slovenske Istre se program LEADER izvaja od leta 2008 dalje, ko je bila ustanovljena LAS Istra. V LAS Istra se lahko s plačilom članarine včlani kdorkoli (pravne ali fizične osebe). LAS Istre ima trenutno 60 družbenikov oz. članov (LAS Istre, 2012).

predvsem NVO (LAS Istre, 2012).

Program LEADER sicer omogoča aktivno participacijo različnih lokalnih deležnikov ter navsezadnje tudi njihovo opolnomočenje, ki pa je predvsem zaradi mnogih »birokratskih« ovir (npr. lastno sofinanciranje, zalaganje sredstev, veliko papirologije) velikokrat oteženo. To velja predvsem za tiste akterje, ki posedujejo manj človeškega, socialnega in ekonomskega kapitala, ki tukaj igrajo ključno vlogo. Tukaj velja dodati, da je prišlo do spremembe pravil o višini sofinanciranja projektov. V preteklosti je sofinanciranje strani programa LEADER lahko znašalo tudi do 100% vrednosti projektov, po novem pa je le to omejeno na največ 85%. Predvsem za nevladne organizacije, ki se že tako ali tako srečujejo z mnogimi finančnimi težavami oz. omejitvami, je to še dodatni odbijajoči dejavnik.

Vsekakor, pa ne gre zanemariti pozitivnega doprinosa izvajanja programa na podeželju Slovenske Istre. Kljub navedenim pomanjkljivostim, program vendarle predstavlja priložnost tudi za (razvojno usmerjene) NVO, kmete, obrtnike in podjetnike, da pridobijo sredstva za projekte. Tako je izvajanje programa prispevalo tudi k »opolnomočenju« in krepitvi prepoznavnosti lokalnih NVO. Tukaj velja dodati, da so se v okviru prijav in izvajanja projektov med seboj začele razvojno povezovati (vsaj) lokalne NVO, kar nedvomno vodi v krepitev socialnega kapitala in razvojnih možnosti območja.

Čeprav so prav NVO (pre)pogosto pri odločevalskih in razvojnih procesih odmaknjene v ozadje (tako na nacionalni kot lokalni ravni), pa igrajo v okviru neoendogenega razvoja podeželja zelo pomembno vlogo, kar izpostavlja tudi Slavič Potočnikova (2009). Na slovenskem podeželju se pojavlja relativno gosta mreža (različnih) društev, v katerih (prostovoljno) deluje velik delež lokalnega prebivalstva. To delovanje pa je v večini primerov vezano oz. omejeno le na (so)organizacijo posameznih vaških

(turističnih, kulturnih, športnih, izobraževalnih in drugih) dogodkov ali prireditev in le malo društev je bolj razvojno ter »podjetniško« usmerjenih (ibid., 2010).

Za območje Slovenske Istre lahko podamo zelo podobno oceno. To potrjuje tudi *»Strategija razvoja nevladnega sektorja v Obalno-kraški regiji«*, ki predstavlja prvi sistematični pregled stanja in razvoja nevladnega sektorja v regiji. Strategijo je pripravilo Stičišče NVO Obalno-kraške regije (Središče Rotunda), ki s svojimi aktivnostmi (mreženje, **zagotavljanje podpornih storitev za NVO**, promocija nevladnega sektorja, ind.) igra glavno krepitveno in povezovalno vlogo za nevladni sektor v celotni regiji. Kot nekatere ključne slabosti nevladnega sektorja v regiji strategija izpostavlja: pomanjkanje finančnih sredstev za zagotavljanje delovnih prostorov, opreme in izvajanj (večjih) projektov, odvisnost od pridobivanja sredstev in financiranja, pomanjkanje strokovnega znanja, neaktivnost članstva, problematika pridobivanja novih članov in pomanjkanja podmladka, preobremenjenost z birokracijo, računalniška nepismenost in nepoznavanje IKT (Strategija, 2012).

Ker je ena od ključnih slabosti NVO odsotnost mreženja in povezovanja, je bila v letu 2012 oblikovana »Mreža NVO Obalno-kraške regije«, v katero je trenutno včlanjenih okoli 30 članic²⁹. Namen mreže je preko krepitve socialnega kapitala tudi aktivno sodelovanje in vključevanje NVO pri pripravi nastajajočega Regionalnega razvojnega programa. Prvi izziv predstavlja zasnova skupnih razvojnih projektov in iskanje širših oz. med sektorskih razvojnih partnerstev na območju.

Samo število NVO je na območju Slovenske Istre sicer visoko. Skupaj je registriranih 1152 NVO, od tega je 368 NVO s sedežem na podežlju.

²⁹ Podatek o številu (trenutnih) članic smo dobili od mag. Bojana Mevlje, direktorja Središča Rotunde, ki koordinira mrežo.

Vendar gre večinoma za manjše NVO, ki delujejo v (zelo) »omejenem« obsegu ali pa so celo neaktivne oz. živijo le na papirju. Tako se polovica vseh registriranih društev uvršča v razred z ustvarjenimi letnimi prihodki do 5000 EUR. Med temi je približno 15% takih, ki v 2010 niso ustvarile nobenega prihodka. V vseh NVO je skupaj zaposlenih 120 oseb, kar predstavlja 0,3 % vsega delovno aktivnega prebivalstva v Slovenski Istri. Navedeno priča o podhranjenosti nevladnega sektorja v Slovenski Istri (Strategija, 2012). Tukaj velja poudariti, da je slika nevladnega sektorja na podeželju še bolj pesimistična, saj imajo praktično vse večje NVO (glede na dohodek in zaposlene) sedež v obalnih mestnih središčih.

Na podeželju največ društev delujejo na področju športa in rekreacije. Sledijo turistično- razvojna in kulturna društva. Močne oz. nosilne NVO na področju razvoja podeželja, tako z vidika delovanja in prihodkov, kot tudi članstva, na območju ni. Velika večina NVO je vezana na prihodke iz naslova članarin ter razpisov oz. sredstev občin, ki pa se v zadnjem obdobju zmanjšujejo (ibid., 2012). Z vidika prihodkov in izvajanja projektov oz. aktivnosti, se med najbolj aktivne uvršča Združenje ekoloških kmetov Obala (Ajpes, 2012). Delovanje društva je pripomoglo k promociji ekološkega kmetijstva in (de neke mere) tudi izdatnem porastu števila ekoloških kmetij v zadnjih letih v Slovenski Istri. Je pa tukaj potreben kritičen komentar, saj društvu ni uspelo »mobilizirati« članstva in je tako vanj včlanjenih le peščica (od skupno 85³⁰) ekoloških kmetij, kar z vidika (krepitve) zalog socialnega kapitala ni ugodno. Nasprotno pa velja za Društvo oljkarjev Slovenske Istre, ki v zadnjih letih povečuje članstvo in trenutno združuje kar 450 oljkarjev (DOSI, 2013). Je pa društvo ožje oz. ciljno usmerjeno na področje izobraževanja in promocije oljkarstva in tako ne predstavlja potencialnega kandidata za prevzem funkcije ključnega nosilca razvoja podeželja s strani NVO, ki je nujno potreben.

³⁰ Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo in okolje (2011).

Z namenom poglobljenega vrednotenja zalog (premostivenega in povezovalnega) socialnega kapitala in razvojnih (ne)zmožnosti NVO na podeželju Slovenske Istre, v povezavi z zgoraj opredeljeno problematiko, bi bili potrebni nadaljnji raziskovalni koraki. Tukaj imamo v mislih predvsem zbiranje podatkov o številu in strukturi (starost in izobrazba) zaposlenih ter aktivnih prostovoljcih, specifičnih (strokovnih) znanjih, gibanju letnih prihodkov, virih financiranja, mreženju in povezovanju, sodelovanju pri razvojnih programih (npr. v okviru LEADER in čezmejnem teritorialnem sodelovanju) in navsezadnje tudi prisotnosti podjetniškega duha med člani.

Razprava in razvojne perspektive

Mnoge raziskave potrjujejo pomen oz. doprinos socialnega kapitala tako k posameznikovi višji kakovosti življenja, kot k družbenemu in ekonomskemu razvoju držav, regij in lokalnih skupnosti. Tukaj velja izpostaviti predvsem pomen premostitvenega socialnega kapitala, ki je prepoznan kot generator razvoja. Avtorji, ki se ukvarjajo s preučevanjem socialnega kapitala pri nas izpostavljajo, da so zaloge socialnega kapitala (v primerjavi z zahodnimi državami) nižje, kar neugodno vpliva na razvoj države (Iglič, 2004, Adam, 2007).

V okviru koncepta neoendogenega razvoja, ki v teoriji in praksi vedno bolj pridobiva na pomenu, sta lokalni človeški in socialni kapital ključ pri aktiviranju endogenih potencialov območja (Cabus in Vanhaverbeke, 2003). Pomen socialnega kapitala pri trajnostnem razvoju podeželja vidimo predvsem v tem, da preko izgradnje kolektivnega zaupanja, (neformalnega) učenja in oblik sodelovanja, prebivalce podeželja »opolnomoči«, da nastopijo kot aktivni deležniki in prevzamejo (so)odgovornost za lasten razvoj. S tega vidika je sicer pomembno, da

podeželske skupnosti negujejo močne vezi in občutke identitete, a se morajo hkrati tudi odpreti navzven in medse sprejeti prišleke, (inovativne) ideje ter graditi različne oblike povezovanja- tako s sosednjimi, čezmejnimi in bolj oddaljenimi (ruralnimi in urbanimi) skupnostmi, kot tudi z različnimi deležniki na lokalni, regionalni, nacionalni ter nadnacionalnimi ravni. Le krepitev premostitvenega socialnega kapitala za katerega velja, da so njegove zaloge na podeželju nižje, generira razvoj.

Na podlagi opravljene raziskave lahko zaključimo, da se na podeželju Slovenske Istre pojavlja nekoliko višja stopnja generaliziranega zaupanja in neformalnih stikov oz. vezivnega socialnega kapitala, kot na državni ravni. Obratno pa to velja za premostitveni socialni kapital (članstvo in prostovoljno delo v prostovoljnih organizacijah). Zaloge premostitvenega socialnega kapitala na obravnavanem območju, so nižje tudi v primerjavi z nekaterimi drugimi podeželskimi območji (Potočnik Slavič, 2009).

Starost in izobrazba sta se (pri nekaterih kazalnikih) pokazali kot (statistično) pomembna dejavnika socialnega kapitala. Med starejšimi je več vezivnega kapitala, med mlajšimi ter višje izobraženimi pa (opazno) več premostitvenega kapitala. Prav tukaj vidimo pomembnost privabljanja aktivnih in izobraženih mladih, ki svoje priložnosti in izzive vidijo neposredno na (večfunkcijskem) podeželju.

Z vidika analize zalog socialnega kapitala med »obmestnim« in »zalednim« tipom lahko zaključimo, da ne prihaja do (statistično) opaznih razlik v zalogah socialnega kapitala, kar velja za vse uporabljene kazalnike. To pomeni, da na eni strani za (suburbani) »obmestni tip« ni mogoče (po)trditi, da poseduje večje zaloge premostitvenega socialnega kapitala, na drugi strani pa tudi ne moremo (po)trditi, da se v bolj ruralnem »zalednem« tipu akumulirajo večjega zaloge vezivnega

kapitala. Tukaj bi izpostavili, da bi bilo za temeljitejšo vrednotenje zaloga socialnega kapitala na lokalnih ravneh, potrebno razširiti nabor kazalnikov in opraviti dodatno kvalitativno (terensko) raziskovalno delo.

Kot enega glavnih zavirajočih razvojnih dejavnikov podeželja Slovenske Istre, lahko opredelimo (dosedanjo) pomanjkljivo aktivno sodelovanje med lokalnimi deležniki (lokalne skupnosti oz. občine, razvojna agencija, NVO, Univerza, strokovne in podporne organizacije na področju kmetijstva, varovanja okolja, turizma in podjetništva ter ekonomski sektor). Podobna opažanja v svojem prispevku s pomenljivim naslovom »Ali zapostavljeno podeželje Mestne občine Koper prevzema odgovornost za svoj lastni razvoj«, na primeru projekta »Šmarje- vrata v Slovensko Istro« izpostavi tudi Barbičeva (2010). Zato lahko zaključkom Adama in Rončeviča (2004), da je za Slovenijo značilen pomanjkljiv socialni kapital v obliki zaupanja, kooperacije in samoorganizacije, kar negativno vpliva na nastajanje t.i. projektnih tipov organiziranja, ki so (pred) pogoj za uspešno razvojno (so)delovanje, na primeru (podeželja) Slovenske Istre, le pritrdimo. Dokaz za to je tudi dosedanja pasivna vloga LAS Istra in izvajanje programa LEADER ter tudi pomanjkanje razvojnega povezovanja med lokalnimi NVO. V tem kontekstu bi po našem mnenju (preveč samozadostne) občine morale prevzeti aktivnejšo razvojno-povezovalno vlogo, saj bi se tako, po Adam in sod. (2010), možnosti za (inovativni) preboj povečale. Korak v to smer je tudi vključevanje NVO in drugih akterjev podeželja v razvojne procese, kar pa je sedaj bolj izjema kot pravilo.

Novo priložnost za krepitev razvojnega med sektorskega povezovanja in socialnega kapitala predstavlja nastajajoči Regionalni razvojni plan za obdobje 2014-2020. Znotraj nevladnega sektorja je tako prišlo do intenzivnega mreženja in (tudi v sodelovanju z drugimi deležniki) so že

pripravljeni prvi osnutki razvojnih projektov za umestitev v RRP. Tukaj velja izpostaviti oblikovanje »razvojnega konzorcija«, ki združuje več lokalnih oz. podeželskih NVO v katerega naj bi se kmalu vključili tudi ostali lokalni deležniki (Univerza oz. članice, krajevne skupnosti, občine, ind.). Konzorcij je oblikoval projektni predlog za trajnostni razvoj in aktivno revitalizacijo zaledja, katerega eden glavnih ciljev je prav krepitev socialnega kapitala z namenom, da prebivalci in akterji na podeželju prevzamejo aktivno vlogo pri (so)upravljanju podeželja. Ali bo projekt uspešen bo odvisno predvsem od zmožnosti akterjev, da se (širše) razvojno povežejo in animirajo lokalne prebivalce ter seveda podpore lokalnih skupnosti.

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