Catching up with the West?
Europeanising rural policies in Hungary and Poland

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Abstract

In this paper we propose a comparative perspective on Europeanization of rural policies in the post-socialist realm. We focus here specifically on two countries – Hungary and Poland, as well as situate them in a wider relational framework – alongside the 'old' EU Member States. This exercise, a research in progress, revealed that Europeanization has been a one-way process, oriented mainly on copying and pasting 'Western' policy models into newly accepted EU countries. We argue that effectiveness of this effort has been hindered by lack of detailed survey and recognition of dissimilarities between various EU countries.

Keywords: Common Agricultural Policy, Europeanization, LEADER, Welfare State decline, post-socialist transformation

Introduction

Looking back to nearly a quarter of a century of the post-socialist transformation, we can observe a challenging process driven by a desire for a system change. Whilst on one hand the fall of 'iron curtain' has resulted in a massive and often very spontaneous mobilisation of numerous actors and resources, it has been shaped by contests and conflicts between the old regimes and emerging new approaches on the other. Among them, the prominent idea of 'catching up with the West' became a fundamental underpinning of major developmental efforts. This attracted a rich variety of rural stakeholders to get involved and contribute to rural policy.

In the 1990s both Hungary and Poland began a systematic reorganisation of the socialist regime, introducing new ways of handling rural issues. In opposite to discredited socialist status quo, the 'Western' economies and their standards turned into the new points of reference. A dream to come true became the overall improvement of social and economic (and to a lesser extent – environmental) situation in rural areas through rural development and by copying the 'Western models'. Many new initiatives and projects took off in both countries, attempting to tackle socio-economic problems of the countryside through channelling foreign financial aid. 'Western' nations widely supported the whole process that became a global experiment, turning the post-socialist regimes into 'laboratories' of a holistic system transformation. In the later phase, the transformation gained an additional stimulus – accession to the European Union. The 2004 EU enlargement brought thus new challenges and development of national rural policy systems.

In this paper we propose to explore this transformative process, highlighting its key drivers and directions followed by rural policy stakeholders. Particular attention is paid to the more recent developments associated with the EU accession since 2004 and associated with this Europeanization. We take a comparative perspective, exploring the evolution of rural policies in two countries of the former 'Eastern Block': Hungary and Poland. Recognizing familiarity of their situations as the former socialist countries and now EU members, at the same time we acknowledge their uniqueness in many terms (such as for instance size of the territory, population, urbanization, administrative structure etc.). An important factor for the comparison is provided by the strong linkages, reaching back in the history: Hungary and Poland have been traditionally supporting each other as allies in various policy arenas. This is still present in the current debates and policy making (see for instance the ENRD study on Hungarian-Polish networking: ENRD, 2012). In parallel, we propose to understand the developments in the 'East' in contrast with the changes that 'Western'

societies have been undergoing in recent decades, assuming the decline of the Welfare State. In this context, the EU Common Agricultural Policy emerges as an important component, stimulating Europeanization and expanding the 'Western' policy approaches towards the post-socialist space. Moreover, following Page (2003) and Gorton et al. (2009) we consider this to be a process of homogenization affecting economic and political structures under the 'flagship project' – the European Union. Originally started by a group of 'Western' countries, with the time this polity has expanded towards 28 nations of the European continent. Insofar, the 2004 enlargement was probably the one of the most significant and challenging steps in this overall process.

Apart from literature survey, this comparative study is based both on evidence from research projects and personal experience of the authors as consultants engaged directly with different stakeholders of rural policies during the last decade. In particular, it has been supported by the results of two EU FP-7 funded projects: RuDI and Transleader. Keeping in mind the broad rural policy focus, we look here specifically on the adoption of LEADER approach in Hungary and Poland (Nemes et al., 2014). The methodology of our investigations is mainly grounded in evidence-based and action research. With this paper we intend to contribute to the debate about the following questions: Was the 10 years that have passed since the Eastern enlargement sufficient to Europeanize rural policy in Hungary and Poland? What are in this respect the key similarities and differences encountered in the two countries? Is this transformation a challenge only for the post-socialist countries, or does it also affect the 'Western' ones?

Comparing the incomparable?

A comparative perspective on rural transformation provokes certain methodological challenges. For example, we observed that newly emergent partnerships within LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the post-socialist countries cannot be simply compared with their equivalents in the 'West'. Their success or failure and functionality should be viewed in a relational framework. The differences in political and institutional cultures result in different policy regimes even under a unified EU system. This causes vast dissimilarities not only in the availability of financial capital, but also in the endeavours and relationships between the system's actors.

We have encountered here particular methodological difficulties connected to cross-cutting issues. Firstly, the limitation of such comparisons lies in timeline. For instance, when looking at the evolution of LEADER LAGs we had to realise that newly emergent partnerships in the post-socialist countries cannot be simply paralleled with their equivalents in the 'West'. The latter, born during the 1990's European prosperity, became operational in a completely different socio-economic and political circumstances than the new CEE LAGs, created just before the start of the recent financial and economic crisis. Thus, their success or failure and functionality should be assessed in context of their environment, resulting in difficulties for a comparative approach. Secondly, one should also bear in mind the far reaching differences in political- and institutional culture and policy regimes: an advanced market economy in the 'West' and an incubating market economy in the post-socialist space (often synonymous to the 'wild capitalism', see for instance Harper 2006; Fekete 2011; Gelencsér et al., 2012). This stands for vast differences not only in the availability of financial capital, but also in the endeavours and relationships between actors within the systems. To this end, one should note the variations in experiencing transition inside the post-socialist space, in our case – between Hungary and Poland – thus avoiding putting all these in the same analytical and policy 'box'.

Despite these national/regional differences, in both countries similar intensified attempts to 'copy and paste' the 'Western' approaches to rural development are noticeable, especially in the field of rural policies. They can manifest in many different ways, however, with frequent parallels, such as: increasing institutional path-dependency, lack of capacities of stakeholders at all policy levels to deal with growing complexity, lack of effective multi-level and good governance mechanisms and decreasing national resources for supporting rural areas and funding rural policies (as required by the EU regulatory framework). This has also led primarily to importing the outdated model of agricultural payments, often hidden behind the rhetoric of the CAP 2nd pillar – rural development (Dwyer et al., 2007; Skogstad and Verdun 2009; Nemes et al., 2014).

Challenging old regimes

Reflecting over twenty years of the post-socialist transformation, one can observe various drives and attempts on coordinating this dynamic process. Not only rural areas, but the whole economy, society and environment have been shaped by more or less radical changes and reconfigurations of networks and actors' interdependencies. An obvious rationale behind this was to promote the establishment of the new regimes, inspired by those existing in the Western democracies, and in the market economy as such. Yet, the transformative process, although widely hoped and welcomed by societal masses, has been manifested with frequent turbulences, thus provoking ongoing debates and conflicts between diverse stakeholder groups (Augustyn, 2009c). Neither it can be considered as a completed, but should be rather as an open-ended evolutionary effort, by nature difficult to capture in rigid analytical frameworks. In our view, however, at least two major phases of post-socialist transformation can be distinguished: 1) experimental (from the end of 1980s until the EU accession in 2004) and 2) adaptive (after 2004 and still ongoing). The table below briefly summarizes some common patterns of these developments in both Hungary and Poland, from the perspective of rural policies:

Table 1. Two Phases of rural policies' evolution in Hungary and Poland

	Experimentation (1989-2004)	**Adaptation** (after 2004)
Situation of rural policies in the regimes	Lack of a dedicated rural development policy, rather inside agricultural and social policies	Rural development policy evident in rhetoric, official documents and stakeholder actions
Main source of funding for rural policies	Development cooperation with multi-lateral donors, esp. USA and EU (pre-accession funds)	EU through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
Key rural policy objectives	Oriented on satisfying local needs	Oriented on policy delivery and targets set up by most influential stakeholders
Key stakeholders driving change	Bottom-up grassroots initiatives, mainly NGOs	Policy networks coordinated by public institutions
Coordination of rural policies	Lack of coordination	Evolving managerialist coordination and 'project state'

Source: The analysis of the authors

Institutional changes have been at the heart of both phases within this overall transformation in the former 'Eastern Bloc'. In the 1990s, following the official fall of socialism, agriculture and rural

development in the newly emerging democracies had been principally shaped by a number of multi-lateral agencies and donors, such as USAID, World Bank, FAO or UNDP. In the new millennium, on the other hand, the European Union became the key driver in this process. Its institutions, networks and values were gradually adopted by the New Member States (NMS). Whereas both periods of transformation were accompanied by financial support from external donors, the latter has offered more sound opportunities and financial volumes of aid, but also much stricter demands and bureaucratic burdens that have not always been corresponding well with the existing capacities of rural actors. This has led to a growing disappointment in the system operating with the logic of 'project state' (High and Nemes 2007).

The crucial element that distinguishes these two phases in our analytical framework is the notion of rural policy. As observed by Adamowicz (2000) during the experimental phase of the 1990s in the post-socialist countries rural policies were less apparent and uncoordinated, while nearing the accession to the EU rural development policy became a compulsory part of the transformative agenda.[1] The growing emphasis on this, however, cannot be simply explained by the EU accession of the NMS, as it was emerging in parallel with the so-called 2nd pillar of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Backed with the major CAP reforms (such as Agenda 2000 that divided CAP in two pillars) and situated in the wider context of WTO's negotiation rounds, rural policy has become an essential instrument to channel EU funding downwards to rural areas. Traditionally focused on agricultural production, the CAP under the 2nd pillar began to emphasize multifunctionality of agriculture and benefits that rural development can bring to a wider society in terms of public goods, environmental services or economic diversification. Nevertheless, it is still disputed how far the 2nd pillar deals with rural development and whether it is more an extension of the pillar 1 payments (Copus and Dax 2010).

This new logic of operation also required an increasing focus on governance mechanisms, undergoing parallel reforms through decentralization in the post-socialist countries (e.g. by introducing multi-level territorial self-government). In this context, for the post-socialist space LEADER appeared as an attractive model to follow. It emerged as an innovative, grass-roots movement in the early 1990s, with Austria, Finland and Ireland as its forerunners, has widely spread across the EU and got embedded into official rural policy frameworks. Acclaimed within the OECD famous study on the New Rural Paradigm (OECD 2006), LEADER and related with it decentralized, multi-level and networked governance have been promoted as essential elements of the reformed CAP and rural policy. This lead to a systematic incorporation of the approach in the EU rural development policy, and followed by side effects such as the increasing bureaucratic burdens (Schuckmith 2012).

Despite its promises, this rural development model proved to be difficult to operate within the realm of post-socialist countries, now combining the EU and domestic regulatory frameworks for rural policy delivery (Nemes et al., 2014). In both Poland and Hungary the LEADER approach was greeted with enthusiasm of local communities, especially by the civil society, viewing it as panacea against the domination of the public sector and central institutional actors. Nevertheless, bottom-up processes from the beginning encountered a strong resistance of central institutions and the public sector at the local level, hindering the implementation of LEADER. Numerous authors point

[1] In both countries first rural development programmes were introduced in 2000/2001, following the requirements to absorb SAPARD funding.

here on pathologies of the approach in post-socialist practice, such as dominance of public authorities, persistence of old elites, administrative burdens, lack of effective evaluation etc. (e.g. Augustyn 2009b; Goszczyński 2009; Knieć 2009; Wasielewski 2009; Fałkowski 2013; Kovach 2012).

As revealed by Palne Kovacs (2012) on the example of Hungary, the barriers of introducing this new local governance system arise within the original socio-economic context. It seems that by transferring 'Western models' into post-socialist space the deep differences and particular lack of local democratic traditions were probably not sufficiently taken into account. According to Gorton et al. (2009:1306) four key reasons hinder effective targeting of the CAP in the post-socialist countries:

(1) the lack of convergence between the socio-economic conditions of rural areas in the NMS and those in established Member States;
(2) differences in farm structures in terms of both size and organizational type;
(3) an inappropriate balance of resources between Pillar I and Pillar II of the CAP; and
(4) inadequate capacity to implement rural development measures in the NMS.

In addition, the role of experts and expertise provisions could be also reconsidered in this place (Kovach and Andersson 2010). Who were they and what was their knowledge about the state of art? Were they independent or driven by specific theories and political directions? We argue that the whole transformation was rather experimental and lacking reference points or benchmarks from similar contexts. From this perspective thus, the East-West comparison and policy transfer seem to be less useful. Or, as noted by Paula (2013) in the case of Latvia, the explanation for failure of rural policy transfer may lay in limited capabilities of actors to adapt and perform systemic changes.

In our view, the main rationale for adopting new policy models in the post-socialist countries can be seen as a tendency within the EU enlargement process to 'export' policies successful in the 'West', to new policy contexts. Their adoption was also a formal requirement for integration of new members with the 'exclusive EU club'. It is though not that obvious to what extent the different context of post-socialist states has been reflected in this exercise as the EU regulations and guidelines are formulated in a generic way, so as to address all the Member States. Even though it has led to channeling significant amounts of financial aid, with Poland being the major beneficiary, in the long term it is still questionable whether the whole idea has been successful and lead to sustainability of the EU as a system. Moreover, it has posed a challenge to transfer such policy models into countries lacking own financial capital and market institutions. Only recently they have been starting to build the market economy, in the spirit of urgent restructuring and technological updates. Here, the rapid demand to find "cash" was pursued especially by privatization of formerly state-owned resources and encouraging foreign investments. This means adopting a 'beneficiary perspective' – and that sometimes is driven more by a clientelism rather than partnership in joint policy making. Consequently, this poses a risk of aid dependency and a race to absorb as much funding as possible, before it dries up.

Despite hopes and massive mobilization driven by civil society movements, the enthusiasm of the experimentation phase had been thus slowing down by the end of 1990s. Receiving a new stimulus in the first years preceding and following the EU accession, later on, rural development stakeholders were gradually consolidating their forces and adapting to functioning within a

'contract culture'. Programmes, projects, targets and deliverables in a managerialist manner began to replace the endogenous, voluntary and developmental spirit, leading to professionalization of civil society movements in Poland and Hungary and increasing their dependence on the external donor – the EU. A quick look at the core policy documents – Rural Development Programmes and National Strategy Plans (AVOP 2007-2013, PROW 2007-2013, KPS 2007-2013) reveals that Hungary and Poland treat EU funding as a dominant and almost exclusive drive of their rural development undertakings. In this sense rural development at the national level has been consequently limited to rural policy as prescribed by (or negotiated with) the EU – the major funding channel.

According to Maurel (2008), in its current form Europeanization is mainly a top-down process, where communities of the New Member States can only 'download' the Western model, but are not given a chance to 'upload' their peculiar preferences. This is further explained by Saraceno (2013), who argues that the EU rural development policy as a rule seems to deny detailed disparities and diversities across the regions. Similarly, in the Polish case study of RuDI (Augustyn 2009a) some respondents pointed on the lack of correspondence of RDP measures with the country specifics. Are thus national rural policies just expressions of the generic EU rural policy? And do EU policy measures offer sufficient support (targeting) to tackle key issues of concern for the New Member States' rural society? These questions could be lengthy in debate, but it is rather clear that no alternative has been identified to date. Although the vision of shrinking EU funding for rural development in Hungary and Poland in the future slowly becomes an apparent distress among stakeholders. A decade of EU membership also poses a challenge to the rhetoric of NMS being in constant need of aid. That became especially apparent during the recent economic crisis, in which some of the 'Old EU Members' (i.e. PIGS) were doing worse that the new ones requiring special assistance and system transformation.

With continuing path dependency within the agricultural sector and ruling elites of the former socialist system, in the CEE institutional changes seem to be of a façade nature, and in case of LEADER modifications of the old paradigm, instead of a genuine, structural change (Nemes 2005; Kovách and Kucherova 2009). For instance, multi-level governance seems to be functioning, when examining the decentralized policy delivery structures and presence of actors from various sectors in the official discourse. However, in practice, lower levels are only given autonomy from a legal perspective, and, at the same time they normally lack sufficient capacities, financial resources, networks and information to fulfill their growing tasks. Trust is almost completely lacking from the system. The tyranny of central bureaucracy, red tape and formal top-down transparency is prevailing. For EU rural development programmes the final responsibility for the delivery remains with centralized Managing Authorities, being usually ministries (Augustyn 2009a). Attached in the Annex, Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the complexity of policy design and delivery systems of the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013. These organizational charts clearly show that the majority of institutional actors are in both countries situated at the level of the central government and within the public sector, and only very few of them originate from the private and NGO sectors. The unequal proportions of institutional actors likely pose a challenge to the system's equilibrium, and – as a matter of fact – result in frequent conflicts and the malfunctioning of multilevel governance. The weakness of institutions is seen as a key obstacle to effective design and delivery of rural policies and is predicted to deepen increasingly with the EU crisis We agree here with Mantino (2010:18) that it is a real challenge to understand 'how institutional diversity and constraints can influence the process of learning and adapting policy instruments in different contexts. So when

the EU introduces some new measure or approach in the common tool box, we are unable to say what it does implies in the different contexts in terms of institutional implementation and adaptation.'

As revealed by RuDI studies on Hungary and Poland (Wiesinger and Dax 2008; Augustyn 2009a) rural policy systems favor centralized and stronger actors, with quick access to relevant and often confidential policy knowledge, and that are dominant as policy drivers. Old institutions and regimes still tend to focus their efforts on preserving their power and control over the emerging benefits from the policy developments. The access of new players and their points of view in official policy debates is hindered by established and often informal networks of actors within closed-loop policy systems. Although, likely the process of 'catching up with the West' may has been also hindered by internal developments within the EU and its decreasing role as a global player. The dream of 'Western Welfare State' (or the 'American Dream'), that has been for long desired in the 'East', cannot be easily fulfilled as the 'mythic West' is itself in crisis, facing the increasing battle of stakeholder groups over shrinking resources. In this sense, the expansion of the EU in the post-socialist space can be also perceived as a way to 'colonize' new territories. A rationale for this might be the limited availability of marketable resources, thus stakeholder efforts circulate around their access and control. This is for instance visible in EU Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, applicable to the EU rural development policy. The whole mechanism has been programmed as a standardized quantifiable account and tools to measure the progress of policy delivery (High and Nemes 2007; Augustyn 2009c; Dax et al., 2013). The critical voices accuse it for too generic approach and lack of context-specific focus. At the same time, in the CEE countries, where evaluation culture has been only recently adopted with the 'Western' policy transfer, the evaluation practice often equates with exercising control. Consequently effective policy learning and Europeanization are still limited.

Europeanization through LEADER: a 'copy and paste approach' in Hungary and Poland

Likewise, the changing nature of the Western societies and evolution of the CAP priorities have been followed by the lifecycle of LEADER. Emerging as a voluntary and bottom-up approach, from 1991 onwards it has turned into an integrated element of the official EU rural policy. Initially intended as a space for experiment and innovation – a 'real life laboratory' – with time LEADER has been multiplied to other EU policies (e.g. as mainstreaming into RDP and more recently – the CLLD). Also, LAGs inspired institutional transformations through the rise of new networks at both domestic and EU level, e.g. the LEADER+ Observatory, European Network for Rural Development, National Rural Networks and the latest – European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability. As such, the mainstreaming of LEADER, its transfer into other policy sectors reflects the wide acknowledgement of the decision makers that its methodology actually works. Nevertheless, rather limited effort was put into learning from failures and substantial improvements, as since LEADER II more and more concerns have been raising on increasing bureaucratization of the approach and loss of its original spirit (Dwyer 2010).

Thus, joining the EU in 2004 Hungary and Poland were confronted with LEADER as a policy tool at a certain maturity stage. We could risk to describe this moment as the finishing experimental phase of LEADER development. Noticeably, the experimentation with LEADER was happening in parallel with the early transformation phase of the post-socialist regimes. In that moment LEADER was, however, a brand new vision, energizing a variety of stakeholders, but mainly in

the EU countries. Unhappily, this enthusiasm became quickly confronted with the growing number of LEADER-related burdens, and the New Member States began their learning of the approach only at this point. Without the time for necessary experimentation and learning from success and failures, actors, institutions and their networks in the post-socialist countries had to catch-up faster with LEADER than those of the old EU. When introducing LEADER+ in 2004-2006, Poland decided to run it in two pilot phases. In contrast, Hungary set up a full programme implementation. Whereas in the first country the emphasis was more on experimentation and capacity building, in the latter LAGs were burdened with greater responsibility for running their strategies (more workload and tighter deadlines). In the subsequent programming period (2007-2013) they encountered a new obstacle in the form of LEADER mainstreaming. A challenge was thus to embrace complexity of the whole Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013. Considerably, Hungary and Poland were given the opportunity to try out LEADER as a rural policy tool earlier than other post-socialist countries and serve as a 'laboratory' before introducing it across the CEE. Though looking back and the LEADER achievements and current state of play, we consider these 2 years of experimentation still too short to run on a full speed which was caused by the mainstreaming.

Meanwhile LAGs in Hungary and Poland date already about 10 years. This means they also have grown into a certain maturity, which was probably more difficult for them to achieve than for the LAGs in the 'West' that benefited from the more favorable environment of the 1990s and still – 'aura' of the Welfare State. A recent research under the Transleader project (2013), compared the practical implementation of the LEADER programme in Hungary and some successful 'older' EU countries/regions (Andalusia in Spain, Finland, Austria and Ireland). The research concluded that three areas where particularly important and their malfunctioning could (and did) hinder LEADER implementation significantly in Hungary and in other CEE countries:

(1) **Active multi-level governance** was the most important one. In successful LEADER implementation the relationship between the organisations cooperating in realising LEADER is characterised on each level and in each direction (from LAGs to the Managing Authorities) by trust, real partnership and the spirit of cooperation. This equally holds true for the developed Finland endowed with democratic traditions and Andalusia with political and institutional culture very similar to Hungary. It seems to be one of the cornerstones in the implementation of LEADER. In Hungary and Poland, as a result of lack of democratic traditions, strong tendencies for centralisation other aspects of path dependency, it does not function sufficiently.

(2) **Stability** was another important aspect. Rural development policy, including LEADER, to be successful, should be implemented in line with valid and long term strategic considerations. Interests of political parties or economic lobbies should not gain a significant importance in any of the fields, to avoid that operation and strategies are not overruled by ad hoc decisions. At the same time, institutions should be granted sufficient funds to perform their tasks. In successful LEADER countries/regions this results in a fairly simple, transparent, predictable and stable system, institutional and legal environment. The related legal rules and the amount of promised funding do not change at all or if they do, they only change in very justified cases (e.g. after the mid-term evaluation). They pay attention to the people working in LAGs and on higher levels, and to preserving the human and network capital they represent. The programming cycles of the EU are embracing seven years, but LAGs, organisations and people working on higher levels often possess experience of 15-20 years in LEADER. This means

long-term learning, which is an invaluable part of the system. In Hungary and Poland, political and economic lobbies often had a strong influence even on the everyday steering of rural development programmes. Regulations, institutional settings, responsible persons were changing rapidly, that created very difficult circumstances for LEADER implementation.

(3) **Institutionalised learning and conscious development of rural development programmes** is the third important factor. Many problems have been encountered in every EU country with respect to the implementation of LEADER. Although an effective evaluation methodology is still missing, 'LEADER-typical', more or less institutional forms that allow for collecting the experience and knowledge generated on the various levels of the programme (work groups, forums, evaluation structures etc.) have already developed in every successful LEADER countries. The system is everywhere characterised by the widest publicity possible. Draft plans and strategic documents are made available to anyone as early as in the preparatory phase and all comments are deliberately collected and utilised. Thereby knowledge is not lost and the solution of problems does not need to be started again from point zero while the participants of rural development experience being involved in major decisions. It is a shared interest of all participants to improve the system. These practices are missing in Hungary, that results in frequent drawbacks and the lack of evolution of the programme.

From these three perspectives, it seems that attempts on 'copying and pasting Western models' failed in Hungary and Poland as means to change the policy regimes. The lack of detailed inquiry and recognition of particular issues may also lead to mediocre results of the Europeanization as a whole, and limited effectiveness of the EU rural development policy. We agree here with Gorton et al. (2010:1315) that 'the unwillingness of the European Union to come to terms with the different underlying historical and socio-economic conditions of rural areas in the NMS has led to the implementation of a policy which is ill-suited for meeting its objectives in an enlarged Europe.' After 10 years of the EU membership, it looks still too early to consider the post-socialist transition as finished. More detailed research, comparative studies and debates on country/regional specifics are thus needed to support the continuation of this trajectory. They should engage not only researchers, but also other stakeholders concerned with rural policies.

Conclusions and look to the future

In this paper we have been exploring Europeanization of rural policies in Hungary and Poland from a point of view of policy transfer that takes a one-way direction: from the 'West' to the 'East'. Adaptation of 'Western' policy models, that happened in the last 10 years in both countries, has brought mixed results and which met expectations only of some stakeholders. Recent developments, such as increasing focus of rural development programmes on environmental concerns and returning rhetoric of agricultural productivity are the key directions the post-2013 CAP seems to be taking. In addition, other policy fields (especially regional development and cohesion policy) continue their distant position towards embracing needs of rural areas expressed under the CLLD. In this context the LEADER approach will be confronted with new challenges and policy directions. Food security, agricultural innovation, climate change or provision of public goods will likely gain more resonance in the operations of LAGs. In addition, scarcer financial resources from the EU and domestic budget may pose serious difficulties for running the strategies, and consequently hinder development of rural areas. It is thus necessary to better recognize the needs of various actors and undertake efforts towards their better integration.

A lesson learnt from our exercise is that Europeanization requires new directions to be taken. Namely, it calls for more reflection over country/regional specifics and their integration in the overall EU programming. Instead of transferring 'Western' policy models towards the 'East', it should embrace additional dimensions of diversity and allow for widening stakeholder participation in governance and policy delivery mechanisms. The 10 years of the EU accession proved that the time was still insufficient for deep systemic changes. Nevertheless, there has been a great progress of 'Western' and 'Eastern' EU nations in learning about each other. We believe this will continue and hope with this paper we were able to outline at least some possible ways for further actions and investigations. We are convinced that more comparative research would be needed to advance the knowledge on EU rural development policy and, hopefully, to help it in addressing its concerns.

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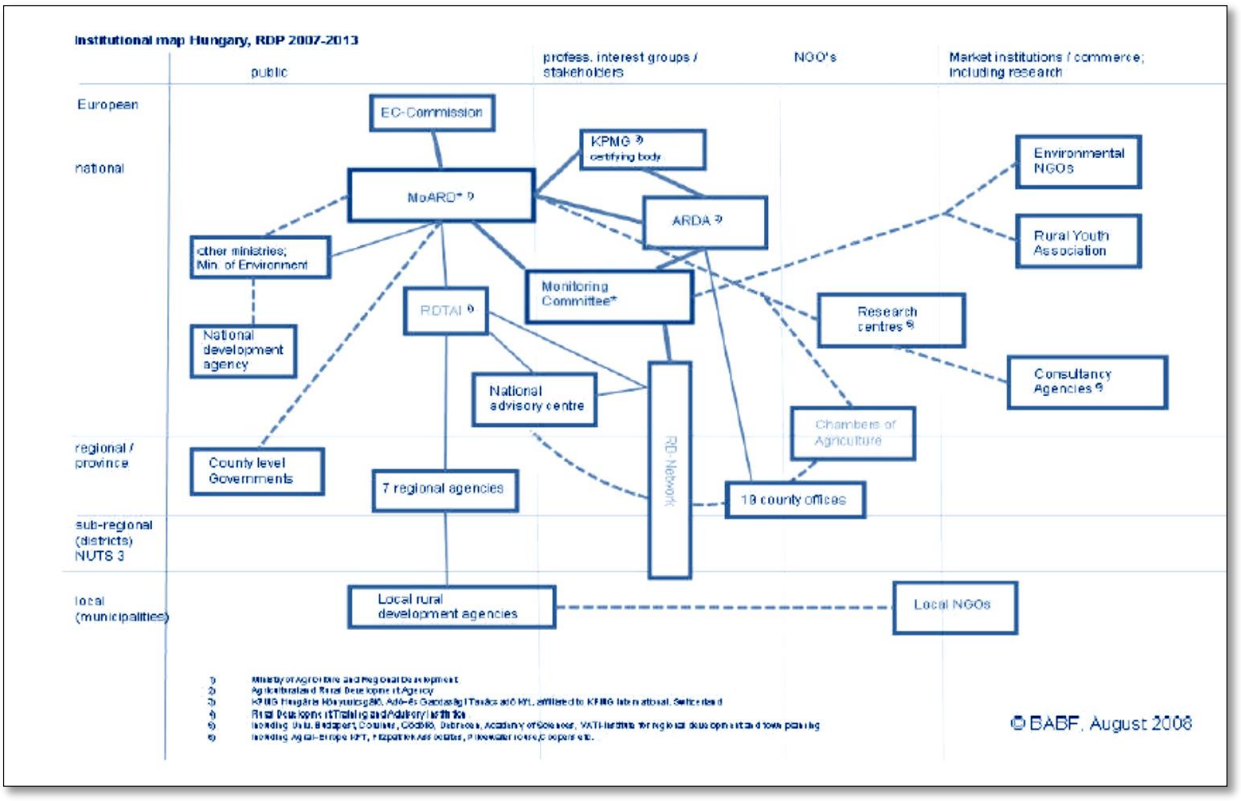
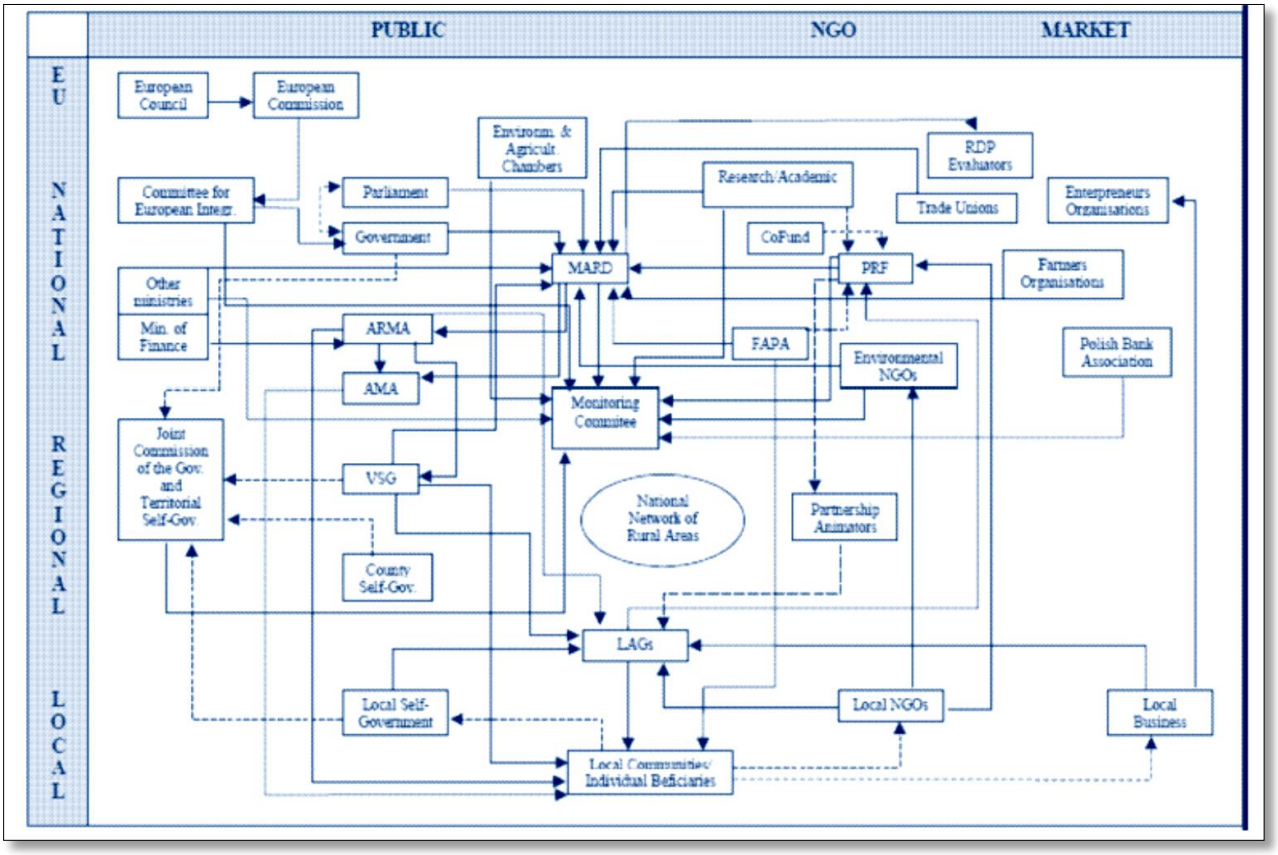
Annex

Figure 1. Institutional map of RDP 2007-2013 stakeholders in Hungary



Source: Wiesinger and Dax, 2008

Figure 3. Institutional map of RDP stakeholders in Poland



Source: Augustyn 2009