

WHEN CONCEPTS TRAVEL TO THE COUNTRYSIDE - TRACING THE DIFFUSION AND ADAPTION OF BASIC SERVICE INNOVATIONS

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In rural regions across Europe, basic service provision is impeded by processes of demographic and economic shrinkage. Sparsely populated areas with a high share of an elderly and resource scarce population are facing an extensive decline in crucial fields such as medical supply, education and transport. As a reaction, several regional development schemes aim to develop novel and likewise practicable solutions to meet crucial needs at place. However, scientific discourses still stress the difficulties of developing and implementing innovative approaches in rural settings and the comparative advantages of urban centres.

Against this background the paper questions how innovative basic service solutions are diffused into peripheral rural areas and adopted to the regional contextual conditions. Focussing on projects from a current German pilot program, the emergence of innovative ideas and concepts is reconstructed. Supra-regional influences and knowledge flows from other places are identified. A second focus lays on the aspects of implementation and consolidation, analysing by which motives those project-based solutions are adopted or rejected by key players in basic service provision. Thereby the analysis relates to the Schumpeterian argument that fundamental innovations can evoke resistance of those who benefit from existing power relations and property rights.

The contribution bases on theoretical reflections about the diffusion of innovations, the intrinsic logic of organisational fields and regional learning processes. Empirical evidence is derived from German regional case studies on three key fields of basic service provision, shaped by novel solutions: digitally supported primary health care, eLearning in primary school education and location management through welcome centres. In each field, qualitative interviews with actors from the projects as well as from topic-related basic service key players were conducted to identify mechanisms of basic services' diffusion and adaption.

CAN BE BRIDGED THE GOVERNANCE GAP BY LIVING LAB'S ECO-INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY? THE CASE STUDY OF PÉCS FROM HUNGARY

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Waste sensitivity is not high in Hungary, neither at household nor at corporate level. The OECD report pinpointed to the lagging at governmental level as well, suggesting a whole-of-government approach to accelerate processes towards circular economy.

From 2010 there has been a very strong centralisation process within the total governmental area, which reaches the waste management sector as well. As a result of the new legislation, the local governments have the responsibility of waste management at local level, but they cannot manage the local waste alone. These conditions don't help the spreading of circular concept at local level, furthermore, the public service provider lost the direct link to the market, hence their economic interest in improving selective collection or secondary raw materials. On the other hand, the focus area of Pécs (Hungary) was a pioneer in introducing new eco-innovations in waste management. The first attempt was that in 1996 Biokom introduced separate collection of (paper, plastic and glass) waste, first in the country. Besides this, the development strategy of Pécs is definitely based on endogenous resources, something that is considered more adaptive (as it provides resilience) than the involvement of external capital.

Taking into account the recent, contradictory situation (where local governmental level would like to innovate while central governmental level centralises every decision), we argue that living laboratory (the method that enables collaborative learning by users, producers and researchers in a real-life environment) - as boundary spanners in innovation (Geenhuizen, 2018) – can bridge this gap. Inviting people from different sectors (including public and private) with different disciplinary background, – also providing them a communication platform – can make an innovative environment where problem might be solved. It is more important in a country, where the stakeholder participation is very weak in connection with the design of different central and local/regional policies and development strategies (ESPON COMPASS, 2018).

The recent paper presents the design, the process and the achievable results of such living laboratory that makes an attempt to bridge the above mentioned gap towards circularity.

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EVALUATION OF AN APPROACH TO THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY PROCESS IN THE POMORSKIE REGION

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The Polish region of Pomorskie has been carrying out the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process which was acknowledged by European Commission and also academics (including myself). The general idea of this region for the selection of smart specialisation domains was to identify and to define them in the publicly open call. The involvement of stakeholders was finally shaped in the form of consortia. In the first call four domains were chosen and clarified. The outcome of this process was supported by the four agreements between Marshall and the relevant stakeholders. In 2018/2019 there was a renewal procedure verifying the members of these four consortia. In this updating exercise both the scope of the key domains and the membership of the consortia were revised.

My study investigates the output of the first members of the first consortia measured by the projects uptake from the national and the regional operational programme. As this output can be considered as a pretty low I check if this can be compensated by the other entities representing relevant sectors which constitute the domains of the discussed consortia. Further investigation also allows for the identification of the key stakeholders or the sectors which are common for all four domains.

My investigation addresses the following concerns of Smart Specialisation implementation:

- Effectiveness of translation of Smart Specialisation from strategy to projects on the ground.
- Effectiveness of continuity of the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process in implementation pointing the strengths and bottlenecks of the region of Pomorskie approach.
- The extent in which the Smart Specialisation approach have been able to facilitate the shift from a triple to a quadruple helix. Suggesting conditions that should be put in place to facilitate this shift in the future.

The role of the administrative capacity of public authorities at regional and national levels, and of stakeholders, acted as a barrier to the implementation of Smart Specialisation including efforts which have been done to overcome this.