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Explaining INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS within
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS: THE CASE OF 'EQUAL II'
AND 'LEADER+' IN CRETE

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Abstract

This neo institutional study analyses the dynamic interaction between formal/informal rules and agents' behaviour inside a political institution, examining these relationships through primary research on local partnerships in Greece.

The theoretical assumptions of this analysis derive mainly from normative neo institutionalism but also include insights from rational choice and the historical institutionalism. Consideration is also given to the way in which theories of the structure/agent duality are related to neo institutional propositions on the relationship between rules and agents' strategic behaviour. The neo institutional approach to local partnerships is also situated in relation to concepts and empirical observations from the literature on urban governance, urban regimes and Europeanisation.

This research adopts the critical realism stance which acknowledges a reflexive approach to reality and it applies an embedded case study strategy. The case study consists of two local partnerships in the region of Crete, which were established under the EU Community Initiatives Programmes EQUAL II and LEADER+ and coordinated by the Local Development Agency of Heraklion. A triangulation method is selected, making use of interviews, storytelling, a short questionnaire, direct observation and secondary analysis of documentation.

The research data reveal that the formal rules of the partnerships are not indicative of what actually happens. It is the configuration of formal and informal rules that offers a deep understanding of partnership. It is concluded that some formal rules are realised (albeit with deviations along the way), like partnership and programming, while others are remained mostly on paper, like community participation, decentralisation and innovation. In these cases, the informal rules appear to be conflicting with the formal rules, leading to different results than those expected.

The research also shows the importance of agents' intentionality in the process of institutional change. Specific actors within the partnership, such as established local leaders and institutional entrepreneurs, select and reinforce particular features of formal rules that restrict partners' freedom and promote values of efficiency within the partners.

Moreover, the findings confirm a gradual changing of local policy making and an increase of local social capital. EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnerships create new possibilities for the empowerment and participation of new actors such as NGOs and vulnerable groups in the local policy-making process. They also promote the establishment of policy networks and enhance the development of collaborative learning processes (trust building and sharing understanding). Finally, they lead to the re-articulation of mayors-chief executives' relationship inside local authorities and of central state's position by creating new possibilities for broadening local authorities' autonomy.

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List of abbreviations

AKOM: Development Agency of Mountainous Milopotamou-Maleviziou

CI: Community Initiative

CSF: Structural Funds

DAH: Local Development Agency of Heraklion

DP: Development Partnership

EBIOP: Industrial Park of Arkalochori

EC: European Commission

EDAP: Science and Development Park of Crete

EETAA: Hellenic Agency of Local Development and Local Government

ELSTAT: Hellenic Statistical Authority of Greece

ESF: European Social Funds

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

KOINOPOLITIA: Social policy network of Cretan Local Authorities

L.A: Local authority

LAG: Local Action Group

LDA: Local Development Agency

MA: Monitoring Authority

MC: Management Committee

MD: Municipal Department

NELE: Prefectural Committee on Adult Education

NI: Neo institutional

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

OADYK: West Crete Development Organisation

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

TEDK: Local Union of Local Authorities of the Heraklion prefecture

ZEUXIS: Pan-cretan network of social organisations for disabled people

Introduction

It is not a very original observation that in West European countries most of local policies are implemented by partnerships between local government, businesses and civil society organisations. The rise of partnerships mirrors the broader concern of governments at national and European level to harness the benefits of urban governance. This phenomenon is followed by an extensive growth of urban policy theories analysing diverse aspects of local partnerships' development. The various positions of urban Marxism, urban regime and urban governance theories use different lenses like the economy of place, agents' behaviour or the territorial levels of governance for analysing this type of collaborative activity.

This study aims to further advance a new dimension to local partnerships study, that of the neo institutional (NI) approach. Although in the last fifty years, there has been a NI turn in the social enquiry (Jessop, 2001), it is only recently, in the mid 90s that the NI approach of local partnerships has arisen in the broader discipline of urban politics. Based on the fundamental assumptions of neo-institutionalism, this NI approach to local partnerships assumes that partnerships are not just organisations but institutional arrangements in which formal/ informal rules embedded in the larger socio-economic context interact with partners' motivations and practices. Consequently, new questions about the study of partnerships arise: a. How do informal conventions and coalitions interact with formal partnership rules? b. How do informal rules constrain and enable agency, besides formal rules? c. In which way do partners interpret/change rules according to their interests? d. Which contextual factors do affect this particular process at all territorial levels? However, the importance that is given to the above components of a partnership as institution, (i.e. rules' configuration, types of actors' behaviour and contextual factors) by the NI study to local partnership depends each time on the theoretical NI tradition to which it belongs.

The aim of this thesis is to take forward the theoretical understanding of what constitutes an institution of local partnership and test it empirically in order to

enlighten new perspectives of partnership development and broader political institutions of governance. In particular, the research intends to highlight the dynamic interaction between formal/ informal rules and agents' behaviour inside a local partnership and to emphasise the importance of the distinctive local context from which it has emerged.

In addition to new insights into the NI approach on local partnership, my study attempts to fill the existing gap in studies regarding local partnerships in Greece. During the last fifteen years in Greece, the introduction of a number of EU funding programmes for municipalities has paved the way for the development of partnerships. These have been aimed at sharing responsibility and action between the traditional local government and other actors of the local society, especially semi-public organisations and NGOs. Since then, partnerships have started to spread all over Greek cities. These partnerships were imposed by the EU programmes since, in most cases, traditional local policy and culture did not offer a favourable climate for the growth of such collaborations. However, these partnerships have not been explored in depth by the Greek scientific community. Although in West Europe and mainly in the UK, partnerships have been extensively analysed by studies investigating how partnerships work, this field of study in Greece is not yet well developed. The lack of such studies reflects a general lack of political research concerning issues of local politics. Nevertheless, the recent growth of partnerships of various sizes and types creates a clear need for their further study.

My research aim is informed by four ontological assumptions about institutions: First, studying the formal rules of a partnership may not establish what is actually happening in practice. So, attention must simultaneously be paid to informal rules and agents' behaviour. It is assumed that it is the configuration of formal and informal rules that offers opportunities and sets limits to partners by defining what action is considered appropriate and possible. But, it depends on the actors' capacity to choose to use/not use the whole space of action offered by the institutions and sustain/alter the established institutional rules. Second, the institution of partnership is a dynamic process of policy-making during which forces of continuity and

change coexist (Lowndes, 2005). Partnerships as well as the context from which they emerge are not a unified or rigid object of analysis that is stuck in time; it is a complex multi-level phenomenon evolving in time, and its evolution sustains/ changes other institutions and also impacts on the broader context. The third ontological assumption is related directly with the selection of the research strategy. As Ostrom (2005: 3-31) argues, a NI analysis of partnership should avoid generalisations and has to progress through a case-by-case study. This is because each institution is characterised by a specific interdependence of variables and the researcher should provide a sufficient explanation of this diversity.

Fourth, starting from an ontological assumption of reflexivity, this research aims to build a theoretical synthesis that combines different NI approaches with sociological theories of power and agency, and wider theories of urban politics. This synthesis reveals the diversity and complexity of political institutions. Although this multidisciplinary and multi-theoretical research approach could appear very ambitious, it is necessary to capture the diverse components of a meso-level phenomenon like that of a partnership institution. Hence, many variables are involved and there is a danger of confusion. So, a concern of this research is to clearly and precisely define the formal/ informal rules as far as possible and analyse the relationship between them and with actors' behaviour.

Four main research questions have been developed by the research aim:

a. Which are the formal and informal rules governing partnerships? Besides the formal institutional rules that one can usually recognise in the constitutional set-up of partnerships, there are some unwritten rules like norms and conventions. Despite their informal character, these rules are usually more powerful than the formal ones sanctioning partners' inappropriate behaviour. Consequently, their recognition and the understanding of their relationship with formal rules are fundamental to the study of partnership operation.

b. Who are the partners strategically pursuing their interests? The broader context and partnership rules embody different power relations. Established

local leaders and institutional entrepreneurs seem to have the capacity to use the available power resources and play a strategic role in partnership development by altering, preserving or changing the configuration of rules.

c. Which contextual factors contribute to explaining the formal/informal rules and agency configuration at all territorial levels? Even though the interplay between partnership institutional rules and strategic actors' behaviour is significant for the partnership development, they still embody and contest at the same time the wider environment. There are a distinctive socio-economic context and a stock of social capital that affect actors' motivations and resources as well as the empowerment /dis-empowerment of informal rules. The interdependence of institutions operating horizontally and vertically, as well as their history, also play a significant role to this institutional process.

d. Which are the changes that the institution of partnership brings to local politics? There is an extensive debate about the potential benefits of the partnership as a policy tool that enhances democracy and efficiency (Kooiman, 2002; Huxham, 1996; Jessop, 2002; Schmitter, 2002). Advocates argue that partnerships improve the effectiveness of a policy by taking advantage of the collaboration processes and opening up the decision making process by giving power to new partners. Opponents argue that partners' participation is selective and unequal, while problem solving is not always secured. However, the extent to which these partnership attributes are actually realised is a matter of investigation in each case study because it depends not only on the partnership's constituent features but also on the circumstances from which it has emerged and the actors' capacity to promote/prevent these features.

The above research propositions will be investigated through a primarily qualitative research design, which looks at two local partnerships in Greece funded by the EU Community Initiatives Programmes EQUAL II and LEADER+ respectively. The analytical understanding of informal rules as well as the cultural and institutional environment in which partnerships are developed requires a more in depth analysis through case studies rather than large scale surveys (Ostrom, 1999: 53). The selected partnerships operated in

the region of Crete. In particular, LEADER+ partnership, which started in 2002 and finished in 2009, developed in the Heraklion prefecture of Crete and focused on local development. EQUAL II partnership started two years later than LEADER+ and was implemented in all the four Cretan prefectures. Its main policy aim was to tackle discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. Both partnerships were coordinated by the Local Development Agency of Heraklion which is an inter-municipal enterprise comprising all the elected local authorities of Heraklion prefecture. In the partnership design and implementation, diverse partners coming from the public, semi public and social sector were involved. Although the partnerships were locally developed and implemented, they were initiated by the EU and overall they were organised by the central state. Consequently there were also partners from different geographical levels of governance.

Before I present an overview of the thesis' chapters, it is useful to present an operational definition of partnership in order to distinguish this from other types of collaborative action such as networks and contracts. The use of the partnership concept by different policy field and academic approaches had led to the attribution of different definitions (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 4-5; Murray, 2005:155). However, Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) go forward by identifying the main characteristics of partnership as negotiation among people from diverse agencies committed to work together long term, providing added value benefits which could not have been provided by any single agency and requiring a formal articulation of the purpose of the negotiation. Consequently, partnerships have at the centre of their operation the concept of collaboration, "of joint decision-making and production" (Klijn and Teisman, 2000:85-86 quoted in Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 5). Moreover, they differ from contracts and networks since there is a stable and long-term cooperation among many parties on the one hand and they operated according to defining formal rules on the other hand (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002:6).

Overview of the chapters

The first two chapters provide a literature review of the main NI theories and theories of urban politics respectively. In particular, chapter one offers a critical account of NI theories and seeks to understand the existing debate on the relationship between the rules, agency and context of a political institution. For this purpose, it assumes that NI theories need to be enriched with concepts and tools from other theories. So, the chapter continues with concepts from the critical realism approach and theories of power and social capital. This leads to the formulation of the research questions and protocol, which guide the primary research.

Chapter two then outlines the way that a NI theory has to be grounded to the particular needs of a local partnership study. To do this, it identifies three theories of urban politics: urban governance, urban regime and urban leadership. The empirical observations, concepts and arguments of these theories seek to relate the NI approaches to local cooperative contexts. In addition, the chapter explores the potential contribution of NI approaches to these theories. This leads to more precise and detailed research propositions necessary for the development of a good research design.

Chapter three introduces the research, outlines the methods used to collect the data and provides the analytical techniques that guided data analysis. It also presents reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and a discussion on the research ethical issues.

The following four chapters present and analyse the research findings. Chapter four outlines the context in which both partnerships have operated. First, it offers some basic information about the case study under research and the broader Greek political context in which it has developed. Second, it seeks to understand how the local endogenous socio-economic context, institutional legacies and social capital stocks have affected the power relations of formal/informal rules and partners' behaviour towards collaboration. Chapter five describes and groups the partnerships' formal rules that shape the cooperative action and looks into the way that these rules have been

implemented. Chapter six outlines and categorises the informal rules and explores the links between them and the formal rules. Chapter seven identifies the actors who behave strategically, i.e. established local leaders and institutional entrepreneurs, and their role in partnership development and sustainability is discussed.

Finally, the concluding chapter provides a summary of the findings and the original theoretical and empirical contribution of this study. It also explores the limitations of the research and concludes with suggestions for further research.

Chapter 1: The NI approach: rules, agency and context

Introduction

The current chapter will provide a critical review of the existing debate regarding NI approaches and will identify the main theoretical assumptions that guide the empirical work of this study. The presentation will be developed around three key issues that broadly transcend the NI approaches: what we mean by institutions and rules, the role of the agency and its impact on institutional change, and finally which contextual variables influence institutions.

Closely related to the above aim, will be the operationalisation of the formulated theoretical assumptions for my primary research. This suggests the building of an analytical framework that further elaborated by theories of urban politics in the following chapter, will direct the research methodology. For that reason, at the end of each section, I will state the research questions that derive from the relevant theoretical framework and consequently guide my research project.

What is fascinating in this chapter is the combination of different approaches of neo institutionalism as well as of political and sociological theories based on analytical concepts beyond institutions like power and agency. These various approaches do not only have different ontological and epistemological positions but they also focus on different levels of explanation as the most appropriate way to understand political behaviour.

I apply multiple theories in approaching institutions for two reasons. First, being in tune with Rhodes' affirmation about the engagement of different theoretical traditions as the future of political science (Rhodes, 2006), I attempt to focus more on synthesis than embrace in an axiomatic way one theoretical approach. My position about the need for reflexivity by the researcher is also presented in the methodological chapter.

Second, it is the nature of institutions themselves as a meso level phenomenon, in which different features of political life like micro level relations and macro

structural phenomena are related that favours the use of multi theories analysis. As Jessop (2001: 2-5) argues, it is this meso level feature of institutions that permits the convergence and the overcoming of traditional dichotomies in social sciences like holism and individualism, structural determination and social agency, necessity and contingency offering a capacity to bridge different theoretical approaches. Additionally, and because of that, Lowndes (2010) claims that neo institutionalism should not be treated as a new theory but as a new approach. She notes that “the strength of new institutionalism may be found precisely in its multi theoretical character, which allows for the assessment of competing propositions drawn from different political theories (Lowndes, 2010: 78).

Section 1: Institutions and Rules

In the ‘80s, there has been a revival of NI theories in political science to the extent that some authors have talked about an institutional turn in the social enquiry (Jessop, 2001). New institutionalism emerges in a variety of different disciplinary contexts such as history, economics, sociology and political sciences as well as in a variety of different theoretical approaches such as rational choice theory, organisational theory, neo-Marxist theory, feminist perspectives, constructivism, etc. Consequently, neo institutionalism is not a unified body of thought, indeed there is “a vast scholarship that falls under the heading of neo institutionalism” (Rhodes et al, 2006: xiii).

The insights of the new institutionalism are very often derived from its comparison with the old institutionalism. Focusing exclusively on the legal analysis of the political life, the old institutionalism has been criticised by the NI approaches for its descriptive and normative analysis (Peters, 1999). Even if the new institutionalism reflects many features of the old approach, it is enriched by theories of behaviouralism, rational choice analysis, sociological and interpretative theories which focus on the actions of the actors, the beliefs and ideas that are embedded in institutions as well as on the historical evolution and change of institutions (Rhodes, 2006: 91).

1.1 The theoretical debate in political science

In political science, two approaches are dominant to new institutionalism, those of the normative and rational choice traditions. The first tradition has been influenced by the seminal work of March and Olsen (1989) as well as of new sociological institutionalists like Putnam (1993) and Granovetter (1973) and radical sociologists like Giddens (1984). The second tradition has been influenced by the work of Elinor Ostrom (1986) and economist institutionalists such as Douglass North (1990). The main differences are focused on the definition of institutions, on the formation of actors' preferences and on the level of interaction between individuals and institutions (see more analytically in Peters, 1999:141-151). In particular, the last factor relates to different ontological approaches regarding the relationship between institutions and behaviour or otherwise the famous controversy between "calculus" and "cultural" approach of this relationship (Hall and Taylor, 1996).

In rational choice theory, human intentionality dominated by rational driven goals plays a determining role in political outcomes. Politics is a series of collective action dilemmas where actors constrained by the institutional context aimed to maximise the attainment of their own preferences (Peters, 1999:43-62). In this context, institutions do not shape preferences since preferences are uniform and fixed by the principle of maximum benefit in each individual, but they do set the rules of the game. So, institutions are positive structural constraints supporting solutions of collective action problems. By offering information and available choices for their members, institutions provide the context in which individuals select their strategies (Ostrom, 1999).

In normative neo institutionalism, institutions embody cultural conventions, norms and cognitive frames that influence the preferences and identities of the actors. So, norms and values become the dominant explanatory factors of agents' behaviour instead of rationality. Analysing March and Olsen (1989), Peters (1999:147) argues that "individuals do possess sets of basic values before they become involved with institutions but their involvement also shapes preferences". So, institutions determine "the appropriate behaviour"

(March and Olsen, 2006:7) of their members by the process of embedding rules and routines that produce “recurring modes of actions and organisational patterns” (March and Olsen, 2006:5). For normative institutionalists, institutions create “elements of order and predictability” that simplify the political life providing “bonds that tie citizens together in spite of the many things that divide them” (March and Olsen, 2006:4, 6).

Regardless the difference between NI approaches, whether ontological and/or theoretical, they share one common feature: institutions matter in political life. Starting from this basic assumption, the new institutionalism offers a new perspective to the study of political science because it claims that political life itself and its institutional organisation are not simple mirrors of the social reality; institutions actually shape political behaviour. “Without denying the importance of both the social context of politics and the motives of individual actors” (March and Olsen, 1989:17), the new institutionalism treats the political institutions as factors that construct and change the polity. As a result, institutions become a dominant explanatory factor of political behaviour.

Lowndes (2010) argues that researchers who are working in the context of a good institutionalist analysis may have a more sophisticated and reflexive appreciation of the various approaches of neo institutionalism by adapting and borrowing insights from each one, but they should beware of the dangers a crude synthesis of the different ontological premises of each approach might entail. “There are creative spaces” (Lowndes, 2010: 76) between the core axioms of each approach and it is these spaces that the researcher had to understand by learning from the different institutionalisms and adapting them to the challenge of their empirical evidence.

Following this argument, I apply various concepts from different NI approaches. At the core of my analysis, I adopt a normative approach of new institutionalism due to its assumptions regarding the normative elements of the institutions (values, symbols, ideas) and as shown more analytically in the following section, the central role assigned to the individuals in shaping and changing the rules of the institutions. Although its conceptualisation on

institutions places more emphasis on the logic of appropriateness, it also focuses on individual behavioural realisation of an institutional rule, i.e. the way that the agents interpret and apply the game rules (March and Olsen, 1989:39-52). So, as Peters (1996:939) notes, normative institutionalism emphasise “the degree to which the choice of a course of action depends on the interpretation of a situation rather than on purely instrumental calculation”. Additionally, it gives an important consideration to institutions as structures of power, unlike the rational choice where power is not part of its analytical core (Moe, 2003).

Moreover, I borrow inputs from rational choice, in particular the role assigned to the strategic behaviour of actors in pursuing their interests and the more systematic and precise methodology on the conception of the relationship between institutions and behaviour (Peters, 1996:950). The work of Ostrom, especially concerning the interdependence of institutions, the multiple levels of analysis and the concept of rules-in-use (Ostrom, 1986, 1999) allow for a concrete mapping and analysis of rules in an institutional context. Although these concepts have to be used carefully due to different ontological origins than the normative institutionalism, they could facilitate the linking of rules with other rules and actors’ behaviour. Additionally, I borrow concepts from historical institutionalism like the concept of path dependency and its distinctive view of the relationship between structure and agency (Hay and Wincott, 1998). Because historical institutionalism does not have a cohesive conceptual framework, Sanders (2006:44) speaks about its undisciplined nature, I have to note that particularly the work of Streeck and Thelen (2005) about incremental change and Hall (1993) about policy paradigm have mostly influenced my research. Moreover, the constructivist institutionalism introduced by Hay (2006) has emphasised the role played by ideas in the determination of institutional outcomes; this has also informed my study.

In the following table (1), I present the distinctive contribution in terms of theories and concepts of each NI approach to the building up of my theoretical framework. These theories and concepts are analysed in the following relevant sections. Bearing in mind that NI approaches not only have differences but also

points of convergence like the common recognition of formal and informal rules and the interdependence of agency/institution relationship; I mention in the table the unique inputs of each approach in the sense that these inputs could not be found in other approaches.

NI approaches	Contribution to my theoretical framework of analysis
Normative institutionalism	Embodiment of values and norms by the institutions, cultural behaviour.
Rational choice theory	Multiple levels of analysis, institutional interdependence, rules-in-use.
Historic institutionalism	Path dependency, incremental change of institutions, policy paradigm.
Constructivist institutionalism	Ideas and narratives as explanatory factors of political behaviour inside institution.

Table 1: The contribution of each NI approach to the theoretical framework of my study

1.2 Definition of institution and rules

As mentioned above, the difference in the two main NI approaches in political science is also reflected in the different definition of institution and thus of rules that constitute the main component of institution. For normative neo institutionalism¹, institutions are seen as “rules and organised practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of the turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances” (March and Olsen, 2006:3). For institutional rational choice, “institutions refer to shared concepts used by humans in repetitive situations organised by rules, norms and strategies” (Ostrom, 1999:37). Despite these differences, both definitions provide to institutions autonomy vis a vis

¹ The ontological frontiers between sociological and normative NI are difficult to be distinguished. Sociological NI is usually applied in the research of social institutions while the normative NI for political institutions. However, sociological NI had provided “important theoretical building blocks for normative institutionalism within political science” (Lowndes, 2010:65).

individual behaviour and context and they identify in them a more or less stable repetitive situation. In this way, institutions resemble to “structures” of a lower level with regards to the way in which they shape individual behaviour.

As shown in figure 1, my approach to institutions follows the definition of the normative institutionalism, which does not distinguish rules from norms. Additionally, I integrate the rational choice position about the agents’ purpose and goals² as a central institutional component. I will elaborate this point in the next section while in the current section, I focus on the analysis of rules.

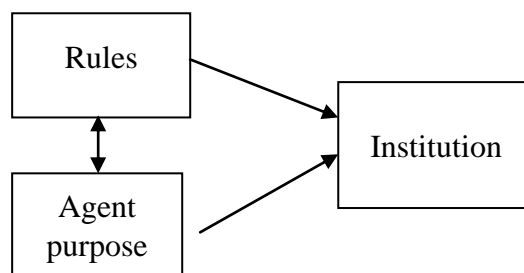


Figure 1: The components of an institution

Analysing in detail the normative NI definition (March and Olsen, 1989), political institutions embody rules and practices that define the appropriate behaviour of the individuals in each situation called the logic of appropriateness. “The institutions define a set of behavioural expectations for individuals in positions within the institution and then reinforce behaviour that is appropriate for the role and sanction behaviour that is inappropriate” (Peters, 1999: 30). For doing that, normative institutionalism recognises two features of institutions: the construction of meanings and the distribution of resources. Political institutions could transform the preferences of the individuals through the construction of meaning and by affecting the distributions of resources. So, as shown more analytically in the next section about power and change, institutions are not neutral mechanisms but they are directly related to power and domination. “Institutions empower and constrain actors differently and make them more or less capable of acting according to prescriptive rules of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 2006: 3). For instance, by controlling

² I avoid the term “strategy” that Ostrom (1999) mentions in her definition since it suggests a rational only driven behaviour.

whose voices get heard, institutions may recognise certain actors and exclude others. As Moe argues “institutions may be structures of cooperation. But they may also be structures of power” and he continues saying “that are beneficial to some, often harmful to others” (Moe, 2003: 1, 3).

Elaborating more on the nature of rules, I understand rules as “sharing understandings among those involved that refer to enforced prescriptions about what actions (or states of the world) are required, prohibited, or permitted” (Ostrom, 1999:50). This definition supports three features of rules: First, rules are recognised by all the actors of the specific institutions. In this way they are distinguished from personal habits and attitudes (Lowndes, 2010) since the rules relate to social (collaborative) actions. Second, rules are followed (not always) by the involved actors. They have a regulative character by prescribing the appropriate behaviour for each actor. Rules stand above each individual and, if not followed, there is a “sanctioning of non- compliance” (March and Olsen, 2006: 3). In particular, March and Olsen (1989, 2006) as well Giddens (1984: 1-40) argue that rules are not only related to the construction of meaning but also with sanctioning “by third parties” (March and Olsen, 2006:3). Finally, rules include a wide range of features that guide human behaviour like values, beliefs, attitudes and practices but their power is restricted to specific actors in specific institutions.

Although the rules features are wide and extensive (Peters, 1999; Lowndes, 2010), they remain directly related to structures of meaning embedded in them. In this way, Hay’s (2006) analytical emphasis on ideas could also be integrated in the rules definition of this research. In particular, I am looking for the normative schemes of an institution that are internalised by the policy actors and define “the range of legitimate policy techniques, mechanisms, and instruments, thereby delimiting the very targets and goals of policy itself” (Hay, 2006: 66). In my primary research, it is the policy paradigm of partnerships emanating from the EU policy principles that became a prism through which the partners and policy makers saw collective action and “their own role within [...] without challenging the overall terms of the given policy paradigm” (Hall, 1993: 279).

The following table (2) summarises the above discussion by demonstrating the attributes of rules and their operation in collaborative action.

Attributes of rules	Effects
Sharing understanding	Recognised and followed
Regulative	Sanctioning of non compliance
Normative	Structure of meaning

Table 2: Rules’ attributes and their effects on collaborative action

1.3 Formal/ informal rules

Neo institutionalism recognises that institutional rules could be formal and/or informal. Some rules are written in paper; for instance the legal framework that directs the partnership. These rules are the formal ones because they are official and directly identifiable on paper. However, there are rules that are developed during the partners’ interactions. These rules are informal; they are not written and could take the form of conventions, practices and customs (Lowndes, 2005). However, they have the same power as formal ones do, i.e. to order and regulate the behaviour and interactions of the involved partners by defining the ‘must, must not and may’ (Ostrom, 2005:200). A main distinction between formal and informal rules is that formal rules are enforced by officially sanctioned channels, while informal rules are self enforced because they are deeply rooted in cultural tradition or they are unofficially enforced by other institutions, i.e. the local government or the state. Whichever does, breaking informal rules “carries some form of credible sanction” (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006: 5) like social disapproval or restriction from resources. Based on empirical evidence, North (1990: 3, 36-45) argues that although the informal institutions operate outside the officially sanctioned channels, they often are as important as the formal institutions in structuring the “rules of the game”.

As to be seen in the next chapter, urban regime theory highlights the significance of the informal interests’ coalitions in governance process. Rhodes and March (1992) also examine networks and they demonstrate how “informal but regulated contacts between particular interests and different sections of

government affect policy outcomes”. Indeed, Ansell (2006:75) refers to “network institutionalism” since a network could be seen as an institution to the extent that it “represents a stable or recurrent pattern of behavioural interaction or exchange between individuals or organisations”.

An institutionalist analysis must identify the configuration of formal and informal rules inside the partnership or as Ostrom argues the rules-in-use ‘the dos and don’ts that one learns on the ground that may not exist in any written document’ (Ostrom, 1999:38). By this way, the researchers “are able to build a more finely grained and realistic picture of what really constrains political behaviour and decision making” (Lowndes, 2010:71).

In most cases, formal and informal rules cohabit but the question is the nature of their relationship. I have found Lauth’s (2000) typology among complementary, conflicting and substitutive informal institutions very useful for my research. This typology, further elaborated by Helmke and Levitsky (2006)³, treats informal rules in a more sophisticated way because it distinguishes between the results of the rules and the process put in place to obtain these results. In some cases, informal rules could achieve the same results as the formal ones but through a different process or could achieve results, which the formal ones fail to achieve. Consequently, it liberates the formal- informal rules relation from their traditional disfunctionality undermining the performance of the formal institutions (March and Olsen, 1989) to a dynamic and mutual existence of formal and informal rules in which informal rules could at times reinforce or substitute the formal rules instead of undermine them (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006).

³ Helmke and Levitsky (2006) use the terms institution and rules interchangeably without distinction, so in my own analytical purpose, I use the term “rules” instead of institution.

In the following table (3), I present the interaction of formal and informal institutions based on Lauth's (2000) typology.

Typology	Relation of formal/informal rules
Complementary	Formal and informal rules support each other
Substitutive	Informal rules do the work for the formal ones
Conflicting	Incompatibility of formal and informal rules (persist or change)

Table 3: Typology of formal/informal rules relationship

In the case of the rules being complementary, the informal rules coexist with the formal ones enhancing the stability and efficiency of the latter in two ways. They could fill the gap in formal rules by offering to actors practices that facilitate coordination and decision making. Furthermore, informal rules could serve “as the underlying foundation for formal institutions” (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006:14) because though they are not an intrinsic part of formal institutions they are attached to them, and thus may complement and reinforce formal institutions. In the case of conflicting, the informal rules are incompatible with the formal ones. If one actor follows informal rules, then this actor will be breaking formal rules.

Finally, the substitutive informal rules exist in environments where the formal rules are not systematically enforced. In this case, the informal rules achieve what the formal rules were designed for but never achieved. This category seems to be related to the distinction between rules-in-use and rules in form (Ostrom, 1999: 37-38), which offers more insights in the understanding of which rules are actually used for the regulation of the behaviour and which rules remain ineffective by their weak or even non implementation.

In the case of conflicting informal rules, Knight (1992: 171-173) has informed my research further because he stresses the power relation between

formal/informal rules. There are cases where the informal rules may persist in the face of new formal rules or even change the direction of formal institutional outcomes due to their influence on the distribution of resources within the institution and/or in the community.

However, a further question that is still important for the understanding of the formal/informal relationship is when conflicting informal rules lose their resilience. According to Helmke and Levitsky (2006:22-25) there are three sources of informal institutional change (figure 2). As shown in the next section on power and institutional change, these sources are also identified as factors that support institutional change in general.

- a. Formal institutional change: informal rules' change could be driven by new formal rules which are considered by the players more efficient than the informal ones. The existing formal rules increase their effectiveness in terms of credible outcomes compared with the informal ones or, as also North (1990:83-91) points out, of changes in the level of enforcement.
- b. Changes in distribution of power and resources: an alternative source of change which is also mentioned by Knight (1992) is the change in distribution of resources and power in the institution and/or in the community. This redistribution could weaken those actors that benefit from the informal rules and strengthen new actors that benefit from the formal rules.
- c. Changes in beliefs and collective experiences: in this case, the weakening of informal rules is produced by changes in actors' beliefs about the opportunities and benefits of formal rules. Gradual learning processes and the accumulation of experience could alter the actors' expectations about the formal institutions. This aspect is very important because it could be related with the key role of ideas as introduced by Hay's conceptualisation of institutions. So, at times of institutional changes, there could be an ideational contestation where the "old" ideas are replaced with new ones (Hay, 2006).

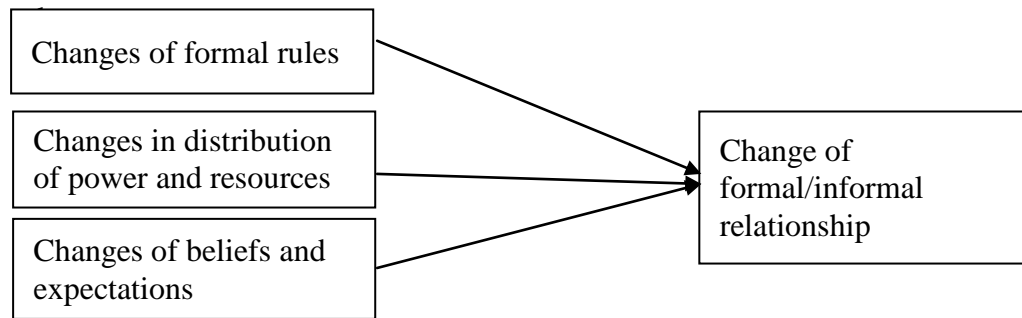


Figure 2: Factors that change the formal/informal relationship

Although Helmke and Levitsky (2006) underplay the interpretation of rules by actors and their strategic choices in this varying institutional context (see my argument in the next section), they make a significant contribution to the identification of the sources of informal institutional change.

Summary

The above analysis has expanded theoretically my first main research question regarding institutions' formal/ informal rules configuration. The following sub questions illuminate in detail this research question and guide my primary research:

1. What constitutes an “institution” in my study?
2. At which level the formal rules have been implemented in the selected institutions?
3. Which informal rules enable, substitute or contradict the formal rules?
4. Which actually are the rules-in-use inside the selected partnerships?
5. To what extent do the formal rules lead to a change in informal rules during partnership process and outcomes?

Section 2: Agency, power and institutional change

In the previous section, I analysed one component of the institution, i.e. rules. In this section, the main topic of analysis is agency and its relation with rules, power and change. Ostrom argues that ‘institutions themselves are invisible’ (1999: 36) because institutions are more than organisations since they are composed by the rules-in-use and the agents’ actions in relation to rules.

So, there is the need to understand the interaction between the individual and rules for the explanation of institutional outcomes (Rhodes et al, 2006; Hay, 2006). As Hay and Wincott argue (1998: 951), “if institutionalism is to develop to its full potential, it must consider the relationship between structure and agency”. The normative institutionalism (and to a lesser extent historical institutionalism) adopted by this research have not adequately conceptualised the relationship between institution and agency (Hay and Wincott, 2001:6). “Although it is clear that institutions can shape the behaviour of individuals, the reciprocal process is not nearly as clear” (Peters, 1999: 36).

The question of structure/agency relationship is central not only for NI but for every political scientist, since this issue offers explanation about the power balance of the constituent parts of social life. However, this relationship is one of the long-standing issues of controversy between the different approaches in social science. Indeed, it is directly related with different ontological and epistemological positions (Marsh, 2010: 212). Hay (2002:89-93) acknowledges that structure and agency should not be a problem that needs to be solved empirically once and forever. Rather “it’s a language by which ontological differences between contending accounts must be registered” (Hay, 2002:91).

In the first part of the current section, I will outline the existing debate on this issue and relate to NI theory. In the second part of the section, I will identify the theoretical links of the structure/agency debate with the notions of power and institutional change. Throughout the section, I will raise questions as to the ways that this discussion enlightens my research by revealing concepts and

analytical tools and as to what extent my primary research could contribute into this discussion.

2.1 Agency/structure relationship

In order to avoid general assumptions in the already well-known debate to the benefit of more detailed and sophisticated accounts, I briefly state the main ontological arguments about structure and agency. I then explore in more depth the role of agency in sociological institutionalism and the way the particular theory of critical realism (in its various versions) could be operationalised in NI theory. When I refer to agency and structure through the institutional lens, structure is largely viewed in institutional terms, meaning the rules of political institutions that present regularity over time, while agency is understood as the actors' behaviour in these institutions. If structure refers to bigger social regulatory frameworks like economy, religion, gender, rule refers to the micro level regulatory framework of the institution itself.

The existing literature on agency and structure identifies three groups of approaches: 1. the structural, 2. the intentional and 3. the dialectical. In the first two approaches, the relation of structure and agency is treated as a dualistic one that means that structure and agency are separate units which depending on the approach, one or the other is privileged. Indeed, they stand as oppositional poles; if an explanation privileges structure, it has to down play the role of agency and vice versa (Hay, 2002:95; Marsh, 2010: 213) In the third, the dialectical one, structure and agency are not separated but are coupled. As Hay underlines “stated most simply, then, neither agents nor structures are real, since neither has an existence in isolation from the other; their existence is relational” (Hay, 2002:127).

Structuralism and intentionalism have a lot of limitations since they are related to holistic and reductionist positions of social life that are unable to understand the complexities of social life processes. Facing all these problems, there are theorists that attempt to ease the tension of agency/structure showing how structure and agency could work together in a dialectical way by contrast to dualism where structure and agency are conceived as different entities. In the

UK literature, two dominant dialectical approaches are identified: Giddens' (1984) structuration theory and critical realism as expressed by Archer's (2010) morphogenetic approach and Jessop (2005) and Hay's (2002) strategic relational approach. Despite their differences with regards to the way that they conceptualise the dialectical relation between structure/agency (Archer, 2010), all these approaches have the same ontological core: the context does influence the agency by setting opportunities and constrains for action but actors inside this context pursue their preferences and their objectives and by acting they influence the development of this context (Hay, 2002). In this perspective, "action" and "structure" presuppose one another: "structural patterning is inextricably grounded in practical interaction" (Archer, 2010: 226).

The theoretical assumptions that underpin this research are developed around the principle that agency and structure have to be conceived and analysed in a dialectical way. Or, through an institutional lens, institutional outcomes are the product of the interaction between agency and rules. However, I do not exclusively adopt one of the above-mentioned approaches of this theoretical strand but I instead mix and match those inputs that have an analytical utility for my research. Although this could be faced with criticism by empiricism and eclecticism, I propose that these three different strands are not rivals; by contrast they have a lot of common ontological and epistemological themes leaving room for combining these different strands.

Giddens' (1984) structuration theory accounts for the agency as a subject acting in society. This is to be achieved by recognising the flexibility and knowledge ability of actors, which mean that "all human beings are highly learned in respect of knowledge which they possess and apply in the production and reproduction of day to day social encounters" (Giddens, 1984: 22). Nevertheless, he underlines that agency employs structural properties in this process. So, the dualism of structure/agency is conceptualised in his theory as the duality of structure where "agency and structure are mutually constituted". His approach involves two points significant for my analysis:

- a. the agency is deeply embedded in regularised institutional elements, while institutions could be conceived as embodiments of action. So, as

Jessop argues very clearly “institutions never exist outside of specific action contexts” (Jessop, 2001:8). Relating the above discussion to the study of institutions, I am looking at the way that partnership involve multiple partners who might otherwise not cooperate into processes of negotiation and collective action for achieving particular outcomes. At the same time, I am looking at the way that these partners, following their strategies, interpret the rules and take advantages of their opportunities, transforming the institutional processes and outcomes of the partnership. As Lowndes and Roberts underline (forthcoming): “the enactment of a role is never perfect and there is always a gap between “the ideal pattern of a rule” and how that pattern is played out in situ”. So the gap between them draws out significant points for the strategic action on the part of actors (Streeck and Thelen, 2005).

- b. the image of the purposive agent who is acting but their action, independently of their intentions, could have unintended consequences. Although the consequences are unintended, they could change beliefs and attitudes influencing the political context. “Agents’ conduct, rarely if ever, leaves the social/political context in which it arises entirely unaltered” (Hay, 2009:268). This issue is further related with Hay’s account of power and institutional change analysed further down.

But how could the dynamic interplay of structure and agency could be understood analytically? Starting from another standpoint, that of critical realism, Archer with her analytical separation of structure and agency and Hay and Jessop’s concept of strategic actor offer a more realistic understanding of this relation. According to Archer’s theory (2010), “analytical dualism” is welcomed when dealing with structure and action. For her, structure predates agency and she identifies a three-stage cycle of change over time: 1. the pre-existing context, 2. the structures condition and 3. the agents’ action. During social interaction, agents are not only influenced by the structure but they also pursue their interests affecting in this way the outcomes leading or not to structural elaboration (morphogenesis).

So, Archer (2010) opens up the discussion of the autonomous power of structural constraints and the different capacities of actors to change structures. She argues that it is important to specify when, under which conditions or circumstances, an actor could be transformative and when they have to serve replication logic. These circumstances are related to the nature of the structure, i.e. the stringency of its constraints and by this the degree of freedom that it leaves to the agency.

But how do we trace the degree of freedom that the rules of an institution leave to the agent? Although starting from a different field, that of institutional design, the identification of some desirable institutional criteria could support my effort to analyse the existing formal institutional rules of partnerships and specifying the degree of opportunities and constraints that these leave to the agency. According to Goodin (1996), there are two main criteria of institutional design, that of revisability and robustness. Institutions must evolve during time adopting innovative ways of doing things on the one hand and institutions must be stable in order not to be easily destroyed by changes initiating by individuals or the socio-economic context on the other hand. While the level of “appropriate” stability versus change on a “good design” is a “matter of contention and political controversy” (Goodin, 1996: 41), these criteria nevertheless guide the research empirically in order to identify the way that the actors conceive the formal rules.

The above two main criteria comprise another internal criteria that of sensibility to motivational complexity of individuals (Goodin, 1996). The institutions must offer a space for alternative manoeuvres to individuals offering them the potential to pursue their motives, self-seeking or altruistic. One tool for doing that is publicity. Institutions should be accountable and legitimated to the public; this is a precondition for the embracement of people by these institutions. Lowndes and Wilson (2003) go further adding a new criterion that of clarity about values. They argue that publicity requires a clear recording of the values being promoted by the new institutions.

One more criterion is that of variability. The institutional design could take into account that one institutional paradigm could not fit into every circumstance. In this context, the institution must offer a repertoire of combining rules in order to be better embedded in the local environment (Goodin, 1996; Lowndes and Wilson, 2003). The criteria of clarity and variability are important in my research because I deal with EU programmes that had introduced new institutions and practices in the Greek municipalities. These “foreign” practices, if not clear and flexible, could confront problems due to lack of correspondence in local circumstances.

The following table (4) presents the above criteria of rules and their impact on agents’ freedom to act.

Criteria of formal rules	Degree of agent’s freedom
Stability	Rules do not allow room for “deviation”
Revisability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensibility • Publicity • Clarity 	Rules respond to agent’s purposes and goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules permit alternative agents’ motives: self interest versus altruistic • Rules being publicly acceptable facilitate/control agents’ action • Clear rules of the game facilitate/control agents’ action
Variability	Rules could adapt to local environment

Table 4: Types of formal rules and agency freedom

Finally, the strategic relational approach, which, as Jessop (2005) argues, could be interpreted-among others- as a particular version of critical realism, offers fruitful insights about the agents’ conduct and the process of learning. This theory treats actors as “strategic” meaning that they “can be reflexive, can formulate within their limits their own identities, and can engage in strategic calculation about the “objective” interests that flow from these alternative identities in particular conjunctures” (Jessop, 2005: 49). This strategic action depends on the individuals’ learning capacities and on the “experience” of the pursuit of different strategies.

Consequently, this approach introduces a number of themes for my case study such as the identification of the motivation and goals of the partners, their capacity to integrate knowledge into their activities, to programme their own activity and finally to produce evolution in the institutional setting. The issue of learning in partnerships is further developed in detail in the next chapter.

Following the concept of strategic action, agency in institutions encompasses two aspects: the selection of rules-in-use from the pool of formal and informal rules, and the preservation/change of rules-in-use (Ostrom, 1999). The difficulty here lies in the distinction of the rules-in-use, especially the informal rules, from the agents' strategy to change them. Since the rules-in-use are shared concepts in the minds of the involved people and they take meaning through their interpretation by them, (the rules-in-use start existing the moment they are applied by the involved people) i.e. when they explain and justify their action, it is difficult for the researcher to distinguish if the transformation of formal rules is led by the agency's purpose for change or by the informal rules, in particular in cases where the change is incremental.

In the following figure (3), I present the contribution of each approach to my analytical framework for the study of the relationship between agency and rules.

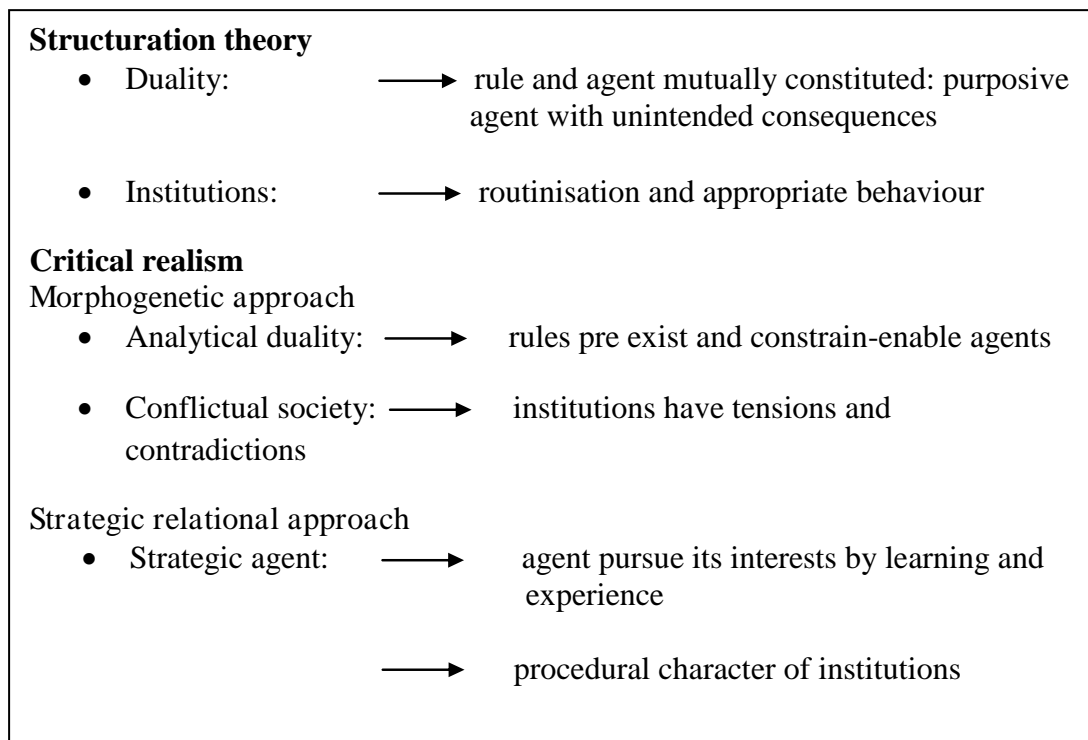


Figure 3: Contribution of each “dualistic” approach to my theoretical framework on rules/agency relationship in political institution

In conclusion, Giddens’ theory, which was one of the first that went beyond the opposition of structure and agency, introduces an image of a recursive social reproduction through the repetitiveness of activities by acting intuitively and by habit. These normative features are related to tradition and routinisation. By contrast, the approaches of critical realism recognise tensions and contradictions in social reproduction, which derive from variations, contradictions and dilemmas inherent in the structural configurations and the agents’ choices. It also pays attention to the strategic features of agency, i.e. the pursuit of interests in the available institutional context and differential capacities and specificities.

If normative and rational choice NI approaches embody an opposition between calculus and cultural agency, critical realism tries to balance this opposition by supporting socialised agents through their calculus. So, critical realism could bridge the opposition between the normative character of institutions, which conveys the logic of appropriateness, and the functional role of institutions as supporters of collective problems which conveys the logic of consequentially. Hay argues “there is a clear danger” to “reduce all motives for political action

to the level of pure instrumentality” in terms of “goal oriented pursuit of material self-interest” (Hay, 2009: 273). However, the same danger exists if the studies project only normative structurally embodied motivations onto political conduct.

2.2 Power and institutional change

2.2.1 Power

The rules embody different power relations (Moe, 2003; Goodin 1996). Rules enable/constrain the agents but they do not do that in the same way for all the agents. But if I end here my analysis, I, on the one hand, stand off from the intentional approach of power like that found in pluralist and elitist theories where the agent acts “largely unconstrained by the institutions” (Lowndes and Roberts, forthcoming). On the other hand, I define rules in a deterministic way, as power structures that shape agents’ behaviour like in the classical Marxist account. In this way, I fail to relate structure and agency in terms of power relations.

For Giddens as for all the others supporters of the structure/ agency duality, structures and institutional rules are not identified with the exercise of power but with resources conferred to the agent. The rules, formal and informal, prescribe power positions to the agent but it is the agent that has the capacity to use or change them. So, power relies on the transformative capacity of the agent in action. Here again structure and agency become interrelated leaving to the agent a significant role to play in the process of (re)production of power relations. Since power is a question of agency and agency action/inaction influence structure and social change, power and change are integral parts of the relationship of agency/structure and for this reason they also appear systematically in the relative discussion.

But in what concrete ways does the agent interact with structures in the production of power? Hay (2002:184-187) recognises that the agent could have two types of power: 1. the capacity for direct power defined as “conduct shaping” and 2. the capacity for indirect power or “context shaping”. In the former, power is immediate and it refers to the classical pluralist account of

power where A gets B to do something that B would not otherwise do. As shown in the following figure (4), practices relating to direct powers are “decision making, physical and psychological coercion, persuasion and blackmail” (Hay, 1997:7). The latter refers to the capacity of individuals to shape structures, institutions and organisations in a way that changes the conditions of what is possible for others. As Hay (2002:186) notes” this is an indirect form of power in which power is mediated by and instantiated in structures”.

Speaking in institutional terms, this is the capacity of the individual to play with the interpretation of the rules, redefining the institutional context where the other players continue to act. This power is usually “indirect, latent and often an unintended consequence” (Hay, 2002:186) but it can also provide “a power resource for the potential exercise of direct power” (Hay, 1997:7). Indirect power could be identified in the norms and values of informal rules for appropriate behaviour, the narratives that ground the activities of the institutions and the agenda setting. In the following figure (4), I demonstrate the way that Hays’ conceptualisation of power informs my primary research regarding the identification and mapping of power relations inside partnerships.

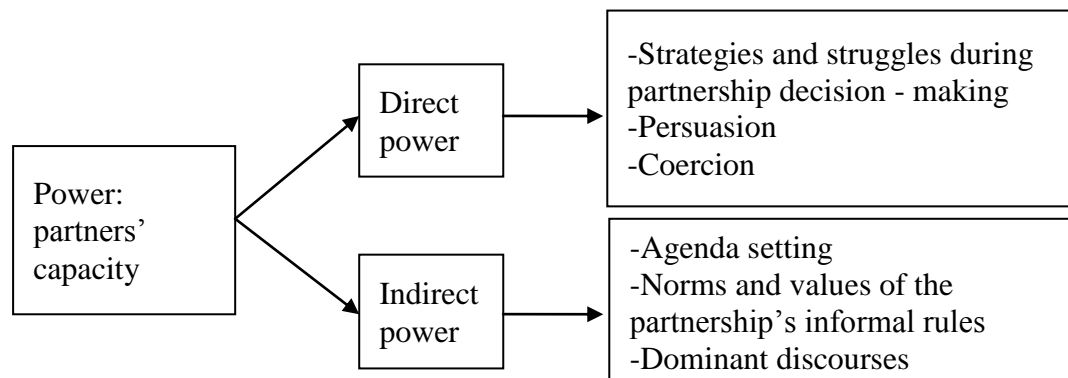


Figure 4: Hay’s conceptualisation of power adapted in the analysis of partnership power relations

Hay’s account of indirect power keeps links closely to Lukes’ (2005) “third face of power” but he follows an analytical approach to power without normative premises and negative assumptions. Additionally, this enabling perception of power that allows agents to have “an effect” upon the context fits

with Stone's positive perception of power regarding collective action in regime theory (Stone, 2005). As is analysed in the next chapter, Stone talks about the generative power of collective action for solutions to be found in common problems.

2.2.2 Institutional change

The recognition of the interaction between agent and institution as well as being power considered as "context shaping" are directly related with questions of institutional change. As mentioned in the first section, institutions offer standards of behaviour providing regulation in social life and so are directly related to stability. However, institutions are not stagnant objects but processes that are changed over time (Lowndes, 2001; Goodin, 1996; Offe, 1996). In this way, on the one hand, institutions realise order and stability in political life by shaping the situations and the role that must be fulfilled by the individual. On the other hand, institutions express flexibility and adaptation by associating agents' actions with new rules in new situations. As March and Olsen (2006: 7) note "institutions are not static; and institutionalisation is not an inevitable process [...] however their internal structures and rules cannot be changed arbitrarily".

Institutional change is a concept that transcends all my research because it is mentioned by the partners as something that occurred through their learning in previous collaboration and thematic networks; as something that is realised during the partnership development during the exercise of agency and as something that will happen in the future due to the effect of rules and agency on other institutions. So, change is an ongoing process throughout time

In terms of the way that new institutions replace the old ones, Goodin (1996:24-30) argues that there are three models of change: 1. accident, 2. evolution and 3. intentional intervention by goal seeking individuals or organised groups. In the combination of evolution and intentional intervention resides the interaction between structure and agent. On the one hand, the process of evolution of the institution itself and on the other hand, the intentional agents that interpret and apply this evolution create a new social

arrangement (Goodin, 1996). Goodin further argues that even the process of institutional evolution, according to which the institutions that better respond to their environment finally survive, “involves the intentional actions of purposive agents, either directly or indirectly” (1996: 26). It is through the intentional agents’ interpretation and interactions that the selective institution will survive. “An institution can thus be the product of intentional action, without its having being literally the intentional product of anyone’s actions” (Goodin, 1996: 28).

As a result, institutional change depends heavily upon actors who seek to reshape the rules in order to respond to their intentions. In the case of externally imposed institutions, as in my primary research, interestingly enough, empirical evidence demonstrating that “leaders matter more than institutions” (Jowitt, 1992 quoted in Streeck and Thelen, 2005:10) responds directly to Goodin’s argument about the significance of intentionality. In particular, when new formal institutions are established, the traditional formal and informal institutions strongly oppose the new ones. In this context, which is almost similar to that of unsettled times or to periods of social transformation as mentioned by Ann Swidler (1986 quoted in Streeck and Thelen, 2005:10), agency has more opportunities to select strategic actions from the old or the new institutional context with significant results in the direction of change. As the Europeanisation theories underline, crucial to the implementation of foreign institutional rules is also the role of entrepreneurs who are playing the mediating role for the smooth introduction of the new rules to the existing institutional environment (Borzel and Risse, 2000) (see more analytically in the next chapter).

In terms of the types of institutional change (table 5), I found very useful the Streeck and Thelen (2005) distinction between the incremental/ disruptive process of change and the continuity /discontinuity in terms of the results of change. In the first case of change results, there is not a “deep” change like in the second one, that of discontinuity, where change is evident. From this typology, particularly interesting is the gradual transformation which comprises a “gradual incremental change with transformative results” (Streeck and Thelen, 2005: 13).

		Result of change	
		Continuity	Discontinuity
Process of change	Incremental	Reproduction by adaptation	<u>Gradual transformation</u>
	Disruptive	Survival and return	Breakdown and replacement

Table 5: Types of institutional change: processes and results, by Streeck and Thelen (2005)

Although the new practices gain salience at the expense of traditional institutional rules and behaviours, opposing the former as anachronistic and corruptive, this change is under development since these recent practices have not come to dominate the old one. “Both co-exist, but with the existence of the former calling into question the primacy and taken for granted of the latter” (Streeck and Thelen, 2005: 31). The potential power relations of old and new institutions in the case of gradual transformation could be linked with the discussion of Lauth (2000) about the reasons of disempowerment of informal rules vis-a-vis new formal ones, as presented in the first section of this chapter.

Summary

From the above analysis, the following sub-questions further illuminate my main theoretical questions regarding the interplay between rules and agency inside an institution as well as institutional change.

1. Based on the aforementioned criteria of institutional design, what are the implications of the partnership formal rules for the capacity of the partners to act strategically?
2. To what extent do partnership rules transmit norms (values, beliefs, practices) to partners? How do these norms influence the power relations of partners?
3. Which and whose interests do the institutional rules and the agents’ strategies serve during agenda setting and decision making? Which agents’ strategies are related to direct and indirect power?

4. To what extent do learning processes and capacity building (gained through experience) impact on agents' strategies?
5. Where are traces of institutional change located and what form do they take?

Section 3: Institutions and context

Institutions do not stand alone in society. Indeed, they emerge in a surrounding society that creates opportunities, constraints, values and narratives (Streeck and Thelen, 2005). Additionally, as Ostrom (2005: 6) argues in relation to the diversity and multi level analysis of human behaviour “ whenever interdependent individuals are thought to be acting in an organised fashion, several layers of universal components create the structure that affects their behaviour and the outcomes they achieve”. Consequently, the partnerships of my primary research do not start from a socio-economic and political void but build on past and existing relations.

Although there is a myriad of variables that could influence institutions, the challenge for institutional theorists is to select the appropriate range of explanatory variables, which fit the type of situation under analysis (Ostrom, 2005). In my research, I have identified two bigger structures that influence the strategic development of partnerships, economy and culture; and two meso level structures; institutional legacies and institutional configuration. I treat both as exogenous variables, which influence the strategic action of the partners as well as the interaction between formal/informal rules and agents’ action. However, coming from a normative approach to neo institutionalism, the factors of institutional legacies and configuration as well as the cultural embodiment of institutions are mostly highlighted in this section. By this, lesser attention is given to socio-economic factors without denying their significant power.

In case I could be criticised of an eclectic selection of variables and level of analysis, I have to mention that the selection of the following contextual variables was the result of both ontological and empirical procedures. First, it is the primary research that defined these variables as the most significant ones and second it is the theoretical framework that provided a pool of possible explanatory variables.

Additionally, the significance of time and space where these structures are developed needs more explanation. In my approach, I follow Jessop's (2001, 2005) argument that the structural constraints could not be conceptualised outside specific temporal and spatial framework since "spatio-temporal properties have their own specific capacities to stretch social relations" (Jessop, 2001: 9). With reference to my primary research, I have to identify the unique local context and time horizon where these broad structures affect the partnership collaborative capacity and dynamics of change.

Nevertheless, what do we specifically mean by "temporal and spatial location of structural endowments" of the case study partnerships?

3.1 Socio-economic factors

Firstly, the larger local socio-economic context in which partnerships evolve. As Lowndes (2001) summarises political institutions and agents' preferences are not independent from other areas of socio-economic life. There are macro-economic and socio demographic properties that both structure the overall set of incentives that the agent faces in a situation and affect institutional processes (Ostrom, 2005:22; Jessop, 2001:2). In particular, my research analyses three groups of indicators in detail: 1. the demographic changes in the population (ageing, juvenility, size of population and urbanisation), 2. the economic changes (production sectors, GNP per region, employment) and finally 3. the geo political position (geographical position, size, and administrative organisation.).

3.2 Institutional configuration

Secondly, there exists a wide set of vertical and horizontal institutional configuration which impacts on the partnership working. Especially in my primary research, where three territorial levels of governance are involved, that of EU, the state and the local government, it is important to understand partnership processes within the whole system of governance and to assess the barriers and opportunities for collaboration imposed by the existing political configuration. So, I briefly discuss the extent to which the existing forms and practices of European and national governance as well as the existing role of

local government shape the policy context, values and practices of both partnerships. In addition to political institutions, I also refer to the horizontal interactions of local government with the institutions of civil society (NGOs, political parties, and cooperatives, etc) and the private sector (Chambers of Commerce, local interests, e.tc.) that lead to particular paths of partners' behaviour. These issues are analytically discussed in the next chapter on local politics and partnerships by outlining theories of Europeanisation, urban politics and NI researches on local partnerships.

3.3 Institutional legacies

Moreover, the existing institutional configuration has its traces on the past. Institutions have historical roots and historical institutionalism has precisely focused on the legacies of the past. Indeed, it has a view of institutional development that emphasises path dependence and unintended consequences (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 938). Different historical contexts offer different opportunities and constraints to institutions and to actors' behaviour (March and Olsen, 2006:11-15). However, different strands inside historic institutionalism accord different levels of influence to the historical context⁴.

In this research, I use a broad conception of path dependency as defined by Sewell (1996:262-263 quoted in Pierson, 2000: 252) "that what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time". The important notion here is that we cannot understand a particular political institution without understanding its history, the path that it followed to get there. As Pierson puts it, "path dependency is used to support the claim that specific patterns of timing and sequences matter" (Pierson, 2000:251). In the following chapter, I also outline empirical evidence from NI studies on local partnerships regarding institutional legacies.

⁴ There is the soft version, which recognises how previous practices and perceptions of bureaucratic and political institutions constrain new practices and future possibilities of change and the hard version of the argument of path dependency which maintains the idea of the difficulties in changing practices and ideas due to resistance to change (Pierson 2000).

In my primary research, I study the history of collaborative projects as well as local socio political institutional legacies. Moreover, I identify the distinct culture, practices and problems that have arisen and the ways in which these influence the case study partnerships. I particularly focus on the established previous networks of collaboration and their implications for the building of the new partnerships.

3.4 Culture: social capital and political culture

Finally, since I talk about norms embedded in institutions, I am profoundly interested in the value system of the Greek society and its particular enactment at the local level. And since I study political institutions, I use some aspects of social capital to explain specific partners' behaviour and also some aspects of political culture that are not addressed adequately by the social capital framework. The need to address both concepts in explaining collective action in political institutions is proposed by Wood's research on religious organisations. Wood (1997) distinguishes between two faces of culture related to politics, the first one is characterised by social networks' trust and reciprocity, which consist the main elements for the development and sustainability of collective action. The second one is composed of beliefs, values and assumptions that enable the political stabilisation and mobilisation of the emerging collective action.

Culture impacts upon institutions in two ways: first, directly on agency values and preferences. According to Ostrom (2005:27), culture defined as "the values shared within a community" affects the "mental models" that the participants in a collective action share between them. Second, indirectly, culture shapes rules. According to March and Olsen (1989), institutions are the vehicles of the existing system that define the "appropriate" behaviour for the individuals. In both cases, agency and rules are carriers of local histories, identities, values, and obligations that bring in the institutional processes.

As shown in the following figure (5), the level of social capital and type of political culture are selected as key variables from the broad range of cultural components because of the way in which both influence the collaborative

activity of a partnership and its democratic operation (Putman, 1993). Political institutions in turn affect and shape wider culture elements.

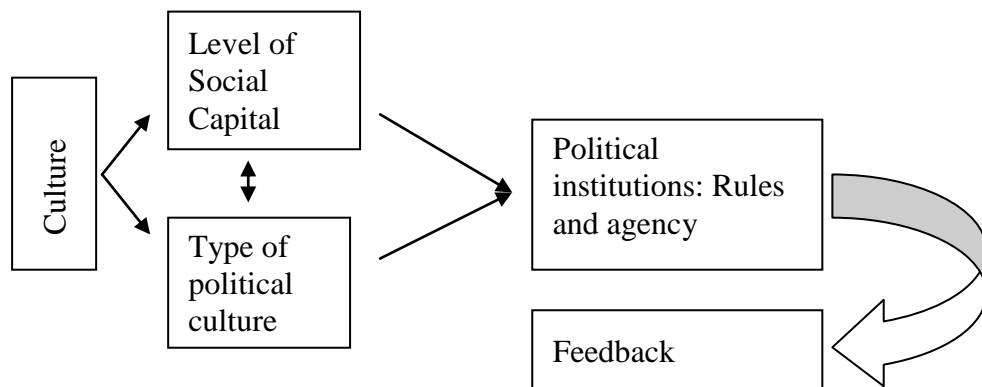


Figure 5: Relation of culture to political institutions

3.4.1 Relationship of culture with rules

Before analysing these features, I have firstly to clarify the relation of rules with cultural norms. In normative institutionalism, it is difficult to distinguish between informal rules and cultural norms. If rules are shared understandings comprising, among others, norms and values, and culture is a shared value system embedded in individuals, how can the researcher discern whether it is the informal rule or the culture that affects agent behaviour? This task gets more difficult since following rules repetitively could spread to other institutions and finally become a cultural norm.

In this research, I argue that culture is an independent variable that shapes the rules-in-use. Informal rules are not identical with cultural norms. Culture stands as an explanatory variable, as the economy and institutional configuration do too.

The way that informal rules operationalise the general values and norms of culture in the specific context of the institution could permit an analytical distinction between culture and informal rules. Informal rules provide a link between the general values of the community and the specific values developed inside the institution in order to be established and sustained. For instance, if the culture of a community is characterised by distrust and corruption, an informal rule inside an institution could allow for unpunished partners’

cheating and free riders behaviours. So, the values guiding informal rules embody the shared values of the society as well as the shared values produced by the actors in the specific institution in order to respond to its own institutional and organisational needs and to actors' intentions. The autonomy of rules by the cultural norms is also resumed in March and Olsen's (1989:12) argument that "institutional autonomy is necessary to establish that political institutions are more than the simple mirrors of social forces".

3.4.2 Features of social capital and political culture

Political culture refers "to the specifically political orientations – attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (Almond and Verba, 1989: 12). Social capital refers to those "features of social life organisation such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putman, 1993:167). So, social capital is a particular type of resource available to individuals or organisations that facilitates the achievement of collective action (Maloney et al, 2000:802).

Social capital and political culture can be regarded as both a policy resource and a policy outcome. In the first case, they are analysed as an input to policy making preventing or making political collective action. In the second case, policy making influences the stock of social capital, -preserve, augment or redistribute it - (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2008) as well as the type of political culture. In my study, I mainly regard both concepts as a policy input and to a lesser extent, I also raise some questions about the partnerships' role in their development.

The relation of political culture to social capital resides mainly in the dependence of political attitudes and practices on other social norms and networks. Social capital theory could explain political behaviour and values since the attitude of the citizen towards his/her social and interpersonal environment and relational networks influence his/her political life (Almond and Verba, 1989; Bockmeyer, 2000: 2419). More specifically, the concepts of trust (towards the political system as well as to social actors like business and

community) and the civic engagement (turnout, political action, conception of citizenship) that are further down analysed are the linking elements of social capital and political culture.

Trust is defined by “a set of expectations held by one party that another party or parties will behave in an appropriate manner with regard to a specific issue” (Farrell and Knight, 2003:541). Trust is a fundamental aspect of institutional establishment and development. March and Olsen (1989:38) underline that “the network of rules and rule bounded relations are sustained by trust, a confidence that appropriate behaviour can be expected most of the time”. Based on the belief that the involved actors will behave as expected, the individual could manage the daily interactions with the other individuals inside the institution and formulate its intentions and goals about future behaviour. Consequently, the absence of trust is accompanied by the expectation of dishonest and uncooperative behaviour (Bockmeyer, 2000: 2421).

Stone distinguishes 3 types of trust: the particularised trust, the generalised trust and the civic trust (Stone 2001: 25-30). The particularised or family trust refers to established relations and social networks (family, neighbourhood). The generalised trust, which is captured in Putmans’ (1993) account, derives from the actor’s experience in their social networks and refers to those with whom the actor does not have previous experience. The civic trust, which is directly related to political culture, refers to basic trust in the formal institutions of governance regarding fairness of rules, official procedures, and allocation of resources etc. In my study of partnerships, I focus on the last two types for two reasons. First, partnership promotes the process of bridging and linking social capital. Representatives from different groups with different geographical positions characterised by hierarchical relations develop relations trying to “get ahead”. Second, since partnerships involve political actors and implement public policies, it is a political institution. So, I am interested also in the civic trust that actors have towards the concrete institution in which they are involved.

A second common aspect of social capital and political culture is civic engagement, i.e. individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. In social capital literature, networks are distinguished between formal and informal (Putman, 1993). Informal networking refers to relations between family, friends, relatives and neighbours while formal networking refers to social relations in the social and political space. In the formal networks developed in political space, the common ground between social capital and political culture can be found in terms of civic engagement.

Besides the above common features of social capital and political culture, there are some other components of social capital and political culture, which are important in order to better understand collective action. Regarding political culture, I focus on some aspects of political competence and partisanship since it is important as Almond and Verba (1989) note to understand the content and quality of the citizens' feelings about their ability to participate in the political system.

Regarding social capital, I focus on social networking and the norms of reciprocity. In particular, political participation in combination with social participation illustrates the existence or the non-existence of a collaborative and participative culture. Moreover, the norms of reciprocity refer to the quality of collective action. Stone defines reciprocity as “the exchange within a social relationship whereby “goods and services” given by one party are repaid to that party by the party who received the original “goods and services” (Stone, 2001:30). So, reciprocity in collective action refers to the assurance that the obligations of the exchange will be kept by all of the participants.

3.4.3 Social capital and political culture in local partnership

In relation to the role of social capital as partnerships' input, it is argued that the established norms of reciprocity, mutual trust, collective and civil engagement -essential elements of civic ness- constitute the base for successful partnerships (Schmitter, 2002). By contrast, low level social capital which comprises traditions of individualistic behaviours seeking the satisfaction of its

interests, low level of collective actions and civic organisations restrain the effectiveness of a partnership (Paraskevopoulos, 2001). Moreover, “virtuous” attributes of political culture like limited participation in public space and no trust to political institutions may have negative effects on partnerships’ operations. Not only do they prevent collaborative action in practice but they also create misconceptions about the expected behaviours of partners (Paraskevopoulos, 2001).

Furthermore, another important assumption is that changes in political culture and in political system do not always follow the same speed and direction (Almond and Verba, 1989). It could be congruence or incongruence between the political system and political culture. Grounding that to institutions, this evidence is important to the partnerships of my case study where the institutional context is changing rapidly by the introduction of new institutions such as partnerships from “above”, the EU, while the political culture is remaining stable. In this case, “people live and think in very different ways, and some of these are radically inconsistent with the requirements of formal organisations” (Banfield, 1958:8). So, the pre-existing political culture and the ideas prevailing in the society could not support the logic of appropriate behaviour of the new institutional rules. This process is getting more aggravating keeping in mind that elements of cultural infrastructure are not “only time consuming to consolidate, but equally time consuming to abolish” (Offe, 1996:218).

Moreover, the establishment of “imposed” partnerships from the central government or the European Union can destroy pre-existing social networks if they are not building around knowledge of local context. They can also negatively affect the level and type of social capital available to partners (Ostrom, 2000). For instance, the development of collaborative projects where local authorities distribute resources to civil organisations by a hierarchical way could create dependent citizens rather than active citizens that have the capacity to generate capital. As Ostrom notes social capital “does not represent however a quick fix that can be created by external or top down processes” (Ostrom, 2000:202).

Regarding social capital as partnership output, I start with the assumption that social capital “increases with use and diminish with disuse” (Putman, 1993:170). As a result, “stocks of social capital tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative” (Putman, 1993:177). Even if partnerships are time-limited, they leave “traces” or “islands” of social capital that could be reactivated in the future (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2008). Partnerships could reinforce social capital through the bridging and linking process. Bridging social capital refers to social networks that bring people together who are unlike each other while linking brings together people from different power positions, who are not on an equal footing (Putman and Goss, 2002).

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that an institution comprises the rules and agents’ behaviour related to these rules. Or, the institutions of my case study consist of the formal/informal rules that guide the two partnerships’ operation from the stage of initiation until the stage of implementation. In terms of agency, they comprise partnerships’ members and particularly “institutional entrepreneurs” and established local leaders as well as state executives and partnerships’ beneficiaries.

As shown in the following figure (6), which illustrates the research protocol of my study, in terms of rules, besides the formal arrangements that structure the partnerships relations, I also identify informal rules and their configuration with the formal rules, in other words, the rules-in-use. Following Lauth’s (2000) typology, I am looking at the distinct ways that formal and informal rules interact and partners’ enactment of these rules. I also focus on the impact of rules-in-use on the partnership processes leading or not to institutional change.

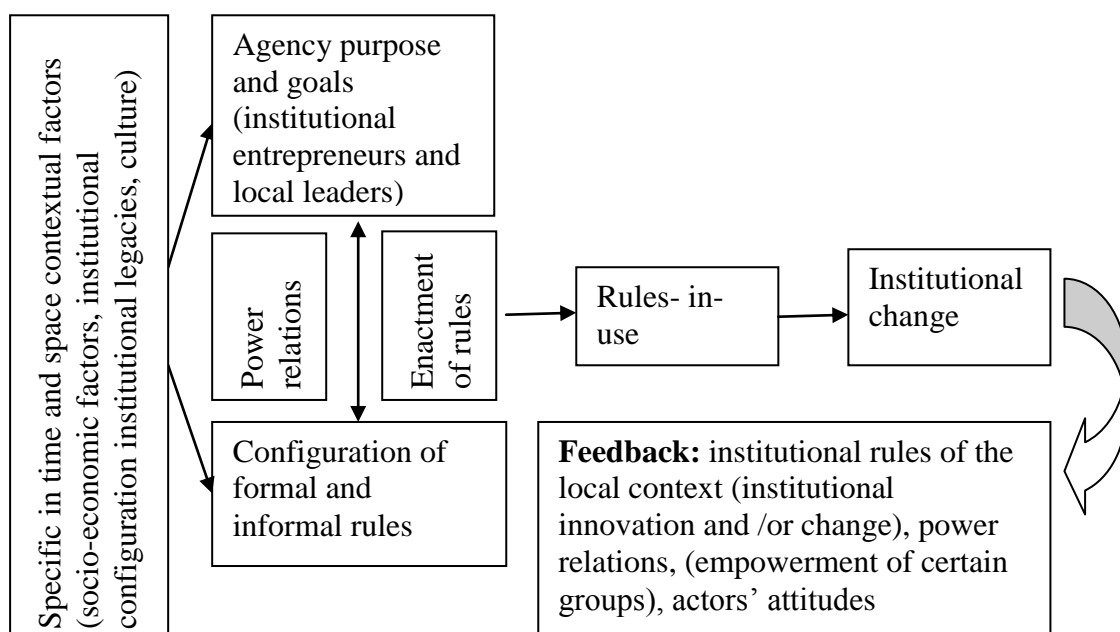


Figure 6: Research protocol

In this process, the main question addressed is to what extent and in which way individuals' actions are shaped by the rules and how the rules are enacted by individuals' action. In doing that, the identification of power relations, the mapping of agents' purpose and goals as well as the potential for institutional change are the main subjects of my analysis.

Finally, I examine the specific contextual factors that influence the partnerships' institutions under study and the impact of collective action on social capital stock and institutional configuration in its turn. The importance here lies in the degree of influence, or the extent to which the contextual factors get embedded on rules and agency preferences and the extent to which the institutions of the primary research call for their autonomy vis-a-vis these factors.

In conclusion, this chapter has mapped the main theoretical concepts that structure my theoretical framework and guide my research questions. In the next chapter these are going to be presented in detail related and grounded in the theoretical field of urban politics and their approach on local partnerships.

Chapter 2: Neo institutional approaches to understanding local partnership

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have outlined the main features that constitute the NI theory and I have identified key concepts that set the theoretical framework for the explanation of my empirical observations. However, what is missing from this process is the “scaling” of the theory to the local level on the one hand, and its grounding to the concrete and empirical level of partnerships on the other. In this way, it will become possible to formulate more precise and targeted research questions that will guide the research methodology presented in the following chapter.

Thus, I will first present the existing development of urban politics theories and their contribution to the study of local governance and particularly to partnerships. My aim will be to illustrate their possible relation to NI theory and to pick up useful concepts, empirical observations and propositions that will help me to ground the general NI concepts to local partnerships. Additionally, I will try to identify in these theories possible conceptual and empirical limitations and the way that the NI approach could offer new insights in the study of partnerships.

From the vast pool of urban theories and approaches, I focus on three theories: 1. regime theory, 2. theories of urban governance and 3. urban leadership theories. On the one side, regime theory and theories of urban governance offer me a lot of empirical observations about the development and operation of coalitions at the local level and their vertical interactions with other levels of governance. Moreover, urban leadership theories contribute to the better understanding of agency inside partnerships.

Second, I will present the existing literature that has used a NI approach for the analysis of urban policies with special focus on local partnerships and question and/or verify their empirical evidence with my own field analysis. Finally, since the partnerships in the current study have been initiated by the EU, I will

be also interested in Europeanisation theories. Although Europeanisation is not an urban theory per se, since it does not entirely focus on urban phenomena analysis but on multi-level governance, its uses of NI insights helps me to understand the top down and bottom up institutional configurations of local partnerships.

The task of this chapter is complex because if in neo institutionalism (as shown in the previous chapter) various theoretical approaches are used to explain institutions, the landscape of urban theories is much more complicated. Urban theories are characterised by theoretical diversity (Davies and Imbroscio, 2009:1-4). On the one hand, there are theories like Marxism, which explains all urban politics through the general theory of capital accumulation and, on the other hand, there are theories that examine a concrete phenomenon of urban politics like urban leadership or urban democracy (Judge et al, 1995; Davies and Imbroscio, 2009). There are theories like urban regimes of which “each proposition is grounded in broader social traditions, but at the same time hinges on conditions pertaining to the urban scale” (Davies and Imbroscio, 2009:3) and theories like urban elitist or pluralist theories that explain urban politics through particular axioms of how a society works. Despite the difficulties, this theoretical diversity poses a challenge for a NI researcher in terms of identifying shared concerns with other theories of urban policies and of thinking further about how the NI theory could shed light on new aspects of the local partnerships phenomenon.

In this chapter, following NI assumptions, I will look into several features of local partnerships. One is the partnership development and evolution along a number of explanatory factors such as formal and informal rules and actors’ practices. Central also to my understanding of partnerships is the nature of power relations and leaders’ behaviour. The contextual factors that influence the collaboration effort inside partnership such as the unique local and national circumstances are also important. Finally, the partnerships’ collaborative outcomes such as the institutional changes in civil society, local government and intergovernmental relations are also discussed.

Section 1: Theories of urban politics and their approaches to local partnership

In European countries, the changes in central local relations and the growing influence of local partnerships and networking in local governance identified in the last decades have given rise to theoretical approaches of urban politics which try to investigate the collaborative activity and the power relations developed horizontally and vertically guiding the governance processes. These approaches seek to explain why collaboration happens, what form it takes and why, which factors affect the capacity and practices of collaboration (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002:35-36) and how it could transform the policy-making.

Different theories of urban policies like that of regime theory, urban Marxism and urban governance are interested in these developments. These theories do not provide a comprehensive and integrated framework for the collaboration development itself but as Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:35) underline “they tend to offer insights into particular aspects of collaboration”, depending on their predominant epistemological claims and assumptions. What is useful for my research is that these theories specify their observations at the local scale and in this way they offer a concrete and empirically grounded insight of the collaborative activity.

Until the late 70’s, local partnerships have not preoccupied urban politics theories since, at that time, partnerships were not so much expanded as a tool of policy-making as they are in our days. The existing at that time elitist, pluralist and Marxist approaches had analysed the way that a city is governed. Looking for behavioural and structural explanatory factors respectively, these theories had rejected the dominant explanation of the institutional theory i.e. the formal arrangements of the elected local government (Lowndes, 2009).

In particular, elitist and pluralist theories, dominant in the research agenda of North America, focused mainly on the notion of power; “its genesis, its acquisition, its forms and its uses” (Davies and Imbroscio, 2009: 4) and

analysed the way that a city is governed. Pluralist theory⁵, with Dahl (1961) being the principle representative, argued that power is fragmented and dispersed while elitists inspired from Hunters' (1953) study of Atlanta supported that there is a small group of economically and societal powerful agents that determine policy outcomes. If a researcher applied a pluralist approach for the study of local partnership, they would focus on the diverse interest groups seeking influence in the partnerships, the sharing power among partners and the consensual decision-making. For pluralists, partnerships would appear as something neutral that does not favour the interests of any particular group; the study of the observable changes during the decision -making process is sufficient for the definition of who governs inside the partnerships. By contrast, in elitist accounts, power in partnerships would be concentrated in a small number of elite individuals, mainly corporate partners, who could exercise change via their available resources during the stage of agenda setting.

Apart from their strong normative accounts about power distribution, another problem of both theories is that they focus exclusively on agent's actual behaviour and their observable interests in participation. In this way, they ignore to examine the general structural context in which the partnerships are operated and the hidden face of power as defined in Lukes' (2005) approach of power. Finally, both theories would treat partnerships as fixed in time with a prescribed agenda and outcomes, which do not change despite the interaction among partners and the gradual development of the partnership. Although there is not a lot of research that has applied pluralist and elitist theories for the study of partnerships⁶, these theories have influenced subsequent theories like urban regime and growth machines that study networks and partnerships respectively.

In Europe, in the same period, the theoretical conceptualisation of urban political analysis was, unlike in North America, profoundly based on Marxist theories. The Marxist contribution in urban theories is the reorientation of the discussion from the individuals and groups' behaviour for the formulation of

⁵ To the extent that there are lot variants of pluralism, this is a general and simplified core idea of the original pluralist theory (Judge, 1995).

⁶ An indicative research using an elitist approach could be found in the study of global public private health partnerships (Buse and Harmer, 2004).

agenda setting and decision-making to the larger socio-economic context in which urban development evolves (Judge et al, 1995). Castells, Miliband and later on Harvey and Saunders analysed urban political institutions as part of the state apparatus and they argued that urban politics play the same protecting role of capital accumulation and social order maintenance as the state. So, they are interested in how the local state works in the interests of capital (Pickvance, 1995). Although Marxist theories have placed urban politics in the larger economic context and they have tried to explain the interconnections between social and economic changes and the effects and outcomes for localities (Pickvance, 1995; Geddes, 2009), they have ignored the autonomy of political processes in general and of local politics in particular. Regarding local partnerships, a deterministic version of Marxist approach would reduce power conflict to class struggle between capital and labour undermining other interests like community or gender interests, and it would more generally-not locally- explain the role of the partnership development in the capitalistic accumulation process.

Although the contribution of the urban Marxism in the debate of power relations at the local level is deprived of local and political specified analysis towards more abstract economic categories like capital accumulation, class struggle and labour reproduction, it is correct about the big influence of macroeconomic changes on local politics and the fact that the local community have the least control over these changes. Influenced by the classical urban Marxism, I devote a section in chapter 4 to the larger national economic changes that have impacted upon the local community under study and have influenced the partners' motivations regarding collaborative activity.

In the mid '80s, there has been a proliferation of approaches aiming at analysing new trends in urban governance such as the rearticulating of the state- local relationships, the growing influence of policy networks and public private partnerships in local governance, the Europeanisation of public policies and the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in (local) administration (John, 2001:6-14). These theories have offered valuable insights in the study of partnerships because they have focused explicitly either on the

collaboration of actors from the private, public and civil society sectors, mainly in partnerships and networks processes, or on the context from which these processes have emerged.

In particular, in North America, the pluralist/elitist debate has been renewed by the theory of growth machines⁷ and regime theory (Judge, 1995). Both approaches enrich the discussion of community power by focusing “on the broad field of urban development and not just on what affects local government decision-making in this field” (Harding, 1995:42). In this way, they develop a systematic account of “a political economy of place” emphasising the impact of economic development interests on urban governance but remaining away from previous work on urban Marxist theories which stress collective consumption (MacLead and Goodwin, 1999). As Stone (2005: 312) argues “the capacity to build, modify, or reinforce governing arrangements requires resources and skills that are not widely available. Inequalities in that capacity are substantial, systemic and persistent”.

Regime theory which came to prominence with Clarence Stone’s study of Atlanta city in 1989 appears to avoid a simplistic Marxist economic reductionism of urban political analysis, while at the same time managing to focus on urban economic development and the conflict between favoured and disfavoured groups as the growth machines do (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Davies, 2001:17-43). Studying the informal coalitions between local economic interests and political leaders, regime theory offers much more scrutiny in the latter, since it is supported that their relationships with the private sector evolve on mutual dependence. As Stone (2005:326) underlines about these coalitions “Still the nature of local political and civic arrangements carries great weight”.

⁷ Growth machines theory developed by Logan and Molotch (1987) is based on the assumption that there is a group of elites who because of the nature of their business are tied with the city and consequently their goal is the local economic growth. However, they cannot achieve their goals alone and for this reason they create coalitions, the local growth machines, which members profit directly from the development process and by which they create a positive business climate for investment (Harding, 1995). Growth machines theory does not receive much attention by the European scientific community because it focuses explicitly on groups of small property owners and consequently it appears to have strong empirical limitations to settings outside U.S. For this reason, I do not apply any of its analytical concepts and evidence in my research.

Consequently, local political processes and economic structures both matter and it is the understanding of the structuring process by the local actors that regime theory focuses on (Davies, 2001:33-37).

It is also supported by this theory that the power in a city is not given, but it is produced by the negotiation of different groups coming together in order to secure the governability of the city. It comes to that by its distinctive approach of the notion of power as social production. The political power of urban regimes is conceived as the “power to” or the capacity to act, rather than “power over” others or social control as pluralists and elitists had until now considered it. In Stone’s (1993:8) words, political power is about “the production rather than the distribution of benefits”, the result of collaboration “towards effective forms of problem solving” (Stone, 2005:333).

Mossberger and Stoker (2001) argue that since the concept of regime theory has originally been formulated in North America, its transfer to the European context, where local government does not depend heavily on local taxes and the private capital but on national grants, must be made with caution. So when I use the insights of the regime theory, I carefully select these concepts and empirical evidence that could realistically be applied to the European context.

Along with urban regime developments, there is also the emergence of governance theories mainly in the European continent. These theories study “process and actors outside the narrow realm of government” (Kjaer, 2004:1), a networked form of politics. They argue that there is a “growing awareness that governments are not the only crucial actors in addressing major societal issues” (Kooiman, 2002:75); there are new modes of government - society interactions, which involve not state solutions to collective action problems (John, 2001). Networks (Rhodes, 1997), participatory or deliberative governance (Gbikpi and Grote, 2002), metagovernance (Jessop, 2002) and collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash, 2007) are some of the alternative governing styles to the existing hierarchies and markets, which “do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government” but on “steering and

coordination” (Stoker, 1998:17) among resources’ dependent actors from the private, civil and public sector.

In particular, urban governance theories study state decentralisation, multi-level governance and the rise of networks and partnerships in local politics. They focus on the distinction between urban government consisted by the political infrastructures governing local authorities and urban governance which refers to the process of coordinating and steering by various groups from urban society towards collectively defined goals (Pierre, 2005).

Urban regimes and urban governance theories have a lot of common theoretical considerations since both theories examine governing coalitions and networks of actors outside the official realm of urban government for the pursuit of common goals. From the point of view of urban governance, urban regimes are considered to be one model of urban governance in terms of configuration of actors and objectives (Stone, 2005).

In the rest of this section, I will identify the key themes from urban regime and urban governance theories that relate to my research. These themes facilitate the grounding of my partnerships NI study locally. Additionally, I question some dominant normative assumptions of these theories regarding the democratic performance and governability achievements of the collaborative activity avoiding in this way one-sided and rigid approaches to the partnership study.

1.1 Key themes

1.1.1. Learning

In governance processes, “learning seems to be a feature of change” (Bache, 2008:12). Governance theories support that collaborative activity could generate social capital and mutual accommodation by reshaping partners’ values and norms. Actually, this process refers to a process of “thick learning”⁸

⁸ Radaelli (2003) makes a distinction between thin and thick learning. In the first case, the actors only readjust their familiar strategies and goals in order to challenge contextual changes. In thick learning they additionally change their primary values and norms in which they

(Radaelli, 2003:52) where actors not only just rearticulate their familiar strategies in order to challenge contextual changes but they also reshape their primary preferences and goals (Radaelli, 2003: 27-56).

In particular, Schmitter (2002: 53) underlines that “the “code words” of governance tend to be “trust and mutual accommodation”. By collaboration, partners learn about each other’s attitudes, they develop a shared understanding of what they could collectively achieve and they gradually develop a recognition and commitment to the governance process (Schmitter 2002; Ansell and Gash, 2007). Additionally, the negotiations derived from the collaboration serve to generate higher levels of trust among those who participate and allow them to develop a sense of regularity, since partners interact over a long time and they know each other’s intentions (Kooiman, 2002). Trust is also built on the basis of risk sharing. As the responsibilities are diffused among partners, so are the failures. Consequently, negotiation and trust in others for the solution of common problems minimise this risk (Murray, 2005).

The “small wins” concept discussed by Vangen and Huxman (2003) is a representative process of collaborative learning that feed back the collaborative activity (Ansell and Gash, 2007). The authors refer to these small wins as intermediary outcomes of the partnership process that could encourage the trust building and commitment among partners further because they convince them about the achievability of the partnership goals. From a different theoretical antecedent, that of planning theory of urban settings, the research arrives to the same empirical evidence about the power of learning. Gonzalez and Healey (2005) argue that consecutive “episodes” of urban governance when new innovative institutions like partnerships and networks are introduced, induce “cracks” in the existing institutional structures. They do that by penetrating local actors’ cognitive frames of reference through the process of learning and they progressively transform governance discourse practices. As the authors argue, “through involvement in such episodes, people learn the discourses,

challenge their environment. Although this concept was developed for the study of Europeanisation, it could also enrich other conceptual contexts like such as of this study.

practices and values embedded in established governance processes. They may also seek to challenge and change them.” (Gonzalez and Healey, 2005:2061).

These developments are part of a gradual learning process during which the different organisations of the society (state-market-civil society) rearticulate their positions and arrive to a mutual understanding of their relationship. This learning process is based on a big number of benefits derived directly from the collaboration activity: “experience gained, skills developed, networks catalysed, knowledge transferred” (Cropper, 1996:97).

1.1.2 *Resources and actors' motivations*

The problem-solving capacity of the collaboration in governance sheds light on the issue of the relative interdependent resources, able to support the collaborative activity. And when I talk about resources, I do not only refer to the material ones. I also identify the resources that are related with knowledge like expertise and skills, with relationships, like informal contacts and organisational connections and with personal aims, like the commitment shown by the participants (Stone, 2005:329). Talking about partners' resources in urban regimes, Stoker (1995:60) stresses the role of particularly two kinds of resources: first, the possession of strategic knowledge of social transactions and a capacity to act on that knowledge and second, the control of resources that make one an attractive coalition partner.

The resource dependency concept is also related with the purposes and intentions of being member in a partnership. As Stoker argues “recognising the power dependence in collective action means accepting intentions do not always match outcomes” (Stoker, 1998:22). When participants decide to participate, they cannot have complete control over the partnership outcome since it is an interactive process during which the members have to deal with different behaviours, sometimes with unintended effects. Therefore, Stone (2005) affirms that urban regimes analysis treats the relationships among partners as contingent.

Additionally to the unexpected and uncertain outcomes in relation to members' motivations, the primary partners' intentions for participation could be related with the concept of "small opportunities". This concept is very useful empirically. Defining "small opportunities", Stone (2005:316) argues that "most people most of the time are guided, not by a grand vision of how the world might be reformed, but by the pursuit of particular opportunities" placing emphasis on small purposes that guide agent's behaviour. Stone also continues by saying that "the key point behind the small opportunities phenomenon is that motives are more complex than selective material incentives" paying attention to others motivational powers than the material ones. Although financial incentives are critical to motivational power, others like the opportunity to participate in informal policy networks or more altruistic ones, as for example the support of local disadvantage groups could play their role.

1.1.3 Agency/Structure relationship

Regime theory recognises that it is in the capacity of the agent to use or not its resources offered by the urban context in its own way in order to participate in collaborative efforts. So, regimes are not treated as external structures imposed on local actors, however, their operation depends on the capacity of local actors to mediate the collaborative rules (Stone, 1989, 2005). This evidence is also supported empirically by Davies (2001) who based on Stone's argument, found that common structural pressures lead each locality to different partnership practices which means that agency action plays a significant role (Giddens (1984) affirms this in his structuration theory too). Agency has a central role in regime theory; this is empirically evident in the recognition of leaders' behaviour in solving problems of coordination and in forging the collaborative spirit among partners (see also section 3).

1.1.4 Ideas

The regime theory's empirical observation about the "purpose power of a coalition" is a very useful insight for my research. Based once again on the social production model of power, Stone stressed the "power to" of ideas and how these ideas, when are concretised in a regime's purpose, could attract

disparate actors and integrate their different aims. In Stone's own words "purpose is a potential source of "power to" (Stone, 2005:325).

However, it is further interesting to understand how these ideas of collaboration are formed. In some cases, they do not emerge from a collective understanding of the resource independence displayed by the community for the achievement of a common goal but they are mandated by the upper political context, like the state and/or the EU. In this case, the perceptions of resource dependency and the collaboration realm are shaped "by the shadow of the state" (Ansell and Gash, 2007:55) with regulative frameworks and financial motives which do not leave space for alternatives other than collaboration policy solutions. In this case, the purpose and the ideas that support them become a source of "power over".

In the following table, I outline key concepts of each theory of urban politics (object of analysis, power, agency /structure relationship) and its contribution to the NI analysis on local partnerships.

Theories of Urban politics	Object of analysis	Power	Agency/ Structure relationship	Contribution to my research
Pluralist theory	Formal decision-making	Power control (who has the power)	Actors' behaviour	-
Elitist theory	Agenda setting and formal decision-making	Power control (who has the power)	Actors' behaviour	Informal rules: The significance of agenda setting in partnership decision-making
Marxist theory	Capital accumulation and maintenance	Power over (power as conflict)	Actors' behaviour is structurally determined	Institutions and context: The impact of socio-economic structures on partners' behaviour
Urban governance	Partnerships and networks (outside the formal urban government)	Power to (coordination and steering)	Central role to actors and to their interaction (processes)	Agency and rules' interpretation: Learning processes by generation of trust and commitment. Resource dependency
Urban regime	Governing coalitions of resourceful groups	Power to (power as social production)	Central role to actors' behaviour. Recognition of structural limitations (economy, ideology...)	Agency and institutional change: Capacity to act (leaders). Actors' motivations (small opportunities) Informal rules: the purposive role of ideas

Table 6: Key concepts of urban theories and their contribution to the institutional analytical framework of this study

1.2 Critical analysis of the partnership's capacity

Two points are under reconsideration here: the assumption by urban governance theories that a partnership is a primary efficient tool of social coordination and that a partnership consists of a democratic tool of policy-making.

1.2.1. Is there partnership efficiency?

Urban regime and urban governance theories reveal the conditions and effects of blending complementary resources to archive common goals. According to them, there are a number of perceived benefits by the collaboration, there are “collaborative advantages” including pooling of expertise and resources, better coordination, community involvement and efficiency (Huxman, 1996). Behind this “optimistic” conception of collaboration lies a different perception of what is power (as already discussed above). These theories stand for generative power relations among partners rather than the authoritative ones supported by neo Marxist theories in terms of power struggle over resources or the elitist/pluralist of power control. These power relations are developed around common efforts and commitment to collaboration for the production of effective outcomes.

However, due to their “positive” stand vis-a-vis power and collaboration, both theories focus extensively on problem solution and coordination avoiding to mention governance failures. In any way, the prevailing public discourse about partnerships and more general about governance is informed by an “ideal” of cooperative and consensual behaviour⁹. According to Jessop (2002), although governance has considerable advantages compared to the other two modes of social coordination, market and hierarchy, it could also lead to failures where “noise” and “talking shop” weaken the coordinating capacity of governance. For this reason, Jessop proposes the concept of metagovernance as a useful form for helping academics and policy makers to overcome both market, state and governance failure. Metagovernance suggests that there are many ways to

⁹ In 1990, EU and International Organisations like OECD’ policies promoted local partnership arrangements as a new policy tool, which will enhance the economic and social regeneration at the local level. Local partnership specifically appeared to be an essential feature of good governance’s orthodoxy.

respond to governance changes, so the selection of the appropriate mode of coordination is a question contextually specified and problem related.

Starting from this critical perspective of governance as “panacea” to social coordination problems, one significant analytical proposition emerged for the partnerships’ study: partnerships could generate collaborative advantage but they could also produce conflict and undermine the governability capacity (Davies, 2004). Kjaer (2009) refers to the findings of Morgan, Rees and Garmise (1999) in their study of the regional public-private partnership in South Wales in order to demonstrate that the collaborative arrangements do not always succeed in all cities; there are cases when they fail. In particular, in South Wales, the partnership was implemented by a hierarchical top down fashion with the involvement of selective partners. As a result, mistrust emerged among the involved partners and existing vertical networks were reinforced (Kjaer, 2009). Another example of a critical apprehension of the partnerships’ collaborative benefits is that of the urban regeneration partnership in South Italy. Vicari’s (2001) findings suggest that this partnership not only fails to address the main problems of Naples’ city but it also aggravates existing traditional relations of power among a closed circle of economic and political elites.

Following Jessop’s argument, I adopt a critical and realistic analysis of the partnerships’ governing capacities since I do not take for granted the coordinative and problem solving advantages of governance. Regarding power relationships more specifically, I use the two different types of power (power to and power over) in order to identify the possible interactive process and the boundaries/overlaps between antagonistic relationships and power dependencies among the partners.

1.2.2. Do the partnerships have democratic values?

Mathur and Skelcher (2007: 229) argue that governance could create ‘new spaces for democratic activity through which the public and other stakeholders can shape and determine public policy programme implementation’ outside the formal representative democratic institutions of majority voting. In this way,

governance opens the door to a different process of decision-making which is less constrained and formal than the traditional one of the representative democracy offering more flexible arenas of communication with participants being able to voice their concerns and ideas, to argue and negotiate (Wolf, 2002). For instance, the role of managers rather than elected politicians in the front line of communication with citizens and the use of innovative managerial attitude affect citizens' perception of accessibility and responsiveness of public administration (Mathur and Skelcher, 2002). Evidence from research suggests that the "public value management" principles governing a manager's behaviour enhance citizens' participation. In contrast, traditional bureaucratic practices discourage citizens' engagement (Lowndes et al, 2006).

However, legitimation and accountability problems of new governance forms such as partnerships, networks and coalitions are extensively discussed by critical theories (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 150). But before I advance to the analysis of governance' "democratic deficit", it is useful for the understanding of governance legitimation and related problems to mention the distinction put forward by Scharpf (2000) about the three modes of legitimation. By legitimation, I refer to the acceptance and support of the political decisions by the social environment of the political system. Acceptance, trust, support and political justifiability are terms that describe political legitimation (Haus and Heinelt, 2005). Scharpf (2000 quoted in Haus et al, 2005)) identifies three interrelated forms of legitimation: a. input legitimation: getting one's voice heard and one's vote counted by means of citizens participation b. output legitimation: capacity of problem solving and well informed decisions leading to effective outcomes c. throughput legitimation: transparency of institutions and processes. Scharpf claims that each one is not sufficient on its own; instead, there should be a balance between them in order to secure a democratic quality of the public policy.

Coming back to partnerships' democratic deficit, Stoker (1998:24) notes that "Governance recognises the capacity to get things done" giving emphasis on the effectiveness of the governance coordination and on managerial practices. What matters more than the traditional forms and norms that ensure

legitimation is the delivery of public policy outcomes (Skelcher et al, 2005). So governance has been “concentrated primary or even exclusively on increasing the effectiveness of self regulation” (Wolf, 2002:40) i.e. on the provision of output-oriented legitimation. But what happened with the input and throughput legitimation? Jessop (2002) analysing governance failure notes the problems of accountability and biased power structures, while Geddes (2000) analyses the processes of exclusion in citizens’ participation in depth.

Regarding the problem of accountability, partnerships are required to account for their actions in the public arena and they have to establish the tools with which they assure accountability to the public. These tools are the electoral mandate, access to information and transparency (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). However, partnership bodies suffer democratically from the lack of electorate arrangements. Although elected politicians or their appointed executive managers may be members of the partnership, political decisions are made by members who are not subject to electoral mandate. Since partnership institutions demand the adoption of new managerial tools and values, which are led by the private sector, knowledge becomes increasingly specialised and distributed. This process weakens the authority of elected members towards private sectors experts and chief executives (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Consequently, managerialism facilitates discretion by public administrators in managing partnership relationship and policy implementation undermining the legitimacy and accountability of the partnership (Ansell and Gash, 2007).

In their research on governing collaboration in Finnish and Norwegian local governments, Haveri et al (2009) found that network governance is in the hands of officials and experts rather than politicians. Politicians usually lack the skills and time to steer a collaborative activity and as a result they appoint executives to run a partnership due to their advanced management knowledge and skills. Based on the work of Howard and Sweeting (2004) on the legitimation of the council-manager executives in local government, significant insights can be drawn about the legitimation of executives in partnerships. In particular, executives have a low level of input legitimation. They have an indirect legitimation, through the delegation of power by elected politicians.

However, executives have the advantage to be free from political constraints like political parties and voters and so they are more independent to make decisions and run the partnerships.

Moreover, partnerships have to define in detail who is accountable for what (political decision, financial management, implementation). However, in collaborative processes of joint up action and co-funding such as partnerships, the responsibilities and obligations of each partner are diffused and citizens do not understand who is accountable for what. So the lack of transparency creates a problem of democratic control over political processes and accountability to elected politicians (Murray, 2005).

Regarding the biased power structures, governance theory fails to focus on issues of power, conflict and interests inherent in the production of networks (Kjaer, 2009). Regime theory, on the other hand, recognises that actors possess unequal resources, but it is concerned more with the local actors' activities and in the way that they generate the capacity to act rather than the structural limitations of influence on decision-making. However, partnerships and networks are not neutral; in many cases their institutional form is selective in terms of involving citizens (Jessop, 2002; Geddes, 2000). In this research, I recognise that there are considerable power imbalances between partners to the extent that some significant partners may not even participate effectively.

In particular, there are questions about the capacity of partnerships to bring together all the key actors involved in the policy designed and delivered by the partnership. In many cases, partnership decision-making is dominated by corporatist forms. Within these forms, established powerful groups make the decision excluding traditionally weak groups (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that the partnership budgets are not formulated by the partners' shared objectives but are guided by the priorities of the coordinative partners (Murray, 2005:161-162). In the question of which socio-economic interests are involved in partnerships, Geddes' (2000) research on urban partnerships in EU shows the dominant role of the public sector (local

authorities and other public agencies), the formal rather than substantive role of private sector and the limited participation of trade unions.

Moreover, the selective nature of citizens participation is due not only to unequal power structures among partners but also to the same logic of governance with participation justified in terms of its contribution to goal accomplishment “to acceptance of decisions, or to the implementation of these” (Wolf, 2002: 40). Governance has to produce results. Consequently, in most cases, partnerships and networks involve those that are related to the relevant policies, and those who control resources for the problem solving. This process prevails over the ideal of the representative democracy in which everyone has the right to participate at least by voting.

But even if full inclusion is formally secured by the partnership, it is not automatically assumed that it will be realised. The quality and capacity of community participation is questionable (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). According to Geddes (2000: 793), “by no means all partnerships offer direct representation to local community interests; and the effectiveness of community involvement in local partnerships is, at best, extremely variable”. Very often community involvement in partnerships actually means the participation of big players of local associations failing to incorporate small, more informally organised vulnerable groups (Geddes, 2000; Lowndes and Wilson, 2003). Additionally, community partners usually lack the appropriate resources to respond to the partnership bureaucratic processes and influence other partners’ views. In particular, the persistence of effective partnership management by indicators and targets has been criticised to have a negative impact on partners’ integration because it prevents them from being engaged in collaboration since they do not have either the organisational capacity or the willingness to participate (Murray, 2005). Moreover, the lack of solidarity in community interests and of organisational resources could prevent the equal participation in the partnership board (Geddes, 2000).

In conclusion, in partnership processes, there is not a balanced account of input and output legitimization with input legitimization lagging behind in terms of

equal opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making. It is this democratic deficit by electorate mandate that requires capacity building policies that secure community participation. Capacity building is related to the development of appropriate skills and resources for citizens and organisations to participate in partnerships. According to Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:171-172), community capacity is determined by a number of factors related to the individual such as skills and confidence and structural such as the local social capital and the culture of the participant organisations. The extent to which these inadequacies are effectively addressed depends a lot on the capacity of the statutory members of the partnership.

Based on the above analysis, I apply in my research the Scharpf (2000) typology of legitimation (input, throughput and output legitimation) by discussing the role of executives, the level of local citizens inclusion and the purpose that serves the community involvement i.e. ideal democratic rights versus functional goal achievement needs. Furthermore, I identify partners' practices that strengthen/prevent input and throughput legitimation and the extent to which the collaboration processes increase local social capital and consolidate local autonomy.

Section 2: A review of the neo institutional literature on local partnership

Regime theory comprises in its synthesis elements from political economy, pluralism and institutionalism (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). And it is because of this familiarity with institutionalism that urban regimes could offer useful insights on the study of local partnerships as institutions. The focus of regime theory on informal coordination among institutions, internal dynamics of coalition building, fragmentation of power and the synthesis of structure and agency (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001: 813) shares a lot of common elements in the way that NI theory and the normative neo institutionalism, in particular, approach the object of their analysis. For instance, Stone's (2005) approach of small opportunities and gradual change has a lot in common with the incremental institutional change supported by normative neo institutionalism. It is argued that small wins in collaborative capacity can support habits of reciprocity and trust and lead to the penetration of partnerships in other areas of local politics and create new relations of interdependence.

Despite the kinship between urban regime theory and institutional theory, regime theory remains much localised by neglecting national and international economic and political institutions (Davies, 2001: 33). It emphasises the study of political processes and agent's behaviour by oversimplifying the economic, ideological, and political institutional configuration within which the regime processes are embedded. Additionally, the governance theory fails to recognise the role of institutions and their normative character, the values, norms and ideas that are embedded with (Kjaer, 2009:137) As Pierre notes, urban governance should include in its analytical model the extent to which horizontal and vertical institutions make a difference in the governance processes (Pierre, 2005, 1999). "Political institutions can play a great many different roles in governance" (Pierre, 2005: 453). Indeed, Stoker (1998) underlines that government can play different roles in governance, from being the coordinator to being just a partner.

It is only recently, in the '90s, that urban politics theorists turn their attention to the ways in which the theories of new institutionalism could illuminate the study of urban politics. Their reserve towards the new institutionalism theory derives from the historical evolution of the discipline of "urban politics" itself which has been constructed in opposition to the traditional version of institutional theory (Lowndes 2001; Pierre, 2011:15-17). According to Lowndes (2009), the theoretical turn of interest corresponds to major substantial changes in urban politics, which make NI approach particularly appropriate for their study. These changes are inherent in the partnership development itself since partnerships are considered as an organisational manifestation of governance among others. In the rest of the section, I introduce the key themes around which a NI approach of local partnerships has developed.

2.1 Formal and informal rules

In the last three decades, mainly in North-West Europe, there has been a proliferation of new institutional rules that govern local politics due to the fragmentation of the elected urban government and the simultaneous development of informal policy networks and partnerships. Many of these rules are not controlled by the official local government rules (Rhodes 1997; Lowndes 2001, 2005) but by informal constraints developed in these collaborative spaces. Many NI researchers have identified empirical evidence of the informal rules' power in local partnerships.

In their study of urban regeneration partnerships, Lowndes (2001) and Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) find evidence of the power of informal relations constituting partnerships. Lowndes (2001: 1963) argues that "the sustainability of interagency relationships over time depended upon the underlying presence of network-style rules and relationships". In terms of citizens' participation, Klausen et al (2005: 200) analysing the community involvement in urban partnerships in different countries, mention the distance between formal rules and actual participation. Verifying Geddes' (2000) conclusions, they report that although full inclusion is a requirement of partnerships, only "a handful of

residents actually take place, so “full inclusion” related only to the opportunity to participate”.

In other cases where all the partners are in equal decision-making positions, actually the decision-making processes are uneven tending to favour more organised interests than less organised ones. Indeed, Mathur and Skelcher (2007) evaluating the democratic performance of network governance, mention that the evaluation of the quality of democracy has to include the informal practices of the actors as they are influenced by the contextual norms and values. “How the collaboration actually works is a matter of pragmatics arising from day to day practices” (Mathur and Skelcher, 2007: 234) and reflects the meanings that actors give to what is democracy. The importance of rules-in-use has also been demonstrated in the study of Lowndes et al (2006) on the level of citizens’ participation in eight British local authorities. It is argued that although formal structures were similar in these local authorities, the way that these structures were operationalised in the daily practices of political and administrative personnel as well as civic organisations impact upon the citizens’ willingness to participate.

So, a NI perspective does not treat partnerships as organisations characterised by prescribed formal regulations and principles but as institutional arrangements in which formal and informal rules embedded by the socio-economic reality interact with agencies’ incentives and practices.

2.2 From staticness to process

As mentioned above in the discussion about metagovernance, governance is not simply a next stage of government. There is greater variety of governance modes in urban politics. In a governance arrangement, market, hierarchy and networks modes could co-exist and in some cases mix with each other.

Governance is rather an “instituted process” during which old and new, formal and informal, top down and bottom up hierarchy and networking coexist (Lowndes, 2009). So, the NI approach can identify the interactions between them and the way that the “players”, agency and institutions, play the “game” of politics.

In the same aforementioned study of Lowndes and Skelcher (1998), this procedural character within partnerships was highlighted. The authors analyse partnerships not as a stagnant and static organisations but as processes involving stages of development. In particular, they distinguish stages in their development and they pay attention to interactions among them. The authors argue that partnerships are organisations shaped not only by a networking style of governance but also by the hierarchy and market form of social coordination.

Following Lowndes and Skelcher argument, Davies (2004: 582) also find that regeneration partnerships comprise old (hierarchical) and new (network) styles of governability, while Whitehead (2007) in his study of the organisational structure and working practices of urban partnerships find that governmental hierarchies and local neo corporatism continue to embody urban partnerships in day to day working. So, when researchers study a partnership development, they have to adopt a rather conceptual openness for analysing the potential political mix of social coordination that appears in the particular partnership development.

2.3 Institutional interdependence and ideas

Additionally, in the last three decades, European integration and states' new political and managerial strategies have supported multi-level governance horizontally and vertically, which involved different geographical levels and different actors in policy-making. In this context, the institutional infrastructures became more complex and interdependent (Ansell, 2006). Europeanisation theories, particularly those of new institutionalism (mainly historical and sociological institutionalism) and network analysis, which as Bache comments are "institutionalist by nature" (Bache, 2008:12), have enriched the NI approach of local partnerships by analysing institutional configurations.

Some theories from the Europeanisation literature (Bache and Marshall, 2004; Marshall, 2002; Cowles et al, 2001) focus on the impact of the European integration on domestic structures, like social capital, institutional

configurations, local traditions and conventions of civic engagement and the ways that these “mediating domestic factors” affect and reshape EU politics. By saying “the impact of European integration”, they refer to a set of processes through which the EU political, social and economic dynamics, i.e. formal and informal norms, rules’ regulations, and practices, become part of the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures and public policies (Radaelli, 2000). The exact patterns of interactions are not specified as part of the definition but are instead kept as free parameters to be examined empirically in each member state (Cowles et al, 2001). Since I deal with Community Initiatives (CIs) programmes, these theories have a great analytical utility for my research because they provide me with concepts and evidence on the way that EU sets the rules and how the state and the local government adapt/mediate these rules. In this way, I can understand the multi-level institutional configuration in which the partnerships of this study have evolved.

Bache (2000) argues that variations exist not only to domestic politics but also to the pressures coming from the EU level. During the process of Europeanisation, three factors are important: 1. the ways of policy transfer, 2. the content of policy transfer and 3. the agent that transfers the ideas and practices from EU to a member state. Regarding the ways of transfer, he distinguishes between voluntary and coercive transfer. In the first case, policy makers freely choose to adopt policies or practices from EU while in the second case, EU forces the member states to adopt a particular policy or practice opposed by key state and society actors. In relation to content, it is suggested that complex policies or practices may be more difficult to transfer than simple ones. This is related to the fact that each policy environment is different and anything transferred could meet resistance. Additionally, complex policies and practices need more stock of resources (political, bureaucratic, and financial), which is not always available to the recipient country. Finally, in CIs’ programmes, the EC is the most important agent of policy transfer. EC has the legitimacy to organise, support and control policy transfer and it is responsible for the development of learning mechanisms, which will support changes.

Regarding domestic factors, the concept of “norm entrepreneurs” (Borzel and Risse, 2000) has attracted my attention because it could be related to the national and local technocrats of the partnerships under study who promoted collaborative activity. The norm entrepreneurs mobilise at the domestic level and persuade others to redefine their interests and identities according to the EU policies under transfer. Two types of entrepreneurs could be distinguished: a. the epistemic community, which is usually a network of actors legitimated to provide scientific knowledge and ideas (e.g. national technocrats) and b. the advocacy or principled issue networks (e.g. environmentalists).

Evaluation studies of the partnership principle of Structural Funds demonstrate that there are considerable variations in effective partnership operation across member states caused by the pre-existing territorial distribution of power and the degree of prior experience in partnerships (Keller et al, 1999). These findings verify the research questions of the NI approaches about the influential role of institutional legacies and institutional configuration in a political institution:

a. Prior experience of partnership operation in EU.

In the cases of member states that had little experience on cooperative modes of policy-making, EU regulation had often initiated the operation of partnership forms. However, in these countries like Greece, local partnerships adjusted to EU imposed programmes and priorities without being fully equipped with skills and capacities to enter such collaborations (Geddes, 2000). For member states which had more experience of partnerships, EU regulation was seen to reformulate the partnership along more innovatory lines. This argument is directly related to the institutional legacies argument of NI theorists.

NI case study research has demonstrated that prehistory of conflicts and unsuccessful efforts of collaboration “creates a vicious cycle of suspicion, distrust and stereotyping” (Ansell and Gash, 2007: 553). According to these authors, although high conflict is not necessarily a prohibit of collaboration, especially when there is a high interdependence of resources, previous

antagonism among partners creates low trust and low trust in its turn creates low commitment and strategies of manipulation and miscommunication. The research evidence by Andersen and Pierre (2010) about the influence of previous collaborations on the existing ones due to geographical proximity and shared history verifies this argument. Analysing inter-municipal cooperation, they argue that the involved municipalities were entrapped “in a network of territorially embedded exchanges” which made it extremely difficult to escape and move autonomously and isolated from others’ actions. This network was based not only on interdependence on territorial defined resources but also on common values, memories and identities.

b. Decentralisation of public administration.

The territorial and functional division of powers and resources plays a significant role for the partnerships’ successful adaptation. For example, in centralised states, the structure of intergovernmental relations is expected to be dominated by vertical networks in which local government depends on higher levels of government for resources. Vertical structures are usually hierarchically and bureaucratically organised bringing together actors in unequal power relations and inter-dependence. This process also leaves little space for horizontal cooperation at the local level with representation of local economic and social actors and it discourages the built up of social trust (Paraskevopoulos, 2001).

This last point is very important. State but also government of all geographical scales are significant factors of examination in local partnerships. Unlike Rhodes’ (1997) new governance as “governing without government”, Jessop (2002: 202) argues that “governments (on various scales) are becoming more involved in organising the self organisation of partnerships, networks and governance regimes”. The national and local governments provide rules, information and knowledge, resolve disputes between different interests and provide strategic directions (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999: 522). In his research on urban regeneration partnerships in U.K., Davies (2004) found evidence that there have been cases when central government funding stimulated action and collaborative efforts in the local level but the procedures

and conditions of this funding have also worked against the local autonomy because the state continued being in control by manipulating the partnership institutions.

Derkzen's (2010) study of rural partnerships in the Netherlands and Wales find that the level of consultation and participation in decision-making in each country was highly dependent on the national policy context, which determined in each case who was allowed to participate as a partner at the local level. In the Netherlands, the narrow national policy of rural development directed urban partnerships to excluding newly emergent groups. However the level of decision-making was high due to the established cooperative culture. By contrast, in Wales, the "joined up" ideology led to greater inclusion of local groups but there was a stronger power dependency during decision-making due to the traditional role of public sector in local governance.

Finally, NI theories on local partnerships have identified one more institutional interdependency of local partnerships, that of ideas. The ideational factors and their contained rationalities infuse the values and practices of partners. There are many NI studies that explain partners' practices through the way that they have embedded dominant political and administrative discourses about collaborative activity (Davies, 2001, 2004). In particular, Davies (2004) identifies the penetration of partnership ideology in the politico-administrative culture of local authorities and community and how it generates a habit of partnership, i.e. an ideological commitment to collaboration, which results more and more in partnership activity. The same evidence is derived from the study of Andersen and Pierre (2010) on inter-local co-operations in Norway. According to them, one main motivation for the municipalities to join collaborative efforts is the reaffirmation that partnership is a good thing and therefore they have to respond positively to the strong expectation from the state to promote collaboration.

Following the path of "discursive institutionalism", Skelcher, Smith and Mathur (2005) go deeper in the analysis of this dominant discourse by identifying three contesting in some cases patterns of framing the partnership

concept in the politico administrative discussion: 1. managerial 2. consociational and 3. participatory. The managerial discourse gives more discretion on managerial action and the public's participation is integrated in terms of potential in facilitating outcomes. In this context, the desire is to secure a stable operating environment in the detriment of participation and accountability. The second discourse supports negotiation and agreement over conflicts and antagonisms in an elite decision-making structure. This collective agreement is facilitated by the technification of solutions and their treatment by professionals and experts that reduce the values of different ideologies and conflicts and consequently de-politicised the decision-making. Additionally, the shaping of the agenda by group leaders in private accommodates the common agreement. The third discourse implies that all the community has equal opportunities and power for working together for a better future. In the latter, an emphasis is given to the inclusiveness of the partnerships and the transparency in procedures.

The authors argue that the partnership governance is dominated by the managerial discourse and it moderates its democratic deficit by elements of consociationalism and participatory discourses. As they underline "partnerships are limited through the dominating managerial principles of entrepreneurial pragmatism and practices of performance (Skelcher et al, 2005: 20).

In conclusion, I focus on the role of EU in partnerships. I treat EU, among other variables, as an independent variable of the larger institutional context and I try to investigate in which way it impacts on the partnership process so as changes would not have occurred without this influential factor. In particular, I look at the particular features of the CI programmes (i.e. (clear/unclear rules, simple/complex rules, role of the EC as agent of policy transfer) and the domestic institutional factors that enable/prevent the partnership operation. Moreover, I take into account the state and its changing relationships with lower levels. I also study the established horizontal institutional configuration of local government with other local institutions like local interest informal networks and civil society organisations. Finally, I look for prevailing meanings of collaboration in formal and informal rules that guide the

partnerships and the way that this discourse(s) has/have shaped the interaction between rules and partners' actions.

2.4 Institutional dynamics

The NI study of local partnerships enhances the discussion about the dynamics of local institutional changes. How and when does the change occur and can one finally talk about an actual change or is it the rehabilitation “of the familiar” that leads to same outcomes? Lowndes (2009:97) precisely notes that “in a period of frenetic activity directed at “modernising” or “reinventing” urban governance, neo-institutionalists are able to distinguish between organisational and institutional change”. In the latter, the goal is not just to highlight formal structural changes but the actual rules as they are shaped by the existing norms and values of the context.

The dynamic character of partnerships as institutions that lead to change and/or to the reproduction of the old practices and cultures due to specific spatial and historic (local) governance context is evident in a number of studies that use institutional insights to their analysis. In her research on the degree of British urban governance changes since the '80s, Lowndes (2005: 292) bypassing the contrasting conceptions of change and inertia, reflects “about the coexistence and interactions of force for continuity and change”. Thus, she reveals the incremental processes of change by identifying various strategies that seek to respond to the changing environment and protect partners' interests. Hastings (1999) in his study of the potential transformative power of partnerships wonders whether transformation does really take place during partnership processes and to what extent the partners' initial objectives and values do actually change.

Consequently, which rules of the past and present matter more during partnership process is an empirical question which can not be answered theoretically once and for all but it must be tested each time in the special circumstances in which a partnership is developed. For instance, the low institutional innovation of partnerships due to the embodiment of traditional institutional cultures is mentioned in the study of Vazquez et al (2009) on the

urban regeneration partnerships in Portugal. The authors argue that these partnerships did not finally induce changes in the governance of urban spaces. By contrast, they preserved the characteristics of the dominant administrative culture and they failed to express the restructuring processes of intergovernmental relations. However, they underline that although remaining limited, learning processes from experience in other contexts has produced some soft changes in the local governance processes.

Davies (2004:582) argues that the proliferation of partnerships are not generated “strong institutions based on informal modes of constraints” between partners but they are dominated by the persistence “of public sector -style organisations structured hierarchically” securing in this way the path dependent course of policy-making. Haveri et al (2009) also find that network governance is still based on traditional mechanisms of steering. However, the development of informational structures and the new role of managers could be a challenge for new governance practices. The way that the past dependencies could also become opportunities for change has been demonstrated in the study of the Mexican urban governance by Guarneros-Meza (2009). She argues that a number of institutional legacies like corporatism “have become both opportunities that prompt changes and obstacles that hinder reforms for becoming part of the status quo” (Guarneros-Meza, 2009:11)

Section 3: The leadership role in partnership

In this section, I am looking at the leadership role in partnership processes. This research task offers me the opportunity to enrich theoretically my knowledge about the role of agency in institutions and the way it enacts the rules of the game. Although, throughout the research emphasis is given on the agency by addressing questions of motivations, resources and actual behaviour, I focus exclusively on leaders' actions because their strategic behaviour demonstrates more clearly the way that the agency could sustain, change and/redirect the formal and informal rules of an institution. In most cases, rules are developed and changed by powerful actors without denying that the everyday interpretation of rules could also lead to gradual changes (as shown in the first chapter).

Indeed, the identification of diverse agents' strategic behaviour is facilitated by the partnership working itself. Multi-partners' collaborations with the involvement of multi-levels of government generate a sharing leadership, which is not identical to one person leading, traditionally the political leader, but it is dispersed among various leaders from different origins and different geographical levels. In this way, my focus is not restricted to one person only, but to a small group, which enhances a better understanding of agent strategic behaviour in partnership. To map leadership in local partnerships, this section is divided in two parts: The first part outlines leadership definition and its main features in general, while the second part includes a discussion about leadership in local partnerships.

In this analysis, beyond political science approaches, I draw from concepts of public management theories too, in order to expand my knowledge on leaders in political institutions. Although from a different intellectual tradition and normative in its principles, public management theory has developed models of leadership behaviour in depth. Hambeton (2005) argue that a multi-disciplinary approach is essential, if we want to understand leadership within local partnerships.

3.1 Understating leadership

Leadership literature suggests that to one or to the other extent both leaders and context matters (Hambleton, 2005). This literature reproduces the existing discussion about agent/structure relationship in leadership in a more explicit way. (see chapter 1, section 2). As a result, leadership refers to the institutionalisation of leaders' role as well as the personal enactment of that role. As Judd (2000: 959) argues “urban leaders have the ability to make choices, but within the parameters imposed both by local political arrangements and by external forces.”

Referring exclusively to political leadership, Elgie (1995) demonstrates the interrelation between context and behaviour in the following figure.

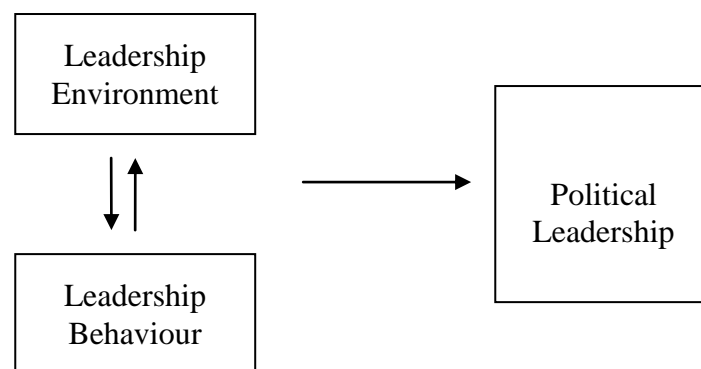


Figure 7: The interactive approach to political leadership by Elgie (1995: 8)

Adapting Elgie's figure in my case study, partnership leadership is defined by the skills and the personal disposition of the leaders to act, as well as by the institutional design of the partnerships, which encourage particular leadership styles and practices.

3.1.1 Leadership definition

In relation to leadership definition, Leach and Wilson (2000: 11) argue that the main essence of leadership “is the ability to inspire or persuade others to follow a course of action when there is at least some initial resistance to following.” This definition suggests that leadership is a purposeful activity, it operates interactively with a body of followers and it is a form of power production

(Stone, 1995: 97). Regarding the latter feature, Burns (1978) draws a very helpful distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. In the first case, the leader gives a much stronger role to followers, in that leader and followers engage in mutually dependent exchanges (symbolic, economic, etc).

Transformational leaders are viewed primarily in terms of their ability to transform their organisation and the initial patterns of transactions with their followers. Burns argues that leaders are more about transforming institutions rather than motivating followers to follow. It is the former approach that attracts my research interest since it is related to the agent's indirect power to shape institutional change as discussed already in chapter one. In particular, the transactional leader of an institution seeks to optimise outcomes within the "rules of the game" while a transformational leader seeks to change the "rules of the game" (i.e. the institutional design) in order to expand horizons according to their own vision.

3.1.2 Identification of leaders

Speaking from a neo institutional theory, identifying leaders and their tasks in a partnership is a process which is not only derived from the constitutional or legally established rules of power distribution, but also from the informal rules that strengthen the ability of some individuals to exercise power in decision-making. In particular, the focus should not only be on the legal powers of the leadership office holder but also on norms and conventions that define who is the real leader and their "appropriate behaviour". Consequently, it is important to look for the formal/informal rules' configuration that shapes the leadership role in a political institution (Leach and Lowndes, 2007). For instance, some political cultures accept more authoritarian leadership than others and this difference may have implications on who becomes a successful leader and the way that they exercise their leadership tasks.

So, if leadership position and behaviour are mediated by formal and informal institutional rules, leaders could be identified in two ways: by their position and by their reputation. In the first case, leaders may be identified by the

formal position that they hold. In the second case, leaders are identified by others who think that the former demonstrate a leader's behaviour (Purdue, 2001). This suggests among others that leaders could officially have a leadership position, but it depends on their desire to exercise leader' tasks (Stone, 1995).

In order to classify the leadership environment and behaviour, the leadership literature uses the terms leadership type and style. By leadership type, one refers to the way the position of leaders is institutionalised in a political organisation; by leadership style, one refers to the enactment of leadership roles by those actors who are formally or informally holders of a leadership position.

3.2 Leadership in local partnership

At a conceptual level, three sets of institutions that have the capacity to exercise leadership role in collaborative arrangements can be distinguished: 1. local government itself, 2. the business sector and 3. the network of civic organisations (Stone, 1989 quoted in Hambleton, 2005). Within government, there are two sets of players: elected politicians and executives. Elected local politicians are seen as the main leadership figures in local partnerships due to their electorate mandate and the traditional involvement of local government to the delivery of local services. Especially in multi-level partnerships in which EU and central government are involved, leadership roles could also be attributed to higher levels of governance; to EU officers and to central state executives.

Moreover, the potential leaders that come from these sectors could hold a formal position (chairman) or have the reputation of a leader among partnership members. Finally, one has to keep in mind that leaders could be different in different stages of the partnership development. For example, in the partnership initiation, central state organisations could have a leading role, while in the partnership establishment the leadership role could be in the mayor's hands.

In the rest of this section, I analyse the political and executive leadership by illustrating some of their distinct features and recent changes. While I acknowledge other categories of local leadership like community leadership and business leadership in local partnerships, I do not discuss them because they have not emerged in my case study.

In an institutional sense, political leaders are those that “hold a position at the top of the city’s administration or political bodies” and are “publicly visible in what they do and politically accountable for their actions” (Haus and Heinelt, 2005: 27). Consequently, political position in local authority and public accountability distinguish local political leaders from other leaders who can be very influential in partnerships (such as officers, leaders of interests groups, community leaders etc.).

In the last decades, there have been some significant shifts in urban politics that have reshaped the context in which local political leadership takes place (John, 2001). The political leadership in local partnership could not have been viewed independently from these changes. More or less, the leaders in local partnerships constitute part of local policy and they encompass with smaller or bigger differentiations the power relations and the existing political and social institutional rules that define the leadership in the locality. Finally, although these changes are not so obvious in the Greek reality, the CIs partnerships under study initiate and strengthen practices towards these new directions. Two main developments in urban politics, those of urban governance and new management practices and tools (see also section 1) have had profound implications for the exercise of local leadership. Regarding the first one, the complex environment of urban governance has led to the following changes on local leadership:

First, there has been an increased dependence of political leadership on the external environment. This has created a need for a more collaborative and inclusive leadership style (Hambleton, 2002; John, 2001). From a hierarchical model of the city boss determining policy and imposing to bureaucrats, leaders have to move to more outward and facilitative styles (Hambleton 2005;

Murray, 2005). “Leadership in collaborative arrangements differs from leadership within single organisations given the need to develop an integrative capacity” (Murray, 2005:157). The key distinction here lies between the traditional exercise of power, to act authoritatively (“power over”) and the desire to act through empowerment (“power to”) of followers. In the latter “power is not about the direct exercise of detailed influence or control over decision-making, but rather it is about giving direction and then mobilising the resources necessary to ensure that the vision is fulfilled” (Gains et al , 2009: 93). Williams and Sullivan (2011) analyse the facilitator’s role even further by emphasising the leaders’ capacity to create/sustain processes of collaborative learning.

At a normative level, this new leadership style in partnerships could be seen in the following practices: a. discover and listen the different views of the partners, b. empower the neglected voices, particularly those derived from the community sector because there is evidence of their marginalisation from partnership interests, c. have a vision and commitment and finally d. create opportunities for others to exercise power (Hambleton, 2005).

Second, the organisational fragmentation within local authorities and the emergence of diverse objectives, often competitive, create an increasing need for strong central direction. In fact, political leaders need to create a strong proactive strategic agenda that oversees the extended fragmentation of non-elected organisations and improve the quality and speed of decision-making (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). The development and endorsement of a strategic direction requires genuine skills of management beyond ‘governing’ (in a traditional way), including setting standards, strategic aims and performance evaluation.

However, in this new institutional framework, leaders can have contradictory roles, on the one hand generating collaboration, inclusiveness and consensus, while on the other hand, exercising strategic policy by a powerful manipulation of the diverse interests (Hambleton, 2005). As Vangen and Huxman (2003: 71) note there is a “need to deliver on things as well as getting together”.

Finally, there is a pattern of dispersed leadership. In this new environment of local polity, “power is fragmented and this means that leadership is a process of connecting the fragments” (Hambleton 2005: 201). Different groups of local society like elected politicians, community representatives, business leaders and appointed executives could be found to have a leadership role in collaboration and leaders have to coordinate all these different social positions and behaviours.

The second development, the introduction of new public management tools in local administration, has led to the reinforcement of chief executives that break the traditional distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation. This leads to a more shared leadership with the mayor, the council and the chief executives making the political decisions collaboratively. As it has already been discussed (see also section 1), the chief executive has become “a dynamic executive leader who is capable of working closely with elected members and brokering community interests” (Hambleton, 2002: 163). While the political leaders move towards a more innovative entrepreneurial and managerial role, the chief executives extend their role beyond their traditional task of serving the administration towards a more political task of working closely and influencing elected bodies and the community.

Cross-national research on local government chief executives has drawn a distinction between two styles of executive leadership. There are the classical and the political bureaucrats (Klausen and Magnier, 1998). At the one end of the spectrum, political bureaucrats are more concerned with “doing the right thing”. Their practices include the formulation of ideas, offering political advice to mayors, influencing the decision-making for efficient solutions and being aware of the citizens’ views. At the other end, classical bureaucrats are more concerned with “doing things right” such as the everyday management and the provision of technical advice to mayors.

Transplanting the political bureaucrat features in a partnership operation, chief executives can play a decisive role in leading partnership by adopting the following practices: a. providing strategic advice to politicians about the

operation and the future of the partnership, b. managing processes relating to decisions like conflict resolution and establishing confidence (Haveri et al, 2009), c. making decisions on behalf of political leaders especially in the day to day partnership activities and finally d. communicating and influencing other organisations, especially the local community.

Moving outside the local level, this type of executive leadership can be exercised by higher levels of government. For example, in EU funded projects, state administrators can play a decisive leadership role in helping set the agenda and facilitate the EU rules to be adapted to the domestic environment (see more on section 2).

As aforementioned about the three types of legitimation (section 1), the executive's leadership legitimacy is questionable. However, with regards to throughput and output legitimation specifically, things get better. Executives in partnership may appear in the local media frequently and are thus viewed by the citizens as the key decision makers. They do that not only because they lead the partnership, but also because they usually are the contact persons of beneficiaries regarding partnership actions. In relation to output legitimation, executives have the capacity to produce efficient outcomes due to their professional skills and impartiality. It is in the output legitimation that their power to lead the partnership lies mainly.

Finally, we could identify two important institutional factors that determine leadership scope: the level of partnership institutionalisation and the conditions under which it has emerged (Sweeting et al, 2004). Regarding the former, in cases when partnerships have previously been rare or non-existent, as in the Greek case, the promotion of working together and the coordination of partners are the main tasks for leaders.

Regarding the latter, Sweeting's et al (2004) typology about the categorisation of the level of leaders' institutional dependence on partnerships could usefully be applied to my case study. If the partnership greatly depends on the institutional rules by which leaders operate, the leaders' style can account for

less. In cases in which the partnership is more autonomous from its constitutional contexts, leaders' behaviour could play a more important role. This is directly related to the discussion developed in the first chapter regarding the revisable character of rules; hence the degree of freedom it allows for partners to act independently. Sweeting et al, (ibid) typology distinguishes four models of leadership:

1. Designed and focused leadership: formal partnership rules clearly identify and recognise a leadership position by providing a high responsibility to the person occupying this position. The influence of personal style is very strong in the partnership and among the followers.
2. Pivotal and integrative leadership: the leader's style counts for less because how the partnership is working depends on the external policy environment and on complicated and bureaucratic arrangements. Leaders struggle to achieve consensus in a situation of multi-organisational bargaining.
3. Invisible, implicit, fragmented: There is a vacuum in leadership due to the complexity of partnership regarding confusion on direction, shifting membership and extensive delegation of responsibilities.
4. Formative and emergent leadership: Leadership is driven by the exigencies of implementation rather than strategic direction. Leaders get on with the job building networks and trust and forging the relationship with followers for the delivery of action. Consequently, in this case, leadership means "making things happen" (Sweeting et al, ibid: 361).

Conclusions

This chapter outlined the main theories of urban politics and it attempted to link these with the NI approach. It identified four key issues- learning, ideas, resources and actors' motivations, structure/agency relationship- as a terrain of conceptual exchange between the NI approach and urban regime/urban governance theories. Based on neo Marxist theories of urban politics, it critically analysed two “collaborative advantages” of local partnerships, those of efficiency and democracy further.

Moreover, it reviewed the existing literature on NI local partnership studies and it drew from their empirical observations in order to scale the broader research questions of NI theory locally. It identified four features of local partnerships that have added up to my research design: informal rules, processes, institutional interdependence and dynamics of institutional change.

Finally, in the last section, the role of leaders in collaborative spaces was discussed. It was argued that both context and agent's behaviour shape leadership scope. Moreover, it outlined recent trends in local politics and their implications in the changing role of local political and executive leadership generally in policy-making and particularly in partnerships. It provided further evidence from empirical research on what constitutes an effective leader in local partnerships in terms of their personal traits and of the particular institutional context.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter will outline the methodological design of my research. It will present the epistemological approach in which my research is embedded, the discussion of the research strategy that has been employed and finally the research methods that have been selected for the pursuit of my research goals. It will also consider the difficulties, the challenges and the limitations of my research design.

Section 1: Ontological and epistemological approach

The first step in the methodology design is the clarification of the ontological and epistemological position of the research since this position shapes “what we study as social scientists, how we study it and what we think we can claim as result of that study” (Furlong and Marsh, 2010: 189). In particular, ontological questions focus on the nature of reality and epistemological questions on how we can learn about this reality; they are related with theories of knowledge.

1.1 The main debate

Although there are various ontological and epistemological approaches, in some cases their boundaries are blurred and contested. However, we could distinguish two common traditional schools of thought regarding the understanding of social reality. One is variously labelled as positivistic, natural based science or even simple scientific; the other as interpretive or ethnographic, among several other labels (Robson, 1993: 18-20). These two schools have different starting points for their research, which lead to different methods of data collection and analysis. For positivism, social reality is external and objective and, for that reason, the purposes of social science are simply to stick to what we can observe and measure objective facts.

The starting point of positivist social research is the hypothetico-deductive approach. According to this, the researcher formulates a hypothesis, a testable proposition about a relationship between two or more events, which has been deduced by the researcher from theory; they then operationalise the hypothesis

in order to proceed to the testing of this hypothesis in reality. In the last step, the researcher infers the implications of findings for the specific theory. Consequently, for the positivistic approach, theory is regarded as the starting point.

On the other hand, interpretivism requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of reality. It proposes that there are many interpretations of reality based on the specific meaning that each subject attributes to their acts and to the acts of others. So, for the interpretative approach, the interconnections between events emerge from the participants' views themselves. Additionally, scientists cannot avoid affecting those phenomena they study, because they operate within the social construction in which these events emerge. Indeed, there is a double interpretation going on: the researcher provides an interpretation of others interpretations. As a result, open-ended research design and qualitative techniques of data collection have been developed to understand how people interpret their world. The major difference with the positivistic approach is that theories and concepts tend to arise from the research. They come after data collection rather than before (Bryman, 2008: 13-21; Furlong and Marsh, 2010).

Although these two research traditions constitute a long-term battlefield in philosophy of sciences and in social sciences, it has often been noted (very accurately from my point of view) that many of the differences between the two traditions are in the minds of philosophers and theorists rather than in the practices of researchers (Robson, 1993: 18-20). It is actually a misunderstanding "to imagine that theory is altogether abstract while empirical knowledge is somehow perfectly correct" (Galhoun, 1996: 432). On the one hand, social science theories depend on at least some information about how the society works and, on the other hand, the "empirical social sciences" rely on concepts that are necessary to constitute facts and give explanations.

However, in any case, this does not mean that it is possible to find a synthesis of all based on agreements over the fundamental issues or to totally avoid the questions of ontology and epistemology in our research. As Furlong and March

(2010:210) argue “ontological and epistemological positions are better viewed as a skin, not a sweater” that could be changed from one research to the other.

1.2 Research approach

Although my approach to reality belongs broadly speaking to the positivistic side, it is far away from its traditional, even naive, approach of simple summation of tested propositions that lead to empirical generalisations. Instead, I am sympathetic to a more realistic position of positivism, that of critical realism, developed in the mid of '60s by the Frankfurt School which criticised the scientific empiricism of positivism and it has been significantly influenced by the interpretative discussion. According to them, the external world exists but in relative independence of the specific interpretations that offers the agents. As such, this position acknowledges the utility of both quantitative and qualitative data. Both types of data help to identify and understood the external reality as well as the social construction of the reality.

Additionally, this strand pays attention to research consistency and the power of logical expression in the selected methods and data analysis (Outhwaite, 1996; Burnham, 2008: 9-37). As Popper characteristically has put it “The old scientific ideal of episteme-of absolutely certain demonstrable knowledge-has proved to be an idol.[...] Only in our subjective experiences of conviction, in our subjective faith, can we be “absolutely certain” (Popper, 2008: 280).

In pragmatic terms, the critical realism leads me to adopt a reflective attitude to reality, which means that as a researcher I have to take a critical stance to the empirical facts and be aware of the hermeneutic tradition in order to discover new areas of the field that could enrich or revise theory. Thus, I avoid the risk to impose predefined concepts in the field hence missing the ‘inductive grounding’ that is needed (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 208). Although I formulated some theoretical propositions at the beginning of the research, some of them have been changed during the data collection due to differences from my initial theoretical assumptions, partners ’ interpretations and perceptions of the reality. As a result, my theoretically derived propositions have been

enriched by the integration of particular respondents' values, ideas and norms about the reality.

Furthermore, since it is difficult to know reality with certainty, my goal is to understand as much as I can with the appropriate methods. So, my concern during the research design has been to be able to justify logically the conclusions of my research whatever approach I have used. A way to do this is the selection of multiple methods, which would secure better understanding of what happened in reality (see below on triangulation). In this case, what is important is to have a deep understanding of the different sorts of knowledge that I obtained using different research methods and to relate the strengths and weakness of these methods with the purpose of my research. As Bryman (2008:624) underlines about the multiple methods: "there is no point collecting more data simply on the basis that "more is better" but rather as in the case of single method to conduct a research which is carefully designed and completed".

Section 2: Case study research strategy

Local partnership institutional dynamics is a complex social phenomenon involving many contextual variables, which require carefully designed research in order to draw well founded conclusions. Although there are many different strategies that could be used to approach this task, like surveys, ethnography, etc., I select the case study approach because it is the most appropriate for my research purpose.

The use of case studies has become widespread in social research, especially in small-scale research (Burnham et al, 2008: 63). A case study is defined in various ways; so a standard definition does not exist. However, according to Yin (2003: 13) a technical definition could begin with the scope of the case study. A case study “is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real- life context” and for these reasons, contextual conditions can be captured in greater detail by the researcher. Nevertheless, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable in a real life context and for that reason case study relies on a technical distinction of the situation by the researcher.

The advantages of the case study approach comprise mainly the focus on in-depth analysis of a complex social phenomenon and the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complexity of the reality under research (Yin 2003: 15 ; Denscombe 2003: 38).

A case study design is considered by Yin (2003: 1) to be appropriate for research when three factors are present:

- When we have to study a contemporary phenomenon in its natural setting
- When the research asks “how” and “why” questions so as to explain the nature and complexity of the processes taking place
- When the researcher has little control over the events and no experiment or manipulation could be used.

Taking into consideration the above factors, I argue that the case study is an appropriate strategy for my research for the following reasons: First, the study of local partnership dynamics in Greece is undeveloped both theoretically and empirically. Since previous research is limited, I need a research strategy that has the potential to discover new issues going in detail and in depth in the field. Second, as noted above, the case study strategy is considered as most suitable in research that studies relationships and processes because its integrative approach offers the opportunity to understand the complexities of a given situation (Yin, 2003: 3-18; Denscombe, 2003:30- 39).

In my research hypothesis, both interactions and processes are questioned. In particular, I study the interactions between formal/informal rules and partners during partnership development and I am looking for explanations from within the context. Finally, another reason for the selection of case study partnerships is timing. When I started the PhD, both partnerships were operating, so with the selection of this strategy I was able to study partnership development in “real time”.

Comparing a case study strategy with alternative strategies that I could apply to my research, a survey appears to be the closest contender. A survey enables the researcher to obtain the largest possible data at one point in time. Quantitative analytical techniques are then used to draw inferences from the data (Denscombe, 2003: 6-29). I consider that the case study works better than the survey in my research because it offers via an in depth and detailed investigation data for a complex situation like that of partnerships since they comprise processes, relationships and inter dependencies developed over time. Instead, surveys are likely to lack much of detail or depth and ignore complexities and operational links between parts of a reality. They are mostly focused on outcomes at a specific point in time providing generalisations about frequencies. Thus, if I wanted to study the satisfaction of partners and beneficiaries from their involvement in partnerships, I could rely on a survey strategy; but since my focus is on partnership dynamics, a case study appears to be an advantageous strategy for this situation.

A case study strategy is vulnerable to criticism for many reasons but two are very significant. The first is related to its incapacity to be generalised to populations. There is scepticism among social researchers as to the ways that insights from a research into a unique case could be representative. The second regards its unsystematic approach to research design. It is accused of lacking the degree of rigor expected of social science research, focusing more on interpretative and descriptive accounts (Yin 2003: 10-11; Bryman, 2008: 52-58).

Regarding the first criticism, it has to be clarified that case studies could lead to generalisations but in a more restricted way than surveys. In surveys, the analysis of data collected from a representative sample can lead to a generalised inference for the population. Indeed, such “statistical generalisation”, following the warning by Yin (2003:32) is not appropriate for the case study: “A fatal flaw in doing case studies is to think of statistical generalisation as the method of generalising the results of the case study”.

However, there are opportunities for limited generalisation, if one considers some specific conditions that occurred for this case study; this is more related with a process of transferability rather than generalisability. If generalisation has to do with quantitative findings that are measurable and testable, transferability is a more “intuitive process” whereby the researcher deduces how the findings may be applicable to other situations (Denscombe, 2010: 181-189; Bryman, 2008: 392). As Denscombe (2003:36) points out, “although each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things”. For instance, the study of local partnerships in Heraklion could be viewed as an example of the Greek local partnerships initiated by European programmes. Following that reasoning, the degree to which a case study example shares same features with others of its type is a condition of generalisation. For instance, if local partnerships in Heraklion are typical in terms of their institutional organisation and socio-economic background, with other partnerships in Crete, then the findings of the particular example could be carefully generalised to them. This presupposes that the researcher provides to the reader a thorough description of the situation with sufficient details of the

complexity of the reality, so as to offer to the reader the possibility to make comparisons and transfer the findings to other situations.

In brief, the observed similarities and differences in two or more situations can substantially support the logic of comparison facilitating in this way the understanding of the diversity and order of political life (Burnham et al, 2008: 80-83). But for doing that, one has to be explicit about the case selection and description so that the extent of the comparability with other cases can be assessed by the reader (Burnham et al: 87).

Apart from the generalisation that depends on contextual similarities, there is another type of generalisation, that of “analytic generalisation”. The latter provides generalisations to theoretical propositions “in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (Yin 2003:33). In this context, a case study appears to be a suitable strategy for testing and generating theory. In the case of theory testing, the findings of the case study are interacting with the research hypothesis; the researcher seeks to validate the theory and to see which approaches and concepts work properly in different contexts. In the case of generating theory, the researcher tries to build new ideas and concepts in order to make sense of the reality.

In relation to the second criticism, regarding the provision of “soft data” due to the lack of quantitative data and statistical procedures, it looks more like a prejudice derived from the proponents of positivist philosophy rather than an inherent disadvantage of the case study approach. These criticisms usually propose that qualitative findings rely on the researchers’ unsystematic view about what is significant and the lack of transparency in the research design (Bryman, 2008: 391-393). However, if case study research, as in all other research strategies, uses a concrete research design comprising a robust logic in all stages of its realisation, it can respond to the prerequisites of good quality research, that of validity and reliability.

2.1 Embedded single case study

One key feature required in the development of the research design is the definition of the case study; this has direct implications for the transferability issue too. This question concerns the number of case studies and the units of analysis that will be covered in each case study (Yin, 2003:39-55). Regarding the number of cases included in the research, this could be selected between single and multiple case studies. In relation to units, the case study could be embedded or holistic. For embedded, it could be identified smaller sub units of analysis looking for a more extensive analysis of some variables; for holistic, the phenomenon is examined as a whole.

According to Yin (2003: *ibid*), the appropriateness of single or multiple case studies depends on a number of circumstances. Generally speaking, a single case study could be used to test a well-formed theory or where there is no previous theory and the study is explanatory. It is also preferred when one has to deal with unique or extreme case studies or when the case represents a typical one. Multiple case studies are preferable when one wants to modify or extend theory through cross-case analysis.

A dilemma that I faced during the case study design regards the selection of a single or two case studies. According to the literature, multiple case designs appear to be stronger (Bryman, 2008: 52-58; Yin 2003: 54) since the replication logic could support the comparative aspect of the research. Despite this, my choice was to go for a single case study for two reasons. First, there is a large number of variables in my research, including contextual variables, partnerships' formal and informal rules and agency's role. All these variables are interconnected and their interaction in some cases is not linear (as in the case of trust building and shared understanding) as they developed continuous and dynamic relations throughout the partnership process.

The second reason is related to the issue of the theoretical level of analysis. Since in this research, I use meso level theoretical frameworks and concepts, such as neo institutional theory, path dependency and social capital theories, these variables produce much variation in each case under study.

In summary, if I had selected two cases studies, first, I would not have either the resources or the time required (Yin, 2003: 47) for an in depth examination in order to highlight all these variables and their interactions. Second, since understanding the interaction between formal/informal rules and the ways that the actors interpret them is already a complex endeavour, the systematic analysis of two cases would reveal also another complexity, that of different external conditions which have a significant role in a multi-case design. The external conditions could produce significant heterogeneity in both cases, so their rigorous analysis would alter my main research purpose, which is to study the relation of rules and agency. Consequently, following Ostrom's proposition that "there is not one optimal map that can be used for all purposes; each level of detail is useful for different purposes" (Ostrom,2005: 8), the single case study responds better to my research purpose and the practical limitations of doctoral study (Denscombe, 2003: 38).

My case study consists of the EU CI partnerships programmes EQUAL II and LEADER+, which are coordinated by the Local Development Agency of Heraklion (DAH) in Crete. The selection of this case study combined a number of features that could support potential transferability to other partnerships in Greece and theory testing. My case study represents an "extreme instance" in comparison with a "typical" one. If a typical one refers to a case which is "similar in crucial respects with others" (Denscombe, 2003: 33, Yin 2003: 40-41), the extreme case had some particularities that made it distinguish from the others. I have selected my case study because of its outstanding character, which refers to the fact that both partnerships were very successful in terms of their partnership development and outcomes. According to the national evaluation reports on all LEADER+ and EQUAL II initiatives of Greece, the DAH was ranked second after the Local Development Agency of Thessaloniki in terms of funding absorption (Final evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2008; Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+, 2005).

This is not an ordinary phenomenon since in Greece, there are very few local partnerships that are working well and provide the expected results (Getimis and Grigoriadou, 2004; Grigoriadou and Marava, 2006; Getimis and

Georgadas, 2003). According to my research purpose, I aim to study the influence of some particular factors like institutional legacies and the role of leaders in partnership development and implementation. So, this extreme case gave me the opportunity to research in a more detailed way the role of these factors, which, in a typical case, would lose their influential power among other factors that prevent the partnership development.

Regarding transferability, in an extreme case, generalisation is more difficult than in a typical case since there are not so many similarities with the ones of same category (Denscombe 2010:186-190). However, transferability is possible for three reasons: First, although my case is unique, it still provides data for local partnerships in Greece. The factors that are revealed in my extreme case already exist and are relevant for the others (Denscombe 2010: *ibid*). Even if they exist in other cases in a way that they bring opposite effects, (i.e. unsuccessful partnership outcomes or moderate outcomes), their disclosure in my case notifies their significance in ordinary case studies too. For instance, a finding from my case study illustrates the significance of the local leader in facilitating the partnership process. This means that in other cases, researchers and practitioners should be aware of the leadership role in partnership development whether its effects are negative or even if totally absent.

Second, like my case, most local partnerships in Greece are initiated by external bodies; mainly the European Union's Structural Funds and the CIs and they are institutionally organised according to the rules of these funds. Finally, my case study, as all the other local partnerships, share the same national institutional legacies which support the development of particular informal institutional rules defining local partnership dynamics, as for instance lack of trust among partners and the public sector prevalence in partnership composition.

It is worth mentioning that the selection of the specific case in Crete was also based on a more pragmatic reason regarding the feasibility of the research in terms of access to data and cooperation from the participants as well as my familiarity with the Cretan culture. I studied for 4 years in Crete and got my

degree in sociology from the University of Crete. During those years, I developed friendships and family relationships with locals, which allowed me to build a “local” identity. This facilitated my access to the field even from my first meetings with the “gatekeepers”. For them, I was not the “foreigner” PhD candidate from Athens but almost one of them since I had studied in Crete, I have been a godmother to a Cretan child and I knew two families with a good social and professional status.

Under these circumstances, I rapidly developed relations of trust and good will with the members of the DAH and the other partners. Another feature that supported my access not only at the local level but also in the involved ministries and EU offices was my professional status. Being a permanent civil servant in the Ministry of Interior Affairs was an important advantage because I was someone who is part of the “civil servant” community, who knows from inside about key events and shares the same “language”. Additionally, since the Ministry of Interior Affairs is responsible for all the issues related to local government, mayors further enhanced my access to the field since they value having a contact in this ministry in terms of their future access to information.

Despite these privileges, the access to the field was a constant concern throughout the phase of data collection. On the one hand, in Greece, trust is not easily developed due to specificities of our culture and on the other hand, research in social sciences is underdeveloped and people are not familiar with interviews and other research methods. Fortunately, the executives of the Local Development Agencies (LDAs) were familiar with questionnaires and interviews due to its participation in a large number of European programmes that required internal and external evaluations.

Additionally, I am based in Athens I had to travel to Crete. This alongside the fact that partners and beneficiaries were dispersed all over Crete has added significantly to the cost for carrying out the research (it has actually exceeded the original budget). It also had an impact on the planned research timeline. There were times that I have to drive over 400 km in one day on bad country

roads to conduct one interview or to extend my stay in the island for one more day in order to meet a partner late in the afternoon. But even when things do not go according to plan, one can find a positive aspect in the adversity of situations. Driving for hours on country roads surrounded by olive groves and vineyards and isolated small villages or spending an evening walking in Arhanes, a big village where the DAH has its offices, offered me the opportunity to take the time to feel and observe the lifestyle. For example, I have grown to understand better the isolation of women in the mountainous villages, grasp what a rural way of living really means and how important local identity is for local people.

Since I have selected a single case study, the next step is the selection between holistic and embedded case study. I have selected an embedded case study for analysis because I would like to increase the sensitivity of my investigation in order to counterbalance the disadvantages of the selection of the single case study. In my case, there are two units of analysis, the LEADER+ and EQUAL II partnerships. These programmes have some similarities and some differences.

Both partnerships are funded by the EC and they follow common principles of institutional organisation of partnerships and policy delivery. However, there are differences in regards to partnership membership, the relation with the beneficiaries and the policy sector of intervention. Due to their similarities, these units of analysis have revealed a duplication logic since I have identified in these units the reproduction of constant interactions among the main variables of my study. Additionally, due to their differences, each unit has highlighted different aspects of the same phenomenon in terms of variables' weight and types of interaction, which have enriched my knowledge of the case study.

So, my analysis of the two units did not aim for a systematic comparison between them (although some obvious conclusions have been made), but rather it aimed to uncover complementary or repetitive interactions in order to have a stronger and deeper understanding of the case as a whole. Anyway, when

studying embedded case studies, one should bear in mind the statement of Yin about the danger of losing focus on the holistic nature of the case. “However, if too much attention is given to these subunits [...] the case study itself will have shifted its orientation and changed its nature” (Yin, 2003: 46).

I would also like to point out that the units of analysis have been changed during the data collection. At the beginning, I have decided to study only the EQUAL II project and I defined as units of analysis the four geographical areas where the programme had been implemented. However, after discussions with the partners of EQUAL II, I realised that it would be more fruitful to study EQUAL II as a whole and to study another programme implemented in Heaklion prefecture, that of LEADER+. This helped me to better reveal the partnership dynamics on both programmes.

I also undertook four mini cases as a complementary research practice in order to understand the relation of the partnership’s institution with the beneficiaries. Each mini case is a story telling, a narrative about the partnership history of a beneficiary, starting from how they came into contact with the programme up to the implementation of their programme actions. The mini cases comprise two beneficiaries of the EQUAL II project, the women’s cooperatives of Zakros and Krousaniotisa as well as two from LEADER+, the owner of the tourism accommodation in Katalagari village and the winery cluster of Heraklion Prefecture. This practice allowed me to study for a short time the sequences of the events in my case and highlight the way that one group of individuals experienced the reality of partnerships. In this way, new issues for further analysis had been arose; I then brought these in the main case study.

2.2. Challenges in establishing the case study scope

A difficulty of the case study identification is the creation of boundaries between the context where the phenomenon is evolved and the phenomenon itself (Yin, 2003: 39-55; Denscombe, 2003: 38). In my case, the main problem refers to the spatial characterisation of both partnerships as urban or rural and what could be the consequences of this choice for my research proposition. First of all, this difficulty arose from the lack of a universally accepted

definition of what is rural. According to Pizzoli and Gong (2001), there is no universally approach as to how to classify the urban and rural. On one hand, there is the OECD simple approach in which a “rural area” is defined merely on the population density (below 150 inhabitants per square kilometre), and on the other hand, there has been a rich literature on what other variables should be considered and included for the urban-rural typology.

The lack of a unified definition is derived from the contemporary transformation of rural areas at global level, due to new forms of economic organisation, technological change and globalisation. Rural areas could no longer be synonymous with agriculture since employment and income in these areas now results from a diversified economy including services, activities and manufacturing. This process has been facilitated by the improvement of infrastructure, providing new transport routes and better accessibility, as well as of new forms of communication (e.g. the information technologies) and ways of living. Furthermore, the interdependence of rural and urban has been increased by a continued and varied exchange of resources at the economic and cultural level that has blurred their boundaries (Boscacci, 1999). Finally, there is also a globalisation effect where we as society now interact with rural and urban space in different ways, blurring traditional boundaries and transgressing different levels of scale (Scott et al, 2007). So there is not a clear distinction between rural and urban, but rather a continuum between the two with many shades of grey.

In Greece, rural space is experiencing a significant transformation too. During the last four decades, the traditional urban –rural dichotomy had given its place to complex spatial configurations, which are in a process of continuous change. For instance, rural development no longer depends solely on the agricultural sector but also on a large variety of economic activities, mainly the service sector and tourism. Additionally, there is an increased exchange of rural –urban relationships related to location of activities, urbanisation and economies of scale (Illiopoulou et al, 2006).

Going back to CIs, LEADER+ has a purely geographical scale approach; it has to be implemented in mountainous and disadvantaged areas with a strong socio-economic gap. EQUAL II does not specifically address the geographical location of its activities. What is important is the identity of the beneficiaries and the policy sector. However, EQUAL II of my case study gave a geographical character to its project by refining the beneficiaries' category from women's unemployment to, more specifically, underemployed low income women and farmers living in mountainous areas. So, both projects are addressed to remote non-accessible rural areas. Indeed, both programmes' operation not only covers similar areas but also in some cases their geographical intervention overlaps.

However, two questions arise. First, how rural are these areas of intervention? In many cases, these rural areas are parts of local authorities, which according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)¹⁰ are characterised as urban. For instance, the municipalities of Arkalochori, Archanes, Moiron and Heraklion belong to this case. Additionally, some rural municipalities like Gorgolaini, Gaziou and Temenus are located near the urban centre of Heraklion (Appendix C, map of Heraklion prefecture) which means that the exchange of resources is increasingly blurring their limits. Although the agricultural activity remains the main resource of income, employment in tourism sector and the related activities such retail and handcraft activities increase continuously (Illiopoulou et al, 2006, see also next chapter on local socio-economic context).

Second, does the area of intervention or the location of partners' organisation characterise the geographical feature of the partnership? Since the area of intervention does not fit to the rural-urban dichotomy, I directed my question towards the geographical location of the partners' organisation, but I had the same results. In EQUAL II partnership, a lot of partners are based in cities, such as research and training centres, which are located in Heraklion city. In

¹⁰ The Hellenic Statistical Authority of Greece employs demographic criteria for the statistical definition of rural areas. According to it, in Greece, rural areas are the municipalities in which the largest settlements have less than 2.000 habitants, while in urban areas the largest population centre has 2.000 or more inhabitants.

LEADER+, some mayors come from urban municipalities. The DAH is also located in Archanes which is a big village located near the urban centre of Heraklion. As far as the beneficiaries are concerned, in the case of LEADER+ project, some of them realise the undertaken activities in their village of origin while they live in Heraklion, as happened in the mini cases of tourism accommodation in Katalagari village and the winery cluster.

Worth all the ambiguities, my decision was to define these partnerships as “local”, hence deemphasising the distinction between rural and urban since this distinction is no longer clear and it does not affect directly the process of partnership. In this way, I keep the issue of scale as a significant component of the partnership development since there is a localisation effect in terms of policies adopted, partners involved and areas of intervention. But I do not resort to simple reductionism of the complexity of the particular local area.

The complexity of the research subject which involves a large number of variables is related to another problem of defining my case study. The lack of long experience in research, especially in small-scale research, as well as the explanatory character of the case study, led me to the selection of a large number of variables which, after the advice of my supervisors and of the national external evaluators of the CIs, were reduced; however, that did not completely resolve the problem. In some cases, I chose not to analyse further a variable, for instance an informal rule at the national level, because evidence showed to me that it was not so important. In another case, I got so much lost in variables’ combination when for instance I analysed the interactions of formal and informal rules inside the national Monitoring Authorities (M.As) of the CIs that I finally got confused about the purpose of this analysis. However, this limitation could be counterbalanced with the fact that the problem of many variables is a general problem “recognised by other scholars as one of the perplexing problems haunting systematic empirical testing of social science theories” (Ostrom, 2005:9).

2.3 Pilot study

A good research strategy requires careful planning and a pilot study is a crucial component of this task. A pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to evaluate and improve the design of the research and especially the research instruments (Burhman et al, 2008: 48-49). Although in PhD research the time framing and the limited budget leave no room for a full pilot of large scale, parts of the design needed to be pre tested (Denscombe, 2003; Robson, 1993:164-165).

In my research design, I conducted a short pilot case study where I tested my main propositions and the methodological instruments of my research. My pilot case study was an EQUAL I partnership programme named “KEDAVROS”. I selected this case for two reasons. First, it was a similar programme to that of my case and also I had access to the data because of my cooperation with the project coordinator in a previous research programme. This programme has been implemented in the urban area of Volos and in the rural area of Livadi. Responsible for the project coordination was the local branch of EETAA (Hellenic Agency of Local Development and Local Government), which is situated in the capital of the region, Larissa.

I travelled to Larissa and conducted two interviews on the same day (15th of November 2007). The first one was with the director of the partnership board and the second one with the project coordinator of a sub project implemented in Volos. Meanwhile, the interviewees gave me selected secondary material related to the project like evaluation reports and publications. The interviews were recorded and they then were transcribed and finally analysed.

The findings from the pilot case study led me to the revision of the research design regarding the main questions of the interviews and the proposed methods. On the first point, during the pilot, I came to realise the need for a more elaborate interview structure in terms of more specific questions that could investigate in depth and in a more detailed way the research issues. The limitation of my first approach was asking rather general questions and, for this reason, I received unclear and vague responses. The general questions were

also accompanied by poorly defined concepts and as a result I could not retrieve the relevant information from the interviewees. Furthermore, it became clear that the issue of Europeanisation could not be addressed at the local partners, because the interviewees stated that neither they nor other partnership members had a direct relation with the EU. Consequently, an additional interview schedule was developed with a new set of questions regarding Europeanisation. This new interview schedule was used with selected officers in Brussels.

Finally, the issues of intergovernmental relations and the role of the national government in EU led me to a third interview schedule targeting selected executives of the ministries' MAs located in Athens. The development of a different interviews schedule added value to my research strategy because they gave me the opportunity to explore the multi-level context in which my case study operated.

In relation to the proposed methods, I realised that the interview was too long, more than one and a half hour and both the interviewee and I were very tired at the end. Consequently, I produced a shorter version of the interview schedule and I came to the decision that I have to use another method in order to gather information for those variables no longer covered by the interview. The excluded variables were related to the context in which the partnerships are developed, especially the level of social capital and the type of political culture. To consider these variables, I decided that it would be better to make a short questionnaire and distribute it to all the partners of both partnerships. In this way, I would, on the one hand, save time by not conducting very long interviews, and on the other hand, I would be able to adhere to a more careful and strict definition and measurement of the contextual factors avoiding misunderstanding at the time of data elaboration. Finally, issues concerning the local political environment and the partnership organisation could be addressed more specifically only with the coordinators of the CIs partnerships through an additional interview focusing exclusively on these issues.

Section 3: Research Methods

In this research, I have tried to avoid what may be characterised as methodological monism, i.e. the practice of using just one research method. Instead, I have used a triangulation approach. Triangulation, increasingly applied by social sciences, comprises the use of more than one method of collecting data for the study of the same phenomenon. There are two main benefits from this technique. On the one hand, it allows the research to address more issues for investigation improving the quality of the research since its method has its own assumptions about the nature of the social world and offers different kinds of data. On the other hand, it allows for the corroboration of the data produced by different methods improving in this way the validity of the research. In this way, the confidence in the findings deriving from a study using multiple methods is enhanced by the use of more than one way of measuring the propositions (Bryman, 2008:603-624; Denscombe, 2003: 131-34).

The use of mixed methods also distinguishes my research from the long “qualitative- quantitative debate” about research methods sustained by the interpretative ethnographers and positivist scientists respectively. I think that for a new researcher like me, who acknowledges the recent critical evaluation of this dichotomy and the move towards a convergence of epistemologies and combination of methods (as in critical realism), this debate appears anachronistic (Tashakkori and Tedllie, 1998).

Additionally, like critical realism does, the recent literature on social sciences methodology proposes that the selection of the method cannot be made in abstract but has to be related to the particular research problem and object of analysis (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 4; Robson, 1993: 2-16). Finally, a case study as a research strategy has greater potential to use multiple data collection methods than other research strategies like experiments or surveys, further supporting my preference for multiple methods. Although there is a tendency to associate case studies with qualitative research, this association is not appropriate since this strategy can also give space to the generation of

quantitative data (Bryman, 2008: 52-57). So, observation, interviews, questionnaires, but also documentation are methods encouraged by this strategy (Yin, 2003: 97).

My research design employed four direct data collection methods: semi structured interviews, a small questionnaire, storytelling and direct observation. Additionally, I undertook a review of national and EU evaluations reports and of official documentation pertaining to each partnership. The research was conducted between December 2007 and January 2009. During this period, I visited the field 7 times and I stayed there 2-3 days each time. Due to family responsibilities, I was not able to stay in the field for longer, for instance 2-3 months; instead, I visited the field sporadically for a short time conducting as many interviews as I could each time. Though the data collection has been completed sufficiently, direct observation was limited and the focus of the research was more on interviews, losing in this way additional information about what people are actually doing in these partnerships. My approach did have advantages, however, allowing for reflection between field visits, and the ongoing iteration or theory development and data collection.

3.1 Interviews

Since there were many different types of actors involved in the partnerships of my study such as partners, local leaders, national government and Brussels officers, I decided to design three different semi-structured schedules (Appendix A) addressed to these different categories of interviewees. In this way, I managed to ask relevant questions to each category, which allowed to me to gather precise and detailed data for the multi-level character of partnerships. For the selection of leaders, I identified them by their institutional position and by reputation as it was stated by partners (see also chapter 2, section 3.1.2). In total, I conducted 34 interviews (see Appendix A which comprises the date of the interview, the job title of each interviewee and their role in the partnership).

Specifically, I have conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with the partners of both partnerships' boards, which constitute the main core of my case study.

From the 19 partners in both programmes, only 3 were not interviewed because they had a busy professional schedule and they could not manage to find a time for the interview. I also conducted 5 additional interviews with members of the DAH board and administration since DAH had been the coordinator of both projects and the information gathered from those members was valuable for understanding the actual partnership dynamics and the context in which partnerships are developed.

I believe that the number of interviews was quite satisfactory since at the end of the data collection, I was gathering the same information from the interviews, which of course enabled me to verify the data. However, there are two limitations of the interviewees' sample. One is the lack of interviews with new mayors or mayors of opposition in order to better understand the balance of power in local politics and the way this reflects on the partnerships' agenda setting and decision-making. The second one is the lack of interviews with the excluded partners who could provide valid information about the democratic processes of partnership design.

Finally, I conducted 6 interviews with executives from the MCs in two ministries: the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Agriculture; 2 interviews with the national external evaluators of the CIs and 1 interview with the coordinator of another EQUAL II programme in Athens. I also conducted 4 interviews with officers in Brussels who have been involved in both CIs implementation and evaluation. These interviewees offered me information on the intergovernmental relations, the EU perception of CIs implementation in Greece and a comparative perspective of how these initiatives work in other countries and in Greece. All the interviews and the questionnaires were conducted between March 2008 and January 2009.

Most interviews have been conducted in an environment of trust and good will and the responses seem to be sufficient, full and open, which is very satisfactory considering the difficulties of the Greek case. Only in some questions, which referred to the sensitive issues of clientelism and political/partisan informal networks did some interviewees give typical

answers tailored to an “ideal” reality; in one case, the interviewee felt defensive to such a point that they mentioned exclusively the legal framework governing the operation of the programme.

When each interviewee agreed to participate in the research, an interview time and place was set. That was usually in the morning, in their workplace, although there were two interviews conducted in central cafes of Heraklion city. The interviews had an ordered list of issues and they were conducted one to one. Interview length ranged from 45 minutes to 1 and ½ hours. After the completion of the interviews, additional questions were asked for clarification; some were on statements made in previous interviews. At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked their permission to tape record the interview. From the 34 interviews, only 7 have not been audio- recorded because the interviewees did not feel comfortable with the audio – recorder and they denied its use. In these cases, notes were taken during the interview.

After the end of each interview, I wrote field notes with my thoughts and my impressions about what was said or not said, about events occurring in the course of the interview and the physical context of the interview. These notes were used as a complement to the tape recording interview.

Additionally, I encountered some difficulties. One is pragmatic and related to the time available for the interviewees. Especially in the case of mayors, it was difficult to find time for an interview and during interviews there were many interruptions because of phone calls and people coming into the office. Furthermore, as mentioned above, on sensitive issues, especially connected to issues of power, party politics and clientelism, the interviewees were very reluctant to answer and resorted to formal standard answers. One difficulty in the interviewees’ selection was the distinction between the partners and the beneficiaries. In both programs, some beneficiaries were also members of the partnership board. In these cases, I chose to deal with these beneficiaries as partners and to use the storytelling method to other beneficiaries which were not members of the board. Finally, the Greek national external evaluators and the officers in Brussels seem to have extreme and absolute negative or positive

views and perceptions of the Greek CIs partnerships. In the latter two cases, I overcame the difficulty of collating “subjective” data, as far as that was possible, through the use of data from observation and secondary analysis of evaluation reports, as well as comparing them with similar studies of the field.

3.2. Storytelling

Furthermore, I decided to get closer to the beneficiaries using a more narrative approach of data collection. I thought that this would be a more appropriate method for respondents like women farmers who might encounter problems in responding to a formal structured interview in terms of confidence and convenience. Instead, I approached them in a more informal way and asked them to tell me their story of participation in these projects. I conducted 4 interviews with the beneficiaries of both partnerships, two from each, and I collected data essentially on the openness of the partnership and the nature of community involvement (Appendix C, photos of tourism accommodation in Katalagari, winery cluster and women’s cooperatives of Zakros and Krousaniotissa). The selection of these respondents was made on a very realistic basis and for that reason the beneficiaries are not considered as a typical example of this category, especially those of LEADER+ project. They were selected because of their willingness to participate in the research, which was related to their commitment to these programmes from the beginning.

The conversations were unstructured starting with the general theme of their involvement in the project and followed by discussing their personal experiences and feelings about the project activity. The respondents felt free to tell the story of how they got involved in this project, talk about the difficulties and the opportunities that they encountered, and the possible solutions to problems. Allowing the respondents to tell in their own words what they have done, and what they thought about all these issues, provided a chance for me to understand in a temporal sequence (like a movie) all the project stages and think about the partnerships from a different angle, in a less complicated and more pragmatic way. Hence, the narratives acknowledge: “the importance of time and the connection of events in a mean full totality” (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 92-93). The discussions were conducted in a very informal

and friendly environment drinking coffee and testing local products and they were usually concluded with a walk around the beneficiaries' investments (tourism accomodation, cooperatives' infrastructures).

3.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix B) is composed of 12 closed questions asking the opinion of the partnerships' members and of selected beneficiaries about social capital and political culture. Most of the questions are based on Stone's (2001) research on social capital and PLUS research (Participation, Leadership and Urban Sustainability, 2001) on urban leadership and community involvement. The closed questions included two options like "yes/no" or more options like five scale options (Likert scale¹¹) regarding the degree of agreement or disagreement on an issue. Some of the closed questions were followed by an open one clearly marked as "other". For these open questions, a post coding procedure was undertaken during data analysis.

I distributed 26 questionnaires to all the interviewed local partners and beneficiaries and I received back 23, which is a good response rate. The questionnaire was given out at the end of the interview and, depending on the time they had available, the respondents completed the questionnaire right away or sent it by e-mail to me at a later point. When they completed the questionnaire directly, interesting questions and comments arose which I recorded in my field notebook.

There are a lot of limitations to this method. First, after the data collection, I realised that some questions might have been missed or should have been reframed while some others could have been more analytical. Question 2 (Appendix B) could have been removed since there are not that many social organisations cooperating with the private sector. It is a good question for other national contexts like the UK but not for Greece. Question 6 and 10 regarding the citizens' participation in politics could have been consolidated into one

¹¹ It is used for the investigation of attitudes in survey research and it is a technique for conduction such an investigation. It is essentially a multi indicator measure of a set of attitudes relating to particular area indicating the level of agreement going from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Bryman, 2008: 146).

question while question 10 needed to be reframed. If I could have rebuilt the questionnaire, I would have added new questions regarding the attitude to cooperation in general and the interaction of professional networks with networks of friends and family, and I would have been more analytical in questions about the leadership behaviour.

Second, the population the questionnaire was administered to has been small enough so that it has not allowed for making statistical generalisations or correlations between questions or between them and demographic characteristics of respondents like sex, occupation and location (although these questions had been included in the questionnaire). It would have been better to extend this questionnaire to a larger population, like all the beneficiaries of both projects, but this would have required more time and money.

Interviews' questions and the questionnaire are attached as Appendices, as well as a list of interviewees (showing dates and the interviewees' professional status) and the questionnaire's responses.

3.4 Observation

My main data was derived from the interviews and to a lesser extent from systematic direct observation. Observation was a supplementary method that complemented the interview method and it occurred during my field visits for conducting interviews. For instance, I will never forget my visit to a mayor's office. I remembered that his secretary announced my arrival to the mayor over the phone and then I went through a security door that opened remotely from the secretary's office to a very big room where the mayor was sitting in a big chair! This made quite an impression to me. Another example has been my observation on the importance attached by the DAH to the LEADER+ project as compared with EQUAL II regarding the location of their office. LEADER+ office was located in the DAH building, while EQUAL II office was located 500 metres away from the DAH offices in a rented space which was closed after the end of the programme.

Although I did not spend enough time in the field for a systematic observation, observation was always an inherent and continuous action in my research that captured in a non-selective way what happened in there. For this reason, I kept long field notes where I wrote in an unsystematic way everything that had a particular significance for my research: from physical settings to actors' activities and feelings. For instance, one day I observed that many stores had signs of the owner's surnames which were the same with those of the executives working in DAH. So I kept notes about the degree of closeness between members of a small local society and the potential familial links between them.

The absence of direct observation of formal meetings in both projects made it more difficult to gather additional information especially on the issues of power relations and networks. I could not undertake a direct observation in EQUAL II project because the project was concluding and the formal meetings with all the partners had been completed. In LEADER+ project, I had been invited to participate to one meeting but this never took place. I think that in reality I did not have access to these meetings. I did not push this issue further because I did not want to lose the goodwill, cooperation and acceptance by the DAH's executives. Regarding the meeting of the DAH Council, there was not any one during the period of my data collection.

3.5 Documentation

Besides the interviews, the questionnaire and the storytelling, I have also used documentary analysis as a complement to the above methods. The material comprised the European, national and local evaluation reports of projects, their official proposals, all the publications by the coordinating agency on paper and on their web site page, the presidential decrees that guide these projects, all the available letters and informative material addressed to beneficiaries and partners and finally the official statistics for the region of Crete. Unfortunately, my material does not include newspaper articles, which are considered as a valuable source of information, if used in a credible way. I did not use this type of source because the newspapers in Heraklion were not archived electronically and consequently, the manual research of relevant articles would have taken

too much time. Additionally, I did not analyse the partners' meetings minutes because the minutes were not detailed but they were kept in a form of headlines, which did not provide any useful information.

Generally, the use of documentation can be considerably helpful for identification of new data for further analysis by other methods or for cross validation of collected data (Robson, 1993: 272-285). However, when we use documentation, special care must be paid to the fact that we are dealing with something that has been produced for some other purpose and not for the specific aims of our research. In this way, "documents are significant for what they were supposed to accomplish and who they are written for" (Bryman, 2008: 527) and they should not be viewed as simple representations of the reality.

This was particularly evident in the case of the national and EU evaluation reports. The EU evaluation reports have treated the data for evaluation with sensitivity due to their political will to avoid revealing problems in some countries. On the other hand, in the national and local evaluation reports, the focus has mainly been on the depiction of positive outcomes since the inflow of European money depends on these evaluations. Having all this in mind, I used the data from evaluation reports very carefully and I made an effort to read "between the lines" in order to understand important meanings that were just mentioned or remained hidden in their official analysis.

Regarding the statistical data of my case study, I used them essentially for the description of the socio-economic context of the projects' area intervention (see next chapter). The main source of primary statistical data comes from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). This organisation is the Greek official institution for the provision of statistical data. All data provided by ELSTAT have been elaborated by the author.

Additionally, the available information from the two studies of Regional Operational Programme of Crete (2000-2006 & 2007-2013) and the local evaluation report of LEADER+ was added to the above statistics. These studies

had also elaborated data from ELSTAT as well as from EUROSTAT. Since I have used these data as additional information to the interviews, my rationale was to firstly use all the available data from the above studies and then move on with my own data processing issues not covered by those studies.

As far as the availability of data is concerned, the lack of data or the interruption of constant flow of data for a particular year has been problematic. This caused to me several difficulties. First of all, I spent a lot of time undertaking primary research, gathering all the data needed to explore a particular argument. For instance, in the case of mayors' identification and party affiliation during the last five electoral periods (from 1990 to 2006), the Ministry of Interior Affairs keeps an electronic record for only the last two electoral periods. So, I called personally all the 26 municipalities of the Heraklion prefecture in order to have an integrated image of all the electoral periods.

Second, there has not been continuity in the provision of data; this resulted in analysing data that has not been recent and comparable (meeting the conditions for data comparability has been an issue throughout this process). For instance, ELSTAT stopped measuring the prefecture's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1996. So, when I discuss the issue of region wealth and the prefectural economic disparities in the region, the data I referred to for the prefectures was that of 1996 whereas the data I referred to for the Cretan region was that of 2006. It is apparent that in the case of prefecture, the data available was quite old as opposed to more recent data for the case of the region. Furthermore, the last general census of ELSTAT was in 2001 and the one before that was in 1991 which is by far very old. So, when I compared these two censuses, my conclusions about the socio-economic features of the case study area were not accurate, particularly if one takes into account the rapidly changing rural societies.

Finally, in some cases, I wanted to explore further a research proposition as interviews have provided evidence for this but it was impossible due to lack of data bases. For instance, it was impossible to find the number of rural

cooperatives in each prefecture of Crete. This data would have been available from an annual report on the cooperative management of the Agricultural Bank of Greece; however, this report, which had been the only valid source for the rural cooperatives' developments in Greece (Maravegias, 1999), stopped being produced in 1991. Another example is that of the World Values Survey (Values Surveys Databank, 1999-2004). There have been 5 surveys in total¹² and Greece has participated only in the 1999 survey; as a result there are no recent comparative data available.

¹² The World Value Survey had conducted five wave surveys: 1981, 1990, 1995/1998, 1999/2000, 2005/ 2008.

Section 4: Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of transforming the collected raw data to findings that answer research questions (Yin, 2003:109). There are different strategies for the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data; however, what is important is that both strategies should meet the validity principle. The data collected in my case study is primarily qualitative and it has been derived from interviews, direct observation and documentation. Only a small part of the data is quantitative and has been derived from questionnaires. Unlike the quantitative data, the qualitative data does not have a prescriptive formula for doing analysis and their techniques are less developed. There are few researchers like Yin (2003) and Miles and Huberman (1994) who have given to qualitative data analysis a realm of rigorous analysis like the one developed in the quantitative data (Robson, 1993: 370 - 407).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 5-11), what the researcher does in the analysis of qualitative data, is to break down the collected data into units identified as important to the research questions and then to reconstruct the data recognising relations, processes, types, etc. The aim of this process is to outline the general research assumptions in a comprehensive and integrated way. The authors recognise in this process three steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions with verification.

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, and thus simplifying, the data that appears in transcriptions, field notes and documentation. Data display refers to ways of displaying the data, which include matrices, graphs, and charts illustrating the patterns and findings from the data. Conclusion drawing and verification refer to a process of developing an initial thought about patterns and explanations stemming from the findings.

However, this technique of data managing, which has been applied in this research is not sufficient on its own, if it is not accompanied by a systematic strategy of data analysis' conceptualisation. And this systematic strategy is dependent on the epistemological approach of the research. Yin (2003:111-115) presents two strategies for general use: one is to rely on the theoretical

propositions of the study, and then to analyse the evidence based on those propositions. The other is to develop a case description, which would be a framework for organising the case study. The latter one could be related to the narrative case studies' description of grounded theory and phenomenology since the theoretical framework does not strictly guide the research process. Since Yin adheres to the positivist site of epistemology, he is hesitant to adopt this strategy because according to him, it does not provide guidance about the selection of data under study.

Following the epistemological approach of this research, I adopt the first strategy which analytical orientation basically relies upon theoretical propositions, but I also acknowledge two principles from the interpretive epistemological approach: analysis should be cyclical and reflexive (Bryman, 2008: 541-546). By that I mean that "words", the common form of qualitative data, are rich with different meanings about the "real" world out there, in comparison with the "clear" and abstract numbers of the "objective" reality. Consequently, the researcher actively participates during the analysis process and approaches it in a cyclical manner, rather than as a finished task of the accomplished data collection.

This is why Miles and Huberman (1994:55-68) refer to the qualitative data analysis as a continuous and interactive enterprise between the initial processing of the data in codes and the identified relations of patterns during the formulation of findings. According to them, data collection and the coding process could create new ideas that could change in their turn the final assumptions by the addition or variation of one initial proposition. This task becomes even more difficult because the researcher is likely to deal with a large volume of data in a non-standard format due to the verbal or textual nature of qualitative data. Consequently, this part of the methodology process appears to be the most difficult but also the most challenging for the production of high quality findings.

So, in my data analysis, although I started the data collection with a well developed theoretical framework with clear propositions, I remained open

minded during the development of the research, alert to emerging themes that would redirect my initial theoretical presumptions.

In particular, I have started the data analysis during data collection by providing to my supervisors reports of some preliminary thoughts about explanations and new findings that altered the direction of the main theoretical issues of my research. For instance, my priority was to examine only the partnership leaders but the research evidence shifted my attention to other actors too such as local and national institutional entrepreneurs. Additionally, I was keen to study three stages in partnership development. However, during interviews I realised that, the distinction is not so relevant for the Greek reality since in the first stage i.e. that of partnership initiation, there is almost no cooperation because it is the project coordinator who does everything. Another example is that of the social capital variable. At the beginning, in the formulation of my hypothesis, I paid attention to the variable of the existing cooperative culture, while during the interviews a new influential factor emerged, that of political stability.

Furthermore, during the coding process, the identification of codes and the relationships between them was also a reflexive procedure during which codes have been changed since new issues appeared to be more important than others and the codes had to be re-shaped in a new way. For instance, some of the codes referring to intergovernmental relations were transferred to a new category that of the informal rule “fear of responsibility”. During the interviews and observation, I understood that this rule is a more general one and it is not only characterising the intergovernmental relations, but rather all the relations between institutions. Or, in some cases, as the analysis progressed, I gave a new, different from the original, interpretation of the same extract of data, like in some mayors’ interviews regarding relations with citizens. In particular, at the beginning, they were coded as clientelistic relations and later on, as I started understanding what happened in the field, as dense interpersonal relations resulting from the small size of the community.

Consequently, from the moment I started the data collection until the writing of the final research conclusions, it was as if the research was clay taking different shapes due to new perspectives and new theoretical concepts emerging from the data analysis which led to its reshaping.

There are many analytical techniques such as pattern matching, time series analysis, logic models, etc, which propose different modes of connecting the data with the research propositions. At the core of this technique is a comparative logic. In this research, I use the pattern matching logic where several pieces of case study data are linked with the theoretical propositions of the research. In particular, pattern matching aims to link two patterns; one is a theoretical pattern and the other is an empirical one. Depending on the extent that the patterns match, one can conclude that the theory that predicted the same observed pattern receives support. In the case of mismatch, there are alternative or rival explanations. The identification of correlation between “theory” and “practice” requires precision in the articulation of empirical data. For this reason, I believe that Miles and Huberman’s (1994) analytical technique is very useful. Because of their insistence in the systematic standardisation of data reduction and display, it is an alternative to the tradition of long narratives, which allows pattern matching to be rigorous and safeguard the validity of the research.

If one adopts the Miles and Huberman technique, the first step is data reduction. In my process of data analysis, I fully transcribed all the interviews, typed all the field notes and saved them on my PC. All the interviews were collated in A4 format with wide margins in order to code them and add notes next to the relevant ideas and events. I also made a list of all the material that I have collected (raw data, documentation, photos, etc) so as to have an overview of all the material.

When I prepared all these I started coding the material. I first read the text from the interviews, the field notes and the documents very carefully and in each line or paragraph, I was thinking under which category the data could be placed. Finally, I looked at which further data belonged to this category. This

process had two dimensions. I worked inductively to understand what new insights the reality offered to me, and then worked deductively to check for themes identified as important in my initial research propositions.

The concepts referring to codes were in some cases descriptive as for example citizens' participation, or local state relations or partners' motives but in some cases they included an argument, as for instance the impact of Europeanisation process or unequal power relations between partners. I also made categories of codes, as some codes appeared to be systematically associated. For instance, the three codes local, intergovernmental and state–European networks are placed in the sub category of informal networks which belongs to the category of informal rules. The coding was completed, when additional information was no longer constructive in discovering something new for this category.

When I did the coding, I was trying to categorise the data but I was also continuously reflecting on the codes' relationships and the transition from codes to concepts. This is the reason that at that time I kept a small memo with new ideas and comments about their relationship. This step was closely related to the data display in which I represented interconnections and systematic associations in matrices¹³, flow charts and causal networks in order to give a more “readily” explanation of what happened in these partnerships. These “completed matrices” which essentially were the findings of my research were used with comments and quotations from the interviews.

Regarding the selection of the quotations, I made an effort to select those that are mostly representative of the research findings and also have “language strength” in order to add vitality to the account. In many cases, the quotations represent views and attitudes dominant in the transcribed text and in some cases they express the thoughts and feelings of a minority (this is explained

¹³ According to Miles and Huberman (2004), there are a lot of data display tools. The most important is the matrix usually with a table with a dual categorisation with the rows to represent one dimension and the columns the second dimension. In the case of flow charts, a study of processes is demonstrated while the causal network is a diagram which includes the most important independent and dependent variables in a case study and their relationship.

each time in the text). Regardless of what they express, they have been used in order to support evidence for a point or an argument in my analysis.

Additionally, in each quotation, I have tried to give some indication of the context from which the quotation emerges, through reference to the position of the person I am quoting, in order to avoid the de-contextualisation of the extract (Bryman, 2008:555). In the final stage, I have revised all my notes and the coding process and I have attempted to refine my explanations going up and down the matrices and codes trying to give a more integrated and consolidated picture of my case study. This process of reflection is related to the identification of a set of generalisations that could serve the purpose of the case study for theoretical generalisation and transferability to other relevant phenomena.

With regards to the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire, the statistical analysis is elementary. Essentially, I did not go beyond descriptive statistics, looking for correlations between sets of data, because of the small population to which the questionnaire was addressed. In particular, the type of data is ordinal which means that I have assigned in each category of the response scale a number, which represented a ranked relationship among them. For instance, in the five point scale -strongly agree, agree, neutral disagree and strongly disagree- I have assigned the numbers 1-5 respectively; in the three point scale, the number 1-3 respectively and so on. For each value of the category, I identified the population frequency and I presented it in proportion (%). For each question, I identified the highest value of the frequency and I also discussed the frequency distribution in cases with extreme values or very high frequency in one category. In some questions, I also proceeded to grouping frequency distributions in order to have more robust findings for one issue. I finally presented the frequencies of each question in pie and bar charts (Appendix B). For the elaboration of the data and their visual presentation I used the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 programme.

Section 5: Challenges and limitations

One important development in qualitative research is the emergence of computer software that can assist in the use of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2008: 565) like Nud.ist, NVivo, Ethnograph, Atlas.ti. They have the possibility to store, code, and retrieve the data very fast but they can also contribute to the core analysis of data, establishing connection between codes, classifications and the formulation of theoretical propositions that fit the data. Despite all these possibilities that these software programmes offer, I used the traditional approach of dealing with my data by keeping folders of all the fieldwork material and coding them manually. I did this for many reasons; first and foremost due to high cost and practical reasons. Since my research has been on a small scale, I have had a relatively small amount of data, which could be managed manually, so it was an opportunity for me to learn without the aid of the computer programmes all the processes of data analysis step by step and to save money for the set up cost which my budget could not have afforded.

Second, although computer analysis of qualitative data has an enormous potential in regards of the storage/retrieval capability, there are many controversies about the quality of data analysis. The criticism is that they lead the researcher towards a mechanistic and superficial processing logic because they cannot understand the polysemy of the words' meanings and the context in which the events have occurred. So, using computer software always bears the danger to distance the researcher from the data and the whole picture of the case leaving them to elaborate segments and de-contextualised data. In this way, these tools could “kill off the intuitive art of analysis in qualitative research”, substituting the intellectual process that the researcher engages in with a procedural mechanical data management (Denscombe, 2003:276). Additionally, the easiness with which the coded text could be quantified raises concerns about the colonisation of reliability and validity criteria of quantitative research (Bryman, 2008: 567)

Another issue encountered during the analysis of the data is that of language. Firstly, writing in a foreign language generally adds an extra difficulty to the writing process, making it more complex than it already is and it affects the quality of the produced text. Research in this subject had demonstrated this difficulty (Bergh et al, 2006). For instance, it has occurred to me many times to sum up a thought in one sentence in Greek, while in English I express that thought in more than one sentences. Another example would be having a well articulated argument in Greek, but when writing this in English, it appears to be poor in meaning.

Second, since Greek is the mother tongue for the interviewees and me the translation of my thoughts and the quotations from the interviews deprived the case study analysis from the vitality and the semantic of the language which are very important elements of a qualitative study. This is a problem generally referred to as the translation. In particular, the word equivalence across two languages is not only restricted to idioms and to syntax but also to the experience and concepts attached to words (Sechrest, 1972). For instance the term “synchorianos” which means people from the same village refers not only to people with the same origin but also to a commitment to a social group defined locally. To overcome this problem, I asked the assistance of a colleague who is bilingual so as to translate together those quotations which meaning was difficult to capture in the English language. Despite the effort to do my best, it is possible that something has been missed during the translation process.

On the other hand, the fact that I reviewed English literature, offered me the opportunity to keep a distance from the Greek reality and to be more “objective” and analytical in the data analysis procedure. Capturing the reality through concepts developed in other countries made me more reflective about the deep meaning of these concepts and their adaptability to the Greek reality. A simple example is that of the partnership concept, which signifies the co-operation of public, private and civil society organisations. However, the meaning attached to private sector in the English language and the Greek

language is quite different due to the different historical development of this sector in both countries.

So, although writing a PhD in a foreign language is difficult and time consuming because of translation problems, it is a worthwhile challenge due to the opportunities provided for reflecting on the different cultural contexts in which words have been developed.

5.1 Ethical issues

Ethical issues in this research were minimal since the object of the analysis is not a special case involving sensitive issues and/or vulnerable groups that could potentially cause inconvenience to the participants. The study involved only adults who had verbally agreed to participate in the research. Prior to commencing the fieldwork, the University Research Committee granted me ethical approval in order to conduct the research.

Furthermore, the interviewees' anonymity has been adhered to, only their professional role has been stated. In fact, in some sensitive themes, like criticisms by senior members of staff or informal practices of power exercise, the stated role is generic so that it cannot be linked to specific persons. Additionally, the interviewees were explicitly told that would not be identified in the research report and all information would be treated as confidential. Finally, clear and honest explanations about the research aims and procedures as well as my professional identity have been made to all participants via a letter sent to them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a detailed account of the research philosophy, strategy and methodology according to which I have conducted this research. Finally, throughout the analysis of the research design, I identified its challenges and limitations.

This research has adopted the critical realism stance, which acknowledges a reflexive approach to reality and the researcher's active participation in data interpretation. Due to the complexity of the partnership processes and the limited previous research in the Greek context, I have selected an embedded case study strategy in which the in-depth research can provide a comprehensive picture of all the variables.

Regarding research methods, I have applied a triangulation approach by using different methods like interviews, questionnaires, storytelling, observation and documentation. Data analysis, following the adopted epistemological approach of this research recognised alongside the critical realism approach, the cyclical and reflexive procedure of data analysis.

Based on the theoretical framework and the research design, the following chapters will discuss the research findings.

Chapter 4: Analysis of case study and context

Introduction

This chapter has two aims: First, to provide a description of the case study offering technical details about where and what happened and who was involved. Second, to identify and analyse main features of the national and local environment in which the partnerships under study had been developed. This analysis will allow the reader to understand comprehensively the specific national and local background of the case study. It will also provide a firm basis upon which to explain the configuration of formal/informal rules and partners' behaviour within partnerships.

Section 1: The case study partnerships

In this section, I briefly outline the main characteristics of CIs EQUAL and LEADER. Additionally, I provide a description of the local EQUAL II and LEADER+ programmes of my primary research by presenting some of their basic features like budget, timescales, activities and area of intervention.

1.1 EQUAL and LEADER Community Initiatives in general

The CIs (such as EQUAL, LEADER, URBAN...) were introduced by reforms of the Structural Funds regulations (CSFs) in 1988 and are governed by the CSF 1260/99 principles (EC, 1260/99). Their distinctive characteristic is that they provide the E.C. with discretion to act independently from central governments, directing structural assistance on specific policy areas that it regards as essential for the promotion of economic and social cohesion. Furthermore, the EC has employed the CIs as flexible mechanisms that allow experimentation with innovative measures and actions that substantially diverge from those incorporated into mainstream policy programmes such as the CSF's (Koutalakis, 2003).

Finally, the most profound innovation is that CIs promote the application of EC policies at the rural and urban level (Hodge, 1996: 38). In the spirit of that, CIs contribute to decentralisation by empowering the local communities and fostering horizontal and vertical cooperation.

EQUAL II CI is testing new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job. Two calls for proposals for EQUAL projects in the member states had taken place so far, the first one in 2001 (EQUAL I or 1st round), the second one in 2004 (EQUAL II or 2nd round). It is the EQUAL II, which is under consideration in my study. EQUAL II operates in 5 thematic fields: employability, entrepreneurialism, adaptability, and equality and asylum seekers. Implementation take place through geographical or sector based Development Partnerships (DPs) that bring together key actors from the local and national level. In addition to partnership, the EQUAL II CI had been guided by the following key principles: thematic approach, empowerment, transnationality, innovation, and mainstreaming (COM (203) 840 final; www.ec.europa.eu/employment-social/equal).

LEADER CI aims at integrated rural development. It started in 1991 with LEADER I, it continued with LEADER II (1994 – 1999) and LEADER+ (2000 – 2006). My case study deals with LEADER+. LEADER has been designed to improve the quality of life of the population in rural areas and to attract young people into the rural economy. LEADER+ is structured around three actions: a. support for integrated territorial development strategies of a pilot nature, b. support for cooperation between rural territories, and c. networking. The programme aims are attained by the implementation of an integrated development strategy for each area of intervention (Local Action Plan) in the context of a significant local issue (Priority Theme), which best encapsulates the nature of local needs. Its implementation takes place through the establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs) bringing together relevant public and private actors at local level. It is guided by the following key principles: bottom-up and area based approach, partnership, integrated and sustainable pilot development strategies around specific themes, inter-territorial and transnational co-operation and networking (2000/C 139/05, www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm)

EQUAL II and LEADER+ co-financed activities in all EU member states. Responsibility for the implementation of these CIs programmes lies with the national authorities of each member state. In each one, monitoring authorities (MAs) are responsible for the design and management of the National CI's programmes, the organisation of the calls for proposals, guidance and support to partnerships such as facilitation of national networking, mainstreaming and evaluation.

1.2 The case study EQUAL II and LEADER + partnerships

The EQUAL II project was called “Incubator for the Development of Social Economy” and it belonged to the Entrepreneurship – Strengthening the Social Economy thematic field of the programme. Its intervention area has been the whole region of Crete¹⁴ (Appendix C, map of Crete). It has been carried out by the DP called KRIKOS (Social & Economic Development Partnership of Crete) encompassing 13 partners from the whole region of Crete. The project coordinator was the Development Agency of Heraklion¹⁵ (Appendix C, map of Heraklion prefecture). The total budget of the project was 1.237.031 euro and it was funded by the European Social Fund (75%) and the Greek Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (25%) (Development Agency of Heraklion, 2004; www.anher.gr).

The project aimed to further support the existing social enterprises in the region and create new ones. The project beneficiaries are the existing social

¹⁴ Crete is the largest island of Greece covering an area of about 8.300 sq.km and it is situated in the south part of Greece. The coastline is over 1.000 km long and there are three big mountain complexes. Crete has about 600.000 inhabitants, of which over a third live in the towns of Heraklion, Chania and Rethymno. The rest of the island is sparsely populated, with large tracts of mountainous areas. Crete is a region divided into 4 prefectures: Chania, Rethymno, Heraklion and Lasithi. At the time of the research, the regions were de-concentrated state organisations while the prefectures and municipalities were local authorities.

¹⁵ The prefecture of Heraklion lies in the central eastern part of Crete. Heraklion city is the capital of the prefecture and of the Crete region. At the time of this study, the prefecture constituted of 26 municipalities and 194 municipal districts (previous municipal authorities). The prefecture landscape is mostly plain and semi- mountainous. Economically, it is the most developed prefecture of Crete and the most densely populated one.

enterprises, the unemployed and women farmers as well as people with disabilities. The main actions of the project were:

1. Operation of one “Support Structure” in each prefecture and a “Centre of Support Structures” in Heraklion prefecture that will assist in the development of social economy in Crete and encourage local actors to support social entrepreneurship.
2. Agreements between local government, private companies and social enterprises with the aim to further promote and support corporate social responsibility.
3. Creation of women’s cooperatives in Crete- at least two in each prefecture- and of training workshops for disabled people. Provision of technical, advisory and financial support to these target groups. Creation of clusters.
4. Creation of a “Showroom of Social Enterprises Products” in a central location in Heraklion Port.

From all these actions, my research focused mainly on the creation of women’s cooperatives in all the four prefectures of Crete and their support by the D.P. However, selected data from other actions like the creation of women cooperatives’ clusters and the training workshops for disabled people have also been integrated in the research analysis in order to complement my understanding about the project.

LEADER+ has been coordinated by the Development Agency of Heraklion like EQUAL II. It has been implemented in the rural and disadvantaged areas of the prefecture of Heraklion (Appendix C, map of LEADER+ area). The LAG consisted of public and private local organisations operating in the project intervention areas. The developmental strategy of the LAG for the area rested on two thematic areas: a. sustainable development for the area by the rational development of resources and the mobilisation of local population b. improvement in the quality of life aiming to develop attractive living conditions (Development Agency of Heraklion, 2002; www.anher.gr)

The total budget was 13.274.051 euro of which the national participation was 2.625.898, 78 euro; the Community participation 5.974.101, 22 euro and the

participation by the project's investors amounted to 4.460.991, 17euro. The main actions that got funded were:

1. The development of agro tourism infrastructures like the construction and improvement of accommodation units, handicraft units and traditional coffee-shops etc
2. Networking and clustering of three categories of enterprises: a. in wine production b. in agro tourism accommodation c. in handicrafts and pottery production.
3. Protection -enhancement and valorisation of the natural and cultural heritage.

From the above actions, I have been more interested in the construction of agro tourism accommodation and the winery clusters since there have been high cost successful investments. However, I have also collected data from clusters of pottery and the housing development of areas with particular cultural interest.

More detailed information and analysis about the case study partnerships' formation and development will be provided in the next chapter, which deals with partnerships' formal rules.

Section 2: National and local context

As mentioned in the first chapter (section 3), the institutions are not developed in a socio-economic and institutional void but are dependent on it and interrelated with it. Thus, in this section, I will present key features of the Greek political system and the larger local socio-economic and institutional context in which partnerships have operated. My attempt will be to understand the way that the partnership rules have embedded norms of the larger environment. I will also try to explain the community needs for development and its readiness to undertake partnership projects.

2.1 Key features of the Greek political system

There is an extensive body of literature (Featherstone, 2005) that analyses the features of Greek politics. In this section, I briefly outline its main aspects. Although many developments have occurred recently, especially after the economic crisis, I confine the analysis only in the period 1995-2005 because it is that period that has actually influenced both partnerships; it is in the 2000s, that the CIs under study have been launched and implemented.

The following features are of particular relevance to this discussion:

2.1.1 State structure and intergovernmental relations

The state is a ‘colossus with feet of clay’ (Mouzelis, 1978; Sotiropoulos, 1993) meaning a huge state with an inefficient administrative structure and highly politicised policy making (Spanou 1996; Sotiropoulos 1993). The policy-making process is marked by authority around “heroic leadership” typically exercised by the prime minister and the ministers (Featherstone, 2005), without technocratic legitimation (Lavdas 1997; Ladi 2002). This leads to political priorities being strongly dependent on (political) interests within government and outside of it.

The highly centralised and hierarchically organised state and the lack of a viable system of sub-national governance are generally considered as the main characteristics of the Greek intergovernmental relations. As many Greek social scientists underline (Ioakimidis, 1998; Verney and Papageorgiou, 1993), the

Greek state was the most centralised and interventionist state in the EU of 12 demonstrating a strong resistance to decentralisation. Consequently, the government in Athens determines the allocation of resources and sets the rules while sub-national authorities are highly dependent on its authority and favour.

More specifically, the financial dependence of sub-national authorities on central state transfers, the functional overlapping of competencies, the controlled and centralised planning development, and the role of political parties as mediators between the central administration and the municipalities are the main features of the Greek intergovernmental relations. They have led to the emergence of an administratively weak, highly party-politicised and state-dependant local government. Within this framework of hierarchical vertical networks, the development of horizontal cooperative actions is difficult to achieve (Paraskevopoulos, 2001).

2.1.2 Civil society

The above features of the Greek state are accompanied by a weak civil society depended on the state and the national parties. In the Greek literature, the subordination of the civil society to the state and the national parties is often perceived as the principal factor for the limited development of NGOs and social movements at the national and local level. The existing research on civil society organisations emphasises their fragmentation, hierarchical structure, small size, financial fragility, lack of links among them and finally lack of a concrete plan of action (Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002; Christoforou, 2004).

The gap between the weak civil society and the strong state is filled by the emergence of clientelistic relations which function as the main informal channels of political integration and participation of the society in the public administration and the political system (Mouzelis, 1995). Furthermore, in the 1980s, the clientelistic networks abandoned their traditional paternalistic character and started developing through national parties. In particular, national parties use the state and public administration to allocate resources to their electorates (Lyritzis, 1993). Additionally, the state society relations are also

marked by heavy legalism and over-regulation (Kazakos, 2001). Legalism is so extensive that the number of laws exceeds the number of 4.000 in our days.

At the local level, the use of clientelistic networks by local authorities has proved to be particularly useful for them. First of all, it has been a precious tool for their legitimation and political empowerment vis-a-vis the citizens. Furthermore, clientelistic relations between local authorities and the state have been a useful tool for the financially weak local authorities as they gain access to more resources. Finally, clientelistic relations help the local authorities to function as a transmission belt of the local demands to the national level (Chlepas, 1994; Christophilopoulou, 1996). In the latter process, mayors achieve the satisfaction of local needs and citizens' requests by using their contacts with political party deputies. Consequently, the reproduction of patronism and clientelistic relations between the state and local authorities, as well as between local authorities and local civil society restrict community involvement and interest groups' participation in the local political affairs since citizens' demands are satisfied by informal procedures (Verney, 1994).

2.1.3 Political culture and social capital

The above features are closely linked to an extremely individualistic political culture and a deep-rooted mistrust of the state. In particular, the Greek political culture is characterised by a strong politicisation of citizens and an individual-particularistic conception of politics (Mouzelis, 1997; Demertzis, 1990). The citizens' strong interest in the political life and the predominance of political language in their daily life contradict their low participation in the public space and the limited emergence of collective action. This particular form of political behaviour is expressed via clientelistic networks (Demertzis, 1994) and behaviour models such as that of "free rider" (Tsoukalas, 1993).

According to the World Values Survey of 1999 (Values Surveys Databank, 1999-2004), in the question asking people to state their agreement on whether people stick to their own affairs, in Greece, 19,5% answered that they strongly agreed and 3,9% strongly disagreed while for the same question, in UK for example, 7% corresponded to strongly agree and 25,9% to strongly disagree.

Following the responses to one question in my questionnaire i.e. the one regarding the level of reciprocity, the individualist attitude has been adopted by more than half of the involved partners (57%) who answered that people are always interested in their own affairs (Appendix B, responses). This question could also be combined with the question about political competence where 87% of partners answered that they were interested in local policy making only in cases that the policy was directly related to their interests (Appendix B, responses).

Low participation and the lack of political trust are also related with the existing national stock of social capital. Greece is a country with low stocks of social capital in terms of social trust and involvement in social networks (Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002). The mistrust gets worse due to the extensive corruption in government and in private sector. “Greek people cannot be controlled by official papers and laws, [...] if they want to do something, they will do it even without applying existing rules and guidelines” the LEADER+ coordinator said laughing when asked to comment on the corruption of the system. While in UK a simple declaration is sufficient for the LEADER investor to verify that he has used the funding in accordance to project requirements the investor, in Greece has to start an endless circle of bureaucratic procedures in order to submit to the project coordinator the certificates that prove how he/she has spent each penny of the funding. It is a way for the state to respond to corruption.

The limits of legitimacy seem to be quite diluted; I was struck by the easiness with which an interviewee whilst evaluating the course of the programme said: “If the investor creates something good for the community, I do not care if it inflates bills” (EU officer).

This section demonstrated that the combination of a centralised and inefficient state structure with a weak civil society and a state-dependant local government has led to hierarchical clientelistic networks, party-dominated political relations, and an individualistic, confrontational and mistrustful

culture. These features seem to constitute major constraints for partnership formation and community involvement forms. Moreover, when collaboration is developed, it is achieved with difficulty and, it is embedded with these features that shape its nature.

2.2 The local context

In this sub section, I will overview the most representing data regarding the socio- economic context of my study area. Additionally, I will discuss the local institutional legacies, the level of social culture development and the type of political culture. I focus only on those institutional legacies and social capital features that are distinct in the geographic area where the partnerships have been implemented. I argue that even if the national context prevents the development and sustainability of collaborative efforts, these partnerships succeeded in being accomplished because the local contextual dough comprising the local society' needs and norms for development corresponded to a big extent to partnership goals.

2.2.1 Local socio-economic context

Both partnerships' intervention area covers a big number of small underdeveloped local municipalities, which are dispersed in the hinterland of Heraklion prefecture. These rural areas are spread around the growth pole of the prefecture, which includes the capital of the region, Heraklion, and developing cities along the prefecture north seaside part. I argue that the economic backwardness of these communities combined with serious demographic problems had supported a unified power for adoption by local actors of collective activities that would guarantee their future economic development.

2.2.1.1. Demographic profile

Since the 1950's, there has been a big immigrant movement of the agricultural population to the nearest big cities¹⁶ in Crete. The internal migration led to the depopulation of small villages, especially the mountainous ones. Table 7 shows

¹⁶ Additionally, some of the farmers have moved to villages in a plain and to the seaside of the island. Due to tourism development, the latest have transformed to small cities.

that in five years (1999-2004), there has been a 7, 21% increase of urbanisation in Crete; much higher than that of the country as a whole (the corresponding rate for the country is 1,68%) causing a decrease of population and dispersion of activities in rural areas.

	Difference between 1999-2004		
	Densely populated zones with over 500 per square meter	Intermediary zones with 100 & 499 per square meter	Sparsely populated zones below 100 per square meter
GREECE	0,44%	1,23%	-1,68%
CRETE	4,98%	2,23%	-7,21%

Table 7: % alteration of urbanisation in Greece and in Crete 1999-2004, author's elaboration. Source: Regional Operational Programme of Crete and Aegean Islands, 2007-2013.

In Heraklion prefecture particularly, the concentration of the population in bigger urban areas and the severe decrease of its rural areas population is also present. The following figure (8) illustrates the changes in population size in all the local authorities of the prefecture in the decade from 1991 to 2001. One can see the increase of population in the city of Heraklion and in the surrounding north seaside local authorities such as Mallion with 43, 23% of population growth, Gouvon with 54, 62%, Gaziou with 72, 96% and Hersonisou with 23,35% respectively.

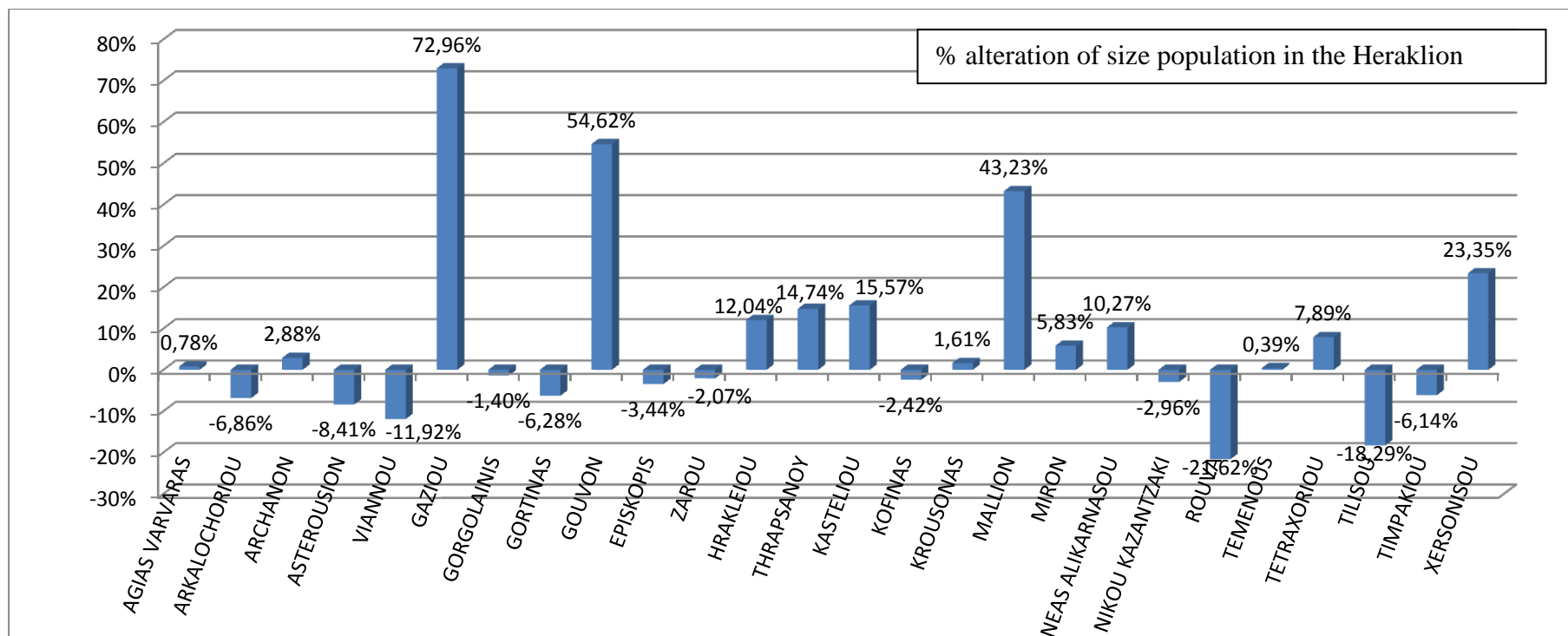


Figure 8: Percentage alteration of size population of the local authorities in the Heraklion prefecture 1991-2001, author's elaboration. Source: ELSTAT, 2010

In the rest of the prefecture, which constitute the main area of the partnerships' intervention, the existing picture of depopulation gets worse with the existence of many municipal departments (MDs)¹⁷ which are small villages with small population. In the following table (8), one can see that the MD population is dispersed across small and very small MDs.

Year 2001			
Size of population in MDs	Number of MDs	Population	
		Number	Percentage
up 500	73	22.832	34%
501-1000	41	28.391	43%
1001-2000	12	15.132	23%
Total	126	66.355	100%

Table 8: (Agricultural) population in MDs. Source: Mid- term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion, 2005

Most of the MDs population (77%) is concentrated in small size MDs of up to 1.000 inhabitants, while only 23% live in MDs with more than 1.000 to 2.000 inhabitants. On the other hand, the countryside of Heraklion has some big villages such as Archanes, Peza, Arkalochori, Castelli, Thrapsano, Avdou, and Gazi. The MDs around these big villages are gradually being abandoned and the population is moving to these centres.

Finally, looking closer at the LEADER+ area of intervention again (Appendix C, map of LEADER+ area), the depopulation of the area is additionally followed by serious demographic problems. In the period 1991-2001, negative changes of some key demographic indicators like juvenility, aging and economic dependence created a concern for the future growth population and regeneration. Based on the mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion (2005), the main changes in the area of LEADER+ intervention are the following:

¹⁷ The MD has been introduced by the law 2539/97, known as Kapodistrias law, which administratively replaced the old autonomous communities following their obligatory amalgamation in bigger municipalities.

- the aging indicator which calculates the number of persons 64 years old or over per hundred persons under age 15 years old increased sharply and from 95,76% reached 150%.
- the indicator of juvenility calculates the number of persons under age 15 per hundred persons 64 years old or over. It is considered as positive the higher the received value. While in 1991, the indicator for the LEADER+ area was characterised relatively satisfactory at a rate of 19, 65%, in 2001 it dropped significantly reaching only 14, 67%.
- the dependency indicator, which reflects the dependence of younger and older people on the productive population (15-64 years) fell from 62,53% to 58,23%.

2.2.1.2. Economic development

Until 2000, despite the downgrading of the demographic profile in these areas, activities of the primary sector such as the cultivation of agricultural products and cattle raising, and some of the third sector activities, mainly the tourism development and the state subsidies, had offered sufficient income to farmers. Based on the 2001 national census (ELSTAT, 2010) the majority of people in the LEADER+ area were still employed in the primary sector (53%) followed by the tertiary sector (32,65%), mainly in tourism business and finally the secondary sector (10,66%).

Nevertheless, the general national economic crisis of the agricultural sector that gradually started in the mid '90s had impacted on the case study area in the beginning of 2000. In the following figure (9), I demonstrate that the decrease of the primary sector during the 1991-2001 decade is evident in all local authorities of the Heraklion prefecture revealing the crisis in farming. In particular, from the 26 municipalities, 13 decreased their primary sector by 15%, 8 municipalities reached a decrease that ranged from 15% to 30% and 5 from 30% to nearly 60%.

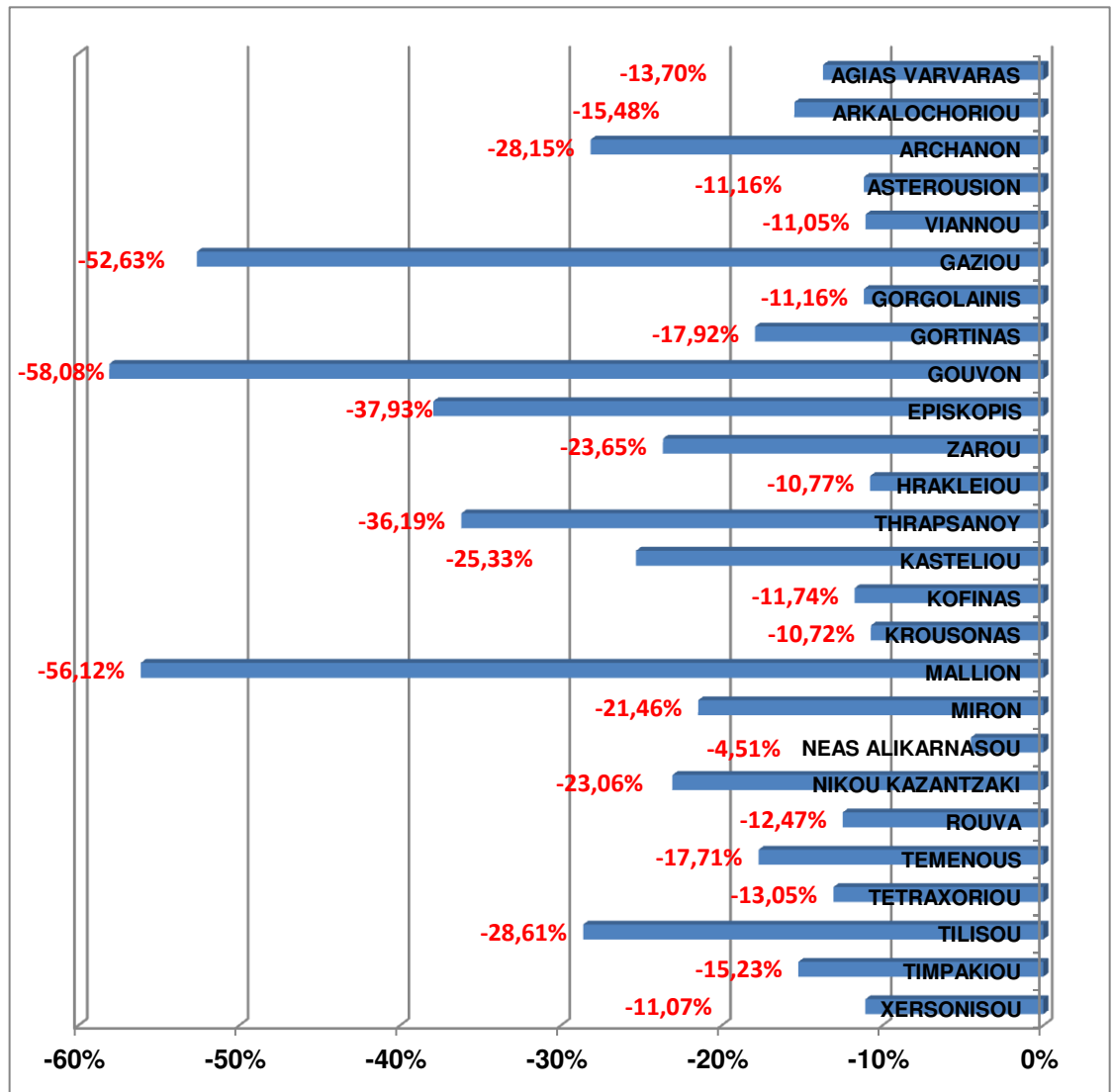


Figure 9: Percentage alteration of primary sector in the municipalities of Heraklion prefecture during 1991-2001, author's elaboration. Source: ELSTAT, 2010

Therefore, the need for developmental interventions that would prevent the future devastation of these small communities came forward. The president of DAH, advocating for the need of implementing local development plans through partnerships pointed out that “Fifteen years ago, there was no significant reason to talk about this because people had an income sufficient enough to live in such rural areas. Today, the situation is very difficult for farmers and for that reason we have to modernise our ideas and ways of intervention”.

Despite the emerging economic crisis by the reduction of the primary sector, Crete responded relatively well in relation to the other regions of Greece. Crete still remains one of the richest regions in Greece and among its prefectures, Heraklion, is the richest one. In the following figure (10) that demonstrates the GDP per capita in each Greek region in 2006, one can see that from the 13 regions of Greece, Crete is the fourth richest region with its GDP per capita reaching 16.828 euro.

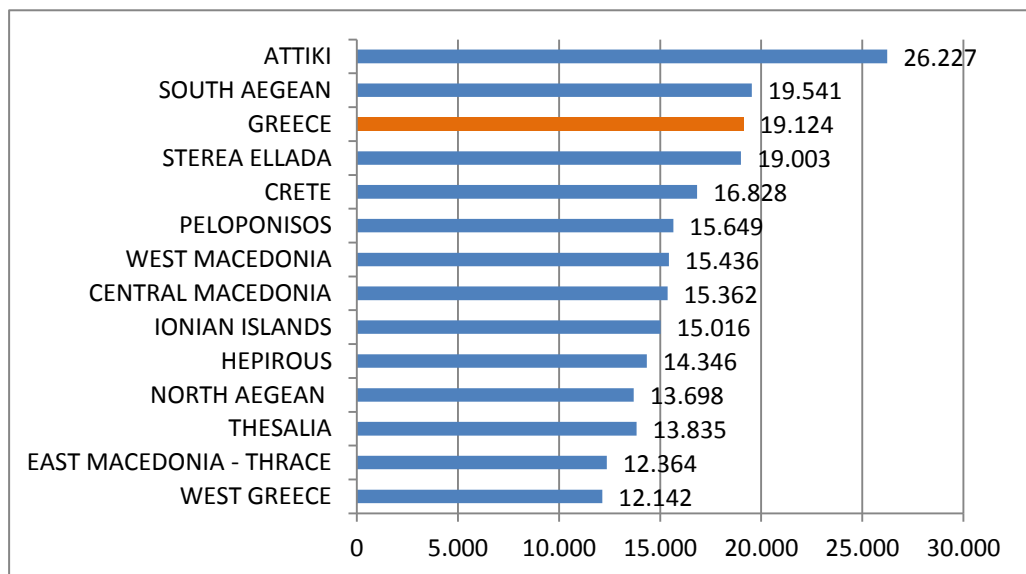


Figure 10: GDP per capita per region, 2006, author's elaboration. Source: ELSTAT, 2010

While the wealth is mainly concentrated in the north part of the prefecture and particularly in the capital of the region, Heraklion, it created multiple economic benefits for the hinterland and the south seacoasts of the region, which are less developed. Consequently, the degree of economic crisis for the farmers living in small villages of Heraklion prefecture is not the same as for example in the region of Hepirous, which is one of the poorest regions with GDP per capita 14.346 euro (see figure 10).

This relative prosperity created an interest for local investments and offered the local deputies better access to central government and power to exercise pressure for more state subsidies and project subsidies. So, while the economic crisis of farmers and the inter-prefectural disparities between north and hinterland played a role of rallying around cooperative efforts of development,

it was also the wealth of the region that played a facilitative role for supporting these cooperative efforts. For that reason, when an executive of EQUAL II M.A. was asked to explain the reasons for the partnership's success in Heraklion she argued that "It's not only the good quality of DAH staff. It is also the area itself, its wealth. For example, the prefecture of Fokida has neither previous experience in projects nor the money to invest; it is a poor area".

2.2.1.3 Geo political position and administrative organisation

The areas of LEADER+ intervention are not only economically deprived; but they are also politically isolated from the centre of decisions, i.e. the ministries located in Athens. Due to their small size and their insularity, they do not have the same access and political influence to the central government as the big local authorities of urban centres. Consequently, their small size, their narrow economic development and their geographical distance from the centre function as a stimulus for the development of joint efforts by community organisations and politicians of these rural communities to solve their problems and to promote development by themselves. As an EQUAL II partner and ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA reported "local authorities in Athens have solved many of their problems that are yet unsolved for us. They are located close to the centre of decision-making. Here, the challenges are so demanding and the tools are so few, that we have to build new ones on our own".

However, the rural communities are in a more advantageous position regarding political access to the central state, in relation to the respective areas in the rest of Crete region. This is because Heraklion is the capital of the region and the biggest in size city of Crete. For these reasons, all public institutions in the region, like for example the regional administration services, are based in Heraklion. In addition, the Heraklion prefecture has more local deputies in the parliament when compared to other prefectures of the region. As we see in the following table (9), the Heraklion prefecture has eight (8) deputies, as many as all the other prefectures together.

Prefecture of Crete	Deputies
Chania	4
Rethymno	2
Heraklion	8
Lasithi	2

Table 9: Number of local deputies per prefecture in Crete, author's elaboration.
Source: Official website of the regional administration of Crete.

By having more political power in the government than the other prefectures of Crete, the Heraklion prefecture could more effectively support its demands to the central state for programme funding.

2.2.1.4 Social organisation

These small in population rural societies enhance proximity, which supports the development of interpersonal relations that could facilitate the circulation of information and the development of dense formal and informal relations between partners. For instance, people working in the DAH could meet with potential project beneficiaries in venues as for example in the market, at local festivals, in name-day celebrations and information about the project could be exchanged.

Moreover, potential partners could easily meet in public places like in informative meetings held by the Regional Council or in the inauguration of a public construction. They are likely known to each other not only by their institutional position but also by their family and friends. The coordinator of the EQUAL II describing the partners' selection reported that "they are people that we meet very often, we know them" and the coordinator of LEADER+ pointed out about the beneficiaries: "there is no need to come to my office because when I go to the market, 200 people stop me and ask me questions". The ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA who was also an EQUAL II partner speaking about the development of partnerships added "We know each other in this community. This can be both good and bad, but I know who to go to, the community is not that big".

Even though the population being small size is defined as a positive factor for the partnership development due to the creation of extensive interpersonal relations, it can also be an obstacle for the partnership development and the sustainability of partnership membership. In regards to the latter, the development of a partnership needs a sufficient population size that can support its outputs. For example, the operation of a social support office needs a sufficient number of beneficiaries in order to realise its policies. For instance, in a deserted village of 1.000 habitants, a social service could not function properly and the cost-benefit evaluation of the service would be negative.

As a result, in rural areas, like the ones in my study, the initiation of the partnership and its development could only be supported by villages with a bigger density of population. It is not by chance that Archanes, a large village of 5.000 habitants (Appendix C, photo of Archanes) was the place where the DAH and other organisations of inter-municipal cooperation (like KOINOPOLITIA) were initiated.

One more social feature of these rural areas that certainly influenced the initiation of both partnerships is the existence of vulnerable groups such as disabled people, unemployed women and young people. Below, I mainly focus on data about unemployed women since women's cooperatives have been one of the main target groups of the EQUAL II partnerships (see section 1 of this chapter).

In the Greek province, women are usually trapped in traditional social roles, mainly that of parenting and informal support of family income that would not allow them to pursue a career. In cases that they manage to access the labour market, they fail to remain engaged for long due to problems of matching their family and professional life.

As regards the employment of women in the whole country, it appears that women have lower rates of full employment than men while the employment rate is higher in part-time jobs that require limited skills. In particular, when both projects started being implemented, in 2006, the female employment rate

in EU 27 was 57, 1%, while Greece was one of the countries with the lowest female employment rate at 47, 4%. The situation in Crete was even worse, since the employment rate for the second trimester of 2007 was 40, 05% for women. Furthermore, women appear to remain unemployed longer than men (First evaluation report of EQUAL II “Incubator for the Development of Social Economy in Crete”, 2006).

The problem of women’s unemployment is combined with the almost nonexistent national and local social policies for this category of the population. In particular, in Greece, social policy in general is elementary; especially at local level. It was just after 2000 that social programmes started to run in local authorities by the opening up of funding from the European Social Funds (Petmesidou, 2006). However, the main social policy provisions still remained limited and centralised. Discussing this with the ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA, he said that “Social policies were not enough in Greece and they stopped at the regional level; there were no public bodies responsible for implementing these at a lower level”. Consequently, “there was a big deficit in local authorities”.

Summary

The following table (10) demonstrates the local socio-economic factors and the needs/opportunities that have arisen for supporting collective action. They have fertilised an environment for the development of a unified power among partners, “a power to” using Stone’s (1989) concept where partners decide to commit to collaboration in order to find solutions for their common problems.

More specifically, the partnership goals have responded to local needs for development due to economic backwardness, demographic problems and political/administrative isolation. Moreover, the partnership operation has taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the specific local community characteristics like the prefecture’s economic prosperity and relations of proximity. Although the area of intervention for these partnerships had a lot of economic and demographic problems, the fact that the area was part of a rich

prefecture offered a double dynamic that not only boosted collective action but it also facilitated it.

Facilitating local contextual factors	Needs	Opportunities
Demographic problems	Keep young people in their villages	
Economic backwardness of rural areas	Local economic development	
Rich and big size of prefecture		Sufficient prosperity for capital mobilisation and political influence
Geographical distance from the centre of decision making	Self-development	
Vulnerable groups: unemployed women	Integrated economic policies	
Small size communities		Proximity

Table 10: Facilitating local socio-economic factors

2.2.2 Institutional legacies and social capital

2.2.2.1 Learning from the past: Cohesion policy and previous partnerships

Since the accession of Greece in EU in 1981 and until the implementation of the CIs under study, there were three periods of ESF funding, the implementation of Integrated Mediterranean Programmes in the mid-1980s and finally various Community Initiatives. In fact, the whole Greece became eligible for Objective 1 structural funding from 1989 to 2006. Afterwards, five out of twelve regions ceased to qualify for this type of funding (Getimis & Demetropoulou, 2004; Bache et al, 2011) Eventually, this large scale funding through the Cohesion Funds and the EU imperatives for convergence led the Greek regional policy to concede with the Community Structural Policy and the CSF as planning instrument to replace all other forms of development plans (Andrikopoulou & Kafkalas, 2004).

However, the incompatibility between the Community Structural Policy requirements such as partnership and programming and the peculiarities of the Greek polity (section 2.1 of this chapter) created considerable adaptational

pressures to Greece just after its accession. In this respect, it was not coincidental that the first accession years had been characterised by a negative stand and commitment reluctance on the part of the Greek state (Getimis & Demetropoulou, 2004). For instance, the planning of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes had been the outcome of the ministerial politicians and high executives' actions instead of regional and local horizontal and vertical networks. In this way, the local needs and demands were ignored causing significant difficulties during implementation and resulting in the lowest absorbance rate among the beneficiary states (Papageorgiou & Verney, 1992).

According to Andreou (2006), overall, the impact of cohesion policy in Greece regarding multi level governance had almost left untouched the intergovernmental relations with regional networks having slowly developed and dominated by state actors and with social dialogue having remained particularly underdeveloped. However, he points out the set up of task specific governing bodies like the local development agencies of my case which even if they did not function as policy makers, they still had an impact upon the existing management system. In particular, the management of EU policy issues requires specialised skills and technocratic knowledge which necessitate a shift towards more managerial practices which will secure better monitoring and administration of programmes (Getimis & Demetropoulou, 2004). Consequently, the most important shift due to cohesion policy referred to the organisational patterns of politics: "Cohesion policy was shrouded in a technocratic mantle and placed almost exclusively in the hands of politically controlled experts" (Andreou, 2006:255).

This is related with the process of (social) learning through the long term engagement of actors with EU cohesion policy (Bache, 2008; Paraskevopoulos, 2005). For instance, Paraskevopoulos (2005) in his investigation of the implementation of structural funds in transport infrastructure in Greece since the mid 1990s identified two processes of policy learning: "learning from past successes and failures" and "learning from abroad". However, the latter policy learning is "thin" since it is not accompanied by changes in social norms due to

the specific features of the Greek institutional and policy making structure. Andreou (2010) points out that in Greece the principle of policy performance with the adoption and diffusion of new management practices in the administration is the result of a “thick” learning during the implementation of EU cohesion policy.

In relation to my case, networking and transfer of know-how from previous programmes to new ones was mostly a gradual learning process of new practices and attitudes between the old and new involved partners leading to some extent to a “thick” learning in terms of altering actors’ preferences regarding partnerships and programming. In fact, even in both EU CIs’ evaluation reports (EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL 2000-2006, 2006; Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005), the implementation of previous projects has been identified as an essential factor for the success of new ones.

For instance, areas with previous experience in LEADER have had a competitive advantage in accelerating the start of a next LEADER, especially where a strong core of human resources (staff, local politicians, voluntary organisations) who understand the LEADER philosophy, its principles and approach already exists. The conclusions of the EU evaluation reports are also confirmed in my interview with an EU officer, geographical responsible of LEADER+ in Greece: “When I got appointed to this position, we were already planning the third period of the programme; therefore any problems that arose during the first period had already been overcome”.

Regarding my case study, the DAH had already realised a number of projects that required the establishment of partnerships (LEADER I & II, EQUAL I, INTERREG III, LIFE, etc). The gap between the partners that had the experience of previous partnerships and the new ones has been clearly presented during the interview with the LEADER+ coordinator: “there is a big gap between the new municipalities that enter LEADER+ and the old ones. And the gap is big not only among elected representatives but also among people, i.e. the investors”. The previous partnerships impact on the partnerships

under study in various ways: first, they have formed a sustainable network of cooperation between local institutions; second, they have cultivated a collaborative culture and a managerial attitude to their partners and, finally, they have established adequately trained staff familiar with the financial and administrative management of European programmes.

Regarding the creation of a stable network, the ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA argued “what is left of these partnerships are the established contacts resulting from the partners collaboration so, in any future cooperation, we have a list of potential partners ready” (Ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA). This did not happen overnight. The gradual cooperation of partners in previous projects or in the extension of the same programme, (i.e EQUAL I and LEADER I, II) for years has led to the creation of stable networks. Partners could go back to these networks and mobilise their relationships for building new projects. Explaining the selection of EQUAL II partners, the coordinator of EQUAL II underlined that: “this was not a sudden, strictly political decision; it was the result of many years of cooperation. Indeed, three quarters of DP’s composition was formed by partners who were involved in EQUAL I and “ISOKRATIA” partnerships which were coordinated by the DAH. Therefore, these partners had already gained knowledge on social policy projects and ability to cope with programme obligations and implementation procedures. “Partners were aware of the target group needs from previous project experience, so we further developed this knowledge so as to maximise collaboration” (National external evaluator of EQUAL II) .

In relation to the second factor, the acquisition of the collaboration culture and managerial skills, the frequent participation of local institutions to partnerships have gradually created trust and familiarity to this kind of policy making. “Fifteen years ago, there was a programme called “Innovative regions in Europe”. At that time, there were many conflicts among partners, as for example, who would be the leader, who would get more money. This did not happen in EQUAL II. There was a greater spirit of conciliation, as for example on budget reforming” (Director of EDAP).

So, if at the beginning, partnership is a totally strange way of working, the partners gradually understand the rules of the “game” and they feel more confident with “playing” it: “EQUAL I was a test of project methodology for us; in EQUAL II, the cooperation of the partners was smoother” (Director of KOINOPOLITIA). Partners learn to listen, to negotiate, to plan and to become seriously committed to the obligations towards other partners. They get more persistent and consensual on the one hand, and more professional and daring on the other hand. “In the beginning, all the new actors, the mayor, the staff and the beneficiaries are reluctant but in a next project, they become more courageous and demanding” (LEADER+ coordinator).

In particular, if I look more systematically at the geographical origin of the people’s demands for investment in LEADER+, about 84% of investment’ applications came from municipalities who participated in LEADER II (northern part of Heraklion) and only 16% from new municipalities (southern part of Heraklion) (Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion, 2005). Therefore, it is assumed that there is a relationship between the beneficiaries’ motivation to participate to LEADER+ and prior experience in the areas of LEADER II. In areas that local people have already experienced LEADER bottom up approach and they know what this programme is about, they trust it.

As far as programme management is concerned, the development of qualified staff in DAH by its participation in previous programmes is related to the CIs preparation and submission to the state in a timely and accurately way as well as to their efficient implementation. In particular, in LEADER +, the activation of the LAG took place in time. Since the announcement of EU LEADER + until the call of interest by the Greek MA, the LAG information office, already established in LEADER II, had started a series of information campaigns to local people and completed the project design (Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion, 2005). In EQUAL II too, previous experience in EQUAL I helped the DAH to design the whole programme timely, along with its activities and to estimate realistically the cost of the

programme's activities (First evaluation report of EQUAL II "Incubator for the Development of Social Economy in Crete, 2006).

Previous experience in partnerships is a significant resource for efficient project management at the central level too. All the interviewees from both CIs and MAs underlined the benefits from the cumulative experience acquired from LEADER I and II as well as from EQUAL I. The ex-general secretary of LEADER+ MA describing the problems of LEADER organisation at state level mentioned that "there were not so many problems in LEADER+. Everyone, from the LDAs to the MAs' executives, has learned how to do their job", while the ex-general secretary of EQUAL II MA commented that "the accumulative experience from collaborative projects such as ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT helped us to organise the MA well, to implement EQUAL following a good management system".

2.2.2.2 Political stability and strong political leadership

In the Heraklion prefecture, there is a tradition of strong visionary mayors. The director of the DAH stated with relief that "At least in Crete, and especially in the prefecture of Heraklion, mayors' work adheres to quality standards and they have all together understood the way to confront and solve the problems of local society. This is very important. They are open- minded".

It is no coincidence, that most of the mayors in Heraklion prefecture have more than two consecutive tenures. The successive electoral victories of the same mayor could be related to efficient and visionary personality who knows well the problems of the community and they struggle for their development. The following table (11) demonstrates the frequency of mayors' tenures and each ones' party affiliation in every local authority of the prefecture during the last 5 electoral periods, starting from 1990 until 2006. As shown in the table, mayors do not change frequently; the same mayors have been elected again and again in the same communities. In fourteen municipalities from the twenty-six of the prefecture, mayors have been elected up to three times consecutively; in the case of Arkalochori, Gorgolainis, and N. Kazantzaki the mayors have not changed at all. Indeed, some of the mayors with a lot of continuous tenures

constitute the main informal network of decision-making inside DAH such as the Mayors of Arkalochori, N. Kazantzaki, Archanon and Episkopis, (discussed in more detail in chapter 6).

Impressive is also their homogeneity in their party affiliation. With few exceptions, all mayors belong to the socialist party PASOK, one of the two biggest political parties in Greece. As already discussed, political parties are strong in local politics and there are rivalries among them that could block local policies. Fortunately for the partnerships of my case study, the mayors' same political affiliation had ensured a lesser influence of political parties although internal micro conflicts in the same political party do exist at the local level and had been reproduced through the existing networks within both partnerships (discussed in more detail in chapter 6). Moreover, the almost identical political affiliation of the mayors created and still creates a unified front to the state for meeting their demands despite having caused collateral practices of clientelism and corruption.

		Electoral Period				
		1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
a/a	L.A/ mayor (X1-X5) per electoral period and political affiliation	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
1.	AGIA VARVARA	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 INDEPENDENT	X3 INDEPENDENT	X5 PASOK
2.	ARKALOCHORI	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK
3.	ARCHANON	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X4 PASOK
4.	ASTEROUSION	X1 PASOK	X2 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X5 PASOK
5.	VIANNOU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X5 COLLECTIVE
6.	GAZIOU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK
7.	GORGOLAINIS	X1 COLLECTIVE	X1 COLLECTIVE	X1 COLLECTIVE	X1 COLLECTIVE	X1 COLLECTIVE
8.	GORTINAS	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK
9.	GOUVON	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X5 PASOK
10.	EPISKOPIS	X1 LEFT	X1 LEFT	X1 LEFT	X1 LEFT	X1 LEFT
11.	ZAROU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK
12.	HRAKLEION	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X5 PASOK
13.	THRAPSANOS	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK
14.	KASTELEI	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK
15.	KOFINAS	X1 INDEPENDENT	X1 INDEPENDENT	X1 INDEPENDENT	X4 PASOK	X1 INDEPENDENT
16.	KROUSONAS	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X5 PASOK
17.	MALLION	X1 PASOK	X2 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 COLLECTIVE	X5 PASOK
18.	MIRON	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 COLLECTIVE	X4 COLLECTIVE	X3 COLLECTIVE
19.	NEA ALIKARNASO	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK
20.	N. KAZANTZAKI	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK
21.	ROUVA	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X3 PASOK
22.	TEMENOUS	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X5 PASOK
23.	TETRAXORIOU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK
24.	TILISOU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X3 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK
25.	TIMPAKIOU	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X4 NX4	X5 PASOK
26.	XERSONISOS	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X1 PASOK	X4 PASOK	X4 PASOK

Table 11: Mayors and party affiliation in the five (5) last electoral periods of the municipalities of Heraklion prefecture, authors' elaboration

During my visits to the research field, the interviewees have very often mentioned two mayors to whom they attributed a very dynamic political profile and appeared to respect: Stavros Arnaoutakis and Nikos Kalochristianakis. Both of them, the last and the current Mayors of Archanes, played a significant role for the development of many policies. They had also created and supported an environment of innovation for municipal councillors and executives to take initiatives for local development. Describing the activism of that period, the ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA underlined that “everyone interested was obliged to follow that stream of thought and action”.

Stavros Arnaoutakis, Mayor of Archanes and president of the DAH from 1990 until 2004, has established the DAH and has been characterised as a visionary man who managed to overcome the localists’ attitudes of mayors (discussed in more detail below) by establishing values of trust and credibility in his relations with other mayors. It is for that reason that in his last tenure, the fourth one, he got 82% of votes. “The DAH had an Arnaoutaki who was clever, of a higher calibre as compared to the level of the Greek province (EU officer)”. Going even further back, in the 1980s, two mayors of Crete have been mentioned as veterans of local government not only for Crete but for the whole of Greece: George Klados, Mayor of Anogia and Nikos Petrakis, Mayor of Sitia. Both had undertaken initiatives very innovative for the local authorities at that time. They had supported entrepreneurialism in local authorities, inter-municipal cooperation with the development of LDAs and sustainable local development policies.

The 30-year history of succession of “important” mayors has consolidated a political environment that presupposes future mayors of “quality” in terms of political management and entrepreneurialism. Furthermore, the importance given by all these mayors in inter municipal cooperation had fostered a culture of collaboration vis-a-vis attitudes of localism creating informal networks of cooperation like the network of “old mayors” in the DAH (discussed in more detail in chapter 6)

The obligatory merge of small communities into bigger geographical and administrative local authorities under the programme Kapodistrias (L.2539/1997) has also positively influenced the development of partnerships and facilitated mayors' activities. This institutional change at the administrative level has created fewer but bigger local government units, which after the first shock of unification, cooperation recorded in local authorities as a "good" thing. Additionally, since there were numerically fewer local authorities than previously, cooperation among lesser local authorities appeared to be easier in terms of political agreements among mayors.

2.2.2.3 Level of social capital

As already mentioned above, Greece is characterised by a weak civil society with low level of social capital endowments and an individualist political culture. However, in the region of Crete, it seems that the social capital is more developed, which explains in its turn, the smoother development of cooperation. In their study for the level of social capital in each Greek region, Jones et al (2008:184) concluded that "the average social capital score of the region of Crete differs in a statistically significant way" from the average social capital scores of all other regions.

Furthermore, there are some variations of the level of social capital at prefectural level with Heraklion prefecture supporting higher levels of trust and cooperative culture than the other 3 prefectures of Crete. For instance, in EQUAL II, the establishment of cooperatives in the prefecture of Rethymno encountered much more problems relating to beneficiaries' behaviour and their difficulty to be mobilised at a professional level than in the prefecture of Heraklion. By contrast, the mobilisation of women in the prefecture of Heraklion was achieved more smoothly and the problems of their business organisation have been solved more easily (in the interview with the EQUAL II coordinator). Indeed, from the existing 29 women cooperatives in all Crete, 16 are operating in the prefecture of Heraklion while the remaining 13 are dispersed in the rest of the three regions (Lasithi (3), Chania (5), Rethymno (5) (Statistics for social enterprises in Crete, 2005).

Nevertheless, this argument must be supported with caution not only due to the fact that “measuring social capital is a notoriously difficult exercise” (Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002: 2), but also to the problem of data availability both contemporarily and across time. Unfortunately, there are only two studies that offer some data for the Cretan social capital, of which only one is specialised in the Heraklion prefecture¹⁸. Additional to these, the 23 questionnaires distributed to both partnerships’ partners, and some of accounts provided by the interviewees complement the following analysis of the social capital in Heraklion. In particular, the analysis comprises social capital features of Crete and especially of the Heraklion prefecture that differ to a certain extent from those at national level. These features are trust, belonging and collaborative culture.

Trust

As already has been discussed, trust is not an established value at the national level and every time people have to prove that they can be trusted by others as well as to be convinced that they can trust others. Revisiting the partnerships under consideration, partners and beneficiaries spend energy in developing relations of trust not only with each other but also towards the partnership institution itself.

However, the starting point of trust building is not as low as in other areas of Greece. Based on the questionnaire data and the conclusions of the two aforementioned studies, I argue that trust is higher between individuals at the same horizontal level and average between individuals and institutions (see chapter 1, section 3.4.2). According to the study by Jones et al (2008), the level of trust between citizens in the Cretan region reaches the highest score (3, 85 at a 10 per cent significance level) of all the Greek regions (civic culture) while the trust of citizens towards institutions (generalised trust) had almost the same score as in all the other regions (5, 26 at a 10 per cent significance level).

¹⁸The study of Regional Social Capital in Europe (2005) focuses exclusively in the prefecture of Heraklion while the study by Jones N. et al (2008) focuses on variations in Greek regions.

In relation to the administered questionnaire, the analysis of responses about trust among individuals confirmed that trust is relatively sufficient (57% responded that the level of trust is relative) and it gets higher when people belong to the same social and professional group¹⁹. Furthermore, regarding the question about trust towards formal institutions, 48% declared high trust while 43% relative. Despite the limited data, there is evidence that the Heraklion prefecture seems to enjoy higher level of civic trust than the average of Greece (and Crete) as a whole.

Belonging

For Greek people, family plays a significant role in their life. According to the World Survey of 1999 (Values Surveys Databank, 1999-2004), the importance of family in Greece is obvious by the fact that 82,3 % participants when asked about family importance replied that they regard it very important; 15,3% stated that it is rather important (Values Surveys Databank, 1999-2004). The Greek tradition on extended strong familial ties is apparent in Crete too. This feature is more intense in rural areas where the crisis of nuclear families (see for example single parent families and divorce rates) in urban areas has not impacted in the same degree on these small communities where more traditional styles of living do exist.

Additionally, there is one more aspect of belonging in the Cretan communities that of strong localism derived from the communities' small size and the region's history. It is the power of this strong localism that guided the director of the DAH to affirm that "what we do it is on our own here". In particular, the habitants of the island define themselves as Cretan in relation to the rest of the Greek people; they believe they are different from them and they also are proud to have been born in Crete. Additionally, Cretan people are considered to be different and particular by the rest of the Greek people. On the one hand, there are some specific positive character traits attributed to Cretans like braveness, dignity, and honour, gatekeepers of tradition, creativity and

¹⁹ In particular, in the question regarding the level of reciprocity within the same social and professional groups, 83% responded that they help others if necessary

hospitality. On the other hand, there are stereotypes of violent character, egoism, revolutionary and touchiness (Astrinaki, 2002).

Individuals define themselves by the village where they were born. Each village “legates” a particular history and some behavioural characteristics to its inhabitants and it is the base for the formation of a social and cultural coiling towards the external world. “In the village, the solidarity is based on the interpersonal relations and the common cultural similarities. They care about each other, as if they are members of their family” (Ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA). Therefore, the identity of origin is a reference point for a Cretan. Even if an individual moves to another place, he/she keeps the relation with the place of origin practically but also socially and ideologically. For example, people from Sfakia, a mountainous village in the north of the Heraklion prefecture, regardless of where they go, they “remain, feel, call themselves Sfakianoï and they will behave like Sfakianoï” (Astrinaki, 2002: 36). I will never forget how proud the Mayor of Gorgolainos was of his village; indeed, a very beautiful village with plenty of vineyards. During our interview, he spent ten minutes describing the village’s natural beauty and historical heritage ending by saying “I am very proud to be the mayor of such a village”.

The strong ties of family and place of origin create a common identity and diffuse an attitude of solidarity in its members against those living outside the island. It is like extending the Banfield assumption about the role of the family “anyone who stands outside the small circle of the family are at least potential competitors” (1958: 111) with one more feature, that of the village. In a partnership, this solidarity could be translated as a facilitating factor for cooperation in the partners’ every day communication and as a unifying power of creativity for further partnership development. As commented by the president of Krousaniotissa women’s cooperative: “Fortunately, local societies are small and everyone makes concessions and compromises”.

Nevertheless, there are not only advantages attributed to belonging in a place; there are problems too. Granovetter’s (1973) analysis on the disadvantages of strong ties may be more relevant to Crete than any other region. The strong

micro- localism of each community creates conditions of conflict with the other communities by intervening in the relations of partners and especially in mayors' relations regarding budget distribution. Localism is a factor of conflict: "In Crete, local partnerships are very difficult because there is a localism of different types" (Ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA). These types are related to different geographical levels of belonging; i.e. the place of origin, the prefecture where the village of origin belongs to and Crete as a whole.

For example, one partner referring to inter-prefectural competitiveness affirmed that "There are strong geographical disagreements and competitions between east and west Crete with regards to the bidding for state subsidies" (Executive of the LDA Sitia) while the Mayor of Arkalochori revealed old inter-municipal conflicts in the same prefecture between two local development agencies that have merged into a new one, the DAH. "In the '80s, there were two local development agencies that competed strongly against each other".

With regards to regional identity, withholding of information and competitiveness practices by the DAH during the exchange of good practices in meetings of the national thematic network have been mentioned in the interviews with the executives of the EQUAL II MA: "They are quite introvert people. Their local identity makes them successful because it unifies them. However, this introversion keeps them isolated."

Culture of cooperation

Another feature of social capital that is more developed than in other parts of Greece is the culture of cooperation. In Jones' et al study (2008), Crete shares the third highest score in the growth of formal networks and the fifth place regarding the informal networks. Moreover, the existence of extensive formal and informal networks of solidarity has often been mentioned in the interviews. Looking closer at these networks, they have been initiated by private and/or public organisations and they have focused on the provision of social services to disadvantaged groups. However, these institutions mainly promote bonding

between families with common characteristics while bridging is less developed (see chapter 1, section 3.4.2).

Also at the economic level, there are more agricultural cooperatives in the Cretan region in relation to the rest of Greece, which shows that habitants are more familiar with cooperative practices. While in 1989, 74, 9% of the agricultural population of Greece were members of agricultural co-operatives, membership was higher in Crete with 84, 6% respectively (Patronis, 1999). Especially in the Heraklion prefecture, one interviewee mentioned that it was the Heraklion prefecture that firstly developed an extended number of cooperatives and later on all the other Cretan prefectures followed “You should know that here in Chania, we do not have so many cooperatives as in Heraklion because we have a collaborative problem; there is a difference in culture in terms of cooperation” (Executive of LDA OADYK).

The high associational membership in the prefecture of Heraklion is also confirmed by a research on the agricultural development of Crete (Alexiou, 2000), which claims that the higher percentage of agricultural participation in cooperatives has been from the prefecture of Heraklion with 89,9% followed by the prefecture of Chania with 88%, Rethymno with 82% and Lasithi with 75%. In the same study, Heraklion presented also the lowest percentage of farmers’ passive participation in the cooperatives with only 22,8% of farmers doing very little with the activities of the cooperatives while in Chania the corresponding percentage is 57,7%, in Rethymno 34% and in Lasithi 45,2% respectively. Consequently, the development of social networks and agricultural cooperatives could constitute an evidence of stronger social capital in the prefecture.

The collective action is stimulated not only at the social and economic level but also at the politico-administrative one. There is an inter-municipal cooperation called KOINOPOLITIA, which comprises 42 Cretan local authorities for the provision of social municipal services. Interestingly, this inter-municipal cooperation has been initiated in Archanes where the DAH was also established and it was a key member of EQUAL I and II projects. Since this

type of inter-municipal cooperation does not exist in other parts of Greece, it could also complement my argument about the existence of a stronger social capital in the prefecture of Heraklion.

If bonding is very strong in the region of Crete, bridging and linking have started to expand only recently, as a result of EU funded projects. It appears that the region and particular the prefecture of Heraklion has entered a phase whereby networks between organisations from the civil society sector are multiplying and cooperation between organisations from different geographical levels has started to develop (Regional Social Capital in Europe, 2005).

Networking is expanded to the whole region of Crete reaching the point where “there are some organisations from different prefectures and with different legal identities that consider themselves permanently as partners at the level of Crete (Executive of NELE). However, there is a disadvantage in networking, that of strong density. In the case of the Heraklion prefecture, it appeared that there is a reproduction of the same institutions and the same individuals in local politics. This is a feature of small communities: engaged individuals and individuals available for participating are not that many and the active organisations are a few. “You know how relationships are here, especially at this level, there are few that are active and interested” (Consultant of the Port Authority). Looking at all the cooperative projects realised by the DAH the last decade, the same partners participated in the established partnerships over and over again as for example ZEUXIS, KOINOPOLITIA, NELE of Heraklion and the LDAs.

This has also been illustrated by the answers provided to the administrated questionnaire regarding the degree of overlapping of the same actors in the networks. Eighty three per cent answered that the same people are involved in the networks and only 17% responded that there is a small overlap.

Finally, it appears that local authorities tend to cooperate more easily with social organisations and lesser with private firms and vice versa. Answers provided to questions regarding the level of cooperation between local

authorities with social organisations and local firms, illustrated a difference in the level of local authorities' cooperation with these two categories. If in the case of private firms, 57% characterised the cooperation with local authorities low, in the case of social organisations, the cooperation scores higher, with 43, 48% of the participants characterising the cooperation strong and 39,13% moderate.

Summary

Regarding institutional legacies, (table 12) I identified: a. the development of networks and attitudes of cooperation of the involved partners due to their participation in previous rounds of the two CIs and other collaborative projects b. the political stability and strong political leadership in the Heraklion prefecture. The first institutional legacy has facilitated the projects' management and implementation. Political stability has established a stable channel of communication between mayors, which has reduced the confrontations within the partnerships and has created a unified power towards the state. Additionally, the strong political leadership by overcoming the traditional irrational political practices of party clientelism and corruption - to a certain extent- has created an environment of trust towards the partnerships and has facilitated the smooth implementation of the partnerships' formal rules.

Institutional legacies	Features that impact on partnerships
Prior networking	Collaborative culture, trust, expertise
Political stability	Stable network of communication, less confrontations, unified power towards the state
Strong political leadership	Modernised and visionary practices of policy making

Table 12: Institutional legacies and their impact on the partnerships of the case study

Regarding the level of social capital (see next table), it is argued that the higher levels of generalised and civic trust and networking have enhanced cooperation and trust among partners.

Level of social capital	Features that impact on partnerships
Higher generalised and civic trust	Collaborative attitudes and trust between partners
High level of bonding: formal and informal networking	Collaborative attitudes and trust between partners
Strong belonging and dense networking	Diverse localist demands, limited openness to new partners
Low level of bridging and linking	Difficulties in cooperation with different groups horizontally and vertically

Table 13: Level of social capital and its impact on the partnerships of the case study

Elements of strong belonging and dense networking have also created collaborative problems by the intervention of diverse localism demands and limited openness in different ideas and interests. This had successively an impact upon the democratic representation of the community and the equally distributed stock of social capital among new members.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I offered an outline of the case study partnerships for which more additional material and analysis will be provided in the next chapter regarding formal rules.

Moreover, I have analysed some key contextual factors of the local and national context in order to explain the empirical evidence about rules' configuration and partners' behaviour within partnerships discussed in the following chapters. My conclusion is that although EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnerships were "imposed" by EU funding opportunities and their requirements were "new and strange" to partners, they managed to commit to the project principles and build a network of collaboration because there were specific local contextual factors, differentiated from the national dominant values and practices that have facilitated collaborative activity.

Chapter 5: Partnership' formal rules arrangements

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the partnerships' formal rules as they appeared in official documents (joint ministerial decrees, laws, directives, regulations and guidelines) and statements of politicians and chief executives at the EU, national and local level. These rules had prescribed the partnerships' operation of the case study. As mentioned in the first chapter, neo-institutional analysis is not completed, if it is deprived of the classic institutional study of formal rules.

I argue that not only had these formal rules initiated partnership as a new way of policy-making in the Heraklion prefecture, but they have also additionally impacted on the national and local political coordination by supporting new policy tools and sectors of intervention. As reported in an interview "Greece has had no experience of collective action in policy-making, so they started from scratch" (EU officer, geographical responsible of LEADER). I further argue that although the main player for the partnerships' formal rules formulation was the EU, there was also a variability feature (see chapter 1, section 2.1) in these rules that enhanced the possibility for national and local coordinators to adapt them to the domestic context.

I have selected five (5) formal rules included in CIs principles and guidelines as well as in joint ministerial decrees as adapted by the Greek state. These formal rules have been selected because they have been directly related with the organisation and implementation of collective action. For each rule, I will discuss the way that it has been implemented horizontally by the involved partners and vertically as the result of the relationship between EU, the Greek state and local partnership coordinators. I will also discuss issues of institutional change by identifying the impact of these formal rules on local and to a lesser extent on national political organisation and policy-making.

First rule: Partnership and openness of decision-making

1.1. The CIs partnership rule and its vertical adaptation

According to the partnership principle underlying both initiatives, the private sector, the non-governmental organisations and the beneficiaries should gain access to partnership policy-making processes building up on their interaction with government institutions at all levels of public administration in order to realise the CI's policy goals.

In LEADER +, the partnership principle had to be realised by the establishment of LAG. It was a local partnership that had the task to formulate and implement the local development strategy plan, make decisions about the allocation of financial resources to investors and coordinate the whole programme.

According to the LEADER+ guideline, LAG should involve public, civil society and private actors. The private and association partners should make up at least 50% of the local partnership (Commission Notice 139/05, 2005:7).

According to EQUAL guideline (COM 840, 2003), the partnership principle has to be realised through the establishment of DP. The latter should gather several public, semi-public or private organisations, which would be in charge of planning and implementing the initiative. In both partnerships, the partners had to participate in the decision-making process on an equal footing while one of the partners was assigned with the administrative and financial co-ordination; they are the project coordinator.

In Greece, the partnership as policy tool and the principles of bottom-up approach and empowerment that followed partnership implementation (see chapter 4, section 1) were something very new for the Greek political and socio-economic reality. "Generally, all the projects that we implement now are through partnerships. This was not something that suddenly started happening in Greece; partnerships have been derived from EU programmes (Coordinator of EQUAL II). The novelty of these programmes applied both to local authorities and the state. "In its first implementation, LEADER was a first time experience for both the Ministry which was responsible for the whole project

management and the involved local authorities” (Executive of LEADER+ MA).

Partnership was a CIs’ general rule that allowed room for manoeuvre for each member state in terms of partnership composition and geographical level of implementation. Each member state could adapt this rule to their national context. So, the Greek state added new formal rules in its effort to specify the general EU rule on partnership. In this context, more attention must be paid to two main interventions made by the Greek state; one was the institutionalisation of DP by law and the other one was LAG establishment under the coordination of LDAs.

In relation the first one, the Greek state decided to institutionalise the DP of EQUAL project with the introduction of a law (L. 2956/2001, article 42), which explicitly described the partnership’s legal identity, its members’ organisational type, responsibilities and entitlements, and the DP administrative and management procedures. In this way, on one hand, “we found a way to protect the small partners who offer their experience and on the other hand, to create a powerful management system that makes partners to be committed avoiding withdrawals” (Executive of EQUAL II MA).

The institutionalisation of the DP, through a specific legal form, was differentiated from DP establishment practices in other member states. In Ireland or in UK for instance, the DPs were informal. One possible explanation is that in these countries the partnership principle was already an established practice of local policy-making. On the contrary, in Greece, where “it was the first time that the project enhanced cooperation among agencies who hardly had any relation previously” (EU officer, evaluator of EQUAL), the fear of resistance by domestic institutions with established norms and practices (see next chapter) obliged the Greek state to make this decision. Discussing further this issue with the EU evaluator of EQUAL, it was reported: “In Greece, politicians feel more confident and do things in a more secure way when they make laws. I think that in the case of EQUAL, this was good because it secured the sustainability of this effort”. Consequently, the Greek state tried to protect

the sustainability of the partnership from potential breaking off due to its innovative character for the Greek policy-making²⁰.

If in the EQUAL II case, the state showed a commitment to substantial partnership development, in the LEADER+ case, it was more unwilling to change the established old way of LEADER implementation. In particular, in LEADER I and II, the LDAs played the role of LAGs managing the whole project. This was possible because LEADER's requirement regarding the ratio of involved public and private shareholders at that time was a minimum of 70% public agencies and 30% private agencies which corresponded well to the shared capital of LDAs. However, in LEADER +, the EC changed the ratio of public and private agencies with a minimum of 50% private and 50% public agencies. The LDA's shareholders composition could no longer respond to this ration since the LDA's shared capital was and still is mainly public, i.e. local authorities. For managing this new situation in order to keep the LDAs as the main providers of LEADER+, the Greek state found an "acrobat" solution: the LDA with its shareholders do not formally appear on the LAG board but they control it" (National external evaluator of LEADER+). The LDA still identified as LAG continued to develop and implement a local LEADER + project in its area of intervention.

The management of all issues relating to programme planning and implementation was realised by a body set up under the LAG as a special Management Committee of LEADER + (MC), which composition met the 50% public -50% private ratio. The MC was also called "decision-making level of LAG" (Common Ministerial Decision, 518/350/12-02-2002). The LAG board transferred responsibility for managing and implementing the local

²⁰ Interestingly, the institutionalisation of the DP was recognised as best practice by EC examining the DP as a policy model (EQUAL Guide for Development Partnerships, 2005). However, this practice was negatively evaluated by the program coordinator due to the lack of flexibility for the involvement of different partners and beneficiaries in different levels of program development "They restricted the partnership and they made it difficult to function [...] it is a "trapped programme" with rules that the Ministry sets" (Equal II coordinator). This argument is in accordance with the EU evaluation report of EQUAL 2000-2006 (2006:203), which mentioned that "the EQUAL experience of partnership has also demonstrated the relevance of planning and combining different levels of involvement for different partners over time, rather than requiring continuous commitment".

programme to this body. In the legal documentation, the relationship of these two bodies was not specifically defined. LAG and MC were not clearly distinguished in terms of their role in the design of the Local Action Plan, which was the most strategic part of the programme. As I argue more analytically in the next chapter, it seems that the fear of the state to trust the private sector with such a big budget for local development led to the institutionalisation of a “false” and “peculiar” cooperation where the public sector remained the key actor.

Apart from the European and national formal rules, there were also those at local level. These rules were not new and different from the existing European and national ones, but they were supported explicitly by the programme coordinators in order to limit informal rules’ power and the realisation of agents’ specific goals (see next chapter). These are: 1. transparency and publicity, 2. unchangeable rules and 3. clear distinction of roles.

In relation to the first one, the establishment and utilisation of transparent criteria in the selection of funded projects and in the decision-making processes were a permanent concern for programmes coordinators in the fear of losing credibility and trustfulness to partners. “For us, it was important to have transparency in all actions we took and for that reason, we created an additional internal regulation for the programme implementation” (EQUAL II coordinator). Particularly in the LEADER+ case, more emphasis was given to the formulation of clear selection criteria for investments under funding. These criteria have also been published in information booklets and on the DAH website “All partners and investors have the booklet with the criteria that have been approved by the board [...]. The criteria are as objective as possible” (LEADER+ coordinator).

Moreover, in both CIs, publicity was an important issue by providing information and availability of data to the public for all partnership processes. “Everyone, whether they got a lot or little funding continues to support the partnership’s decisions because they understand that everyone is involved in all

the processes openly; the publicity of the programmes has been available to all, every citizen was aware of everything” (Municipal councillor of Archanes).

The principle of transparency was combined with the principle of unchangeable rules: “We inform them from the beginning that the criteria are not just typical, each criterion has its direct implications on selecting investments” (LEADER+ coordinator). Since the criteria had been established and decisions were made about investments, no further changes could be done even if there were pressures exercised by political parties affiliations, interpersonal relations or larger family ties “If we (DAH) backed down and we did a favour to a mayor or we integrated him to a programme informally, there would have been consequences; they would accuse us of getting black money [...] the agency’s policy is not to give in to such pressures” (LEADER+ coordinator).

Finally, the formation of clear rules regarding partners’ role and partnership operation was one of the project coordinators and the DAH political management priorities: “The issue is to clearly know the meanings and rules of the game and this has been the case for the DAH” (Mayor of Arkalochori); “there are clear objectives and agreed principles” (Municipal Councillor of Archanes). Many partners also confirmed the relationship between clarity of the partners’ role and the partnership’s smooth operation “We all have good relations because every partner has a distinct role; the DAH has been clear on this” (Executive of LDA AKOM).

1.2 EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnership principles at the horizontal level

1.2.1 Decision making, management structure and *partners’ description*

In LEADER+, DAH as all other LDAs that could not respond to the EC prerequisite for a representation of 50% by private interests and 50% by public interests in LAG, has also established a MC. The MC composition was designed to ensure representation at 50% by socio-economic actors. So, finally, both DAH and MC were involved in the programme decision-making and management.

The involved bodies in the LEADER+ partnership regarding decision-making are presented in the following figure (11).

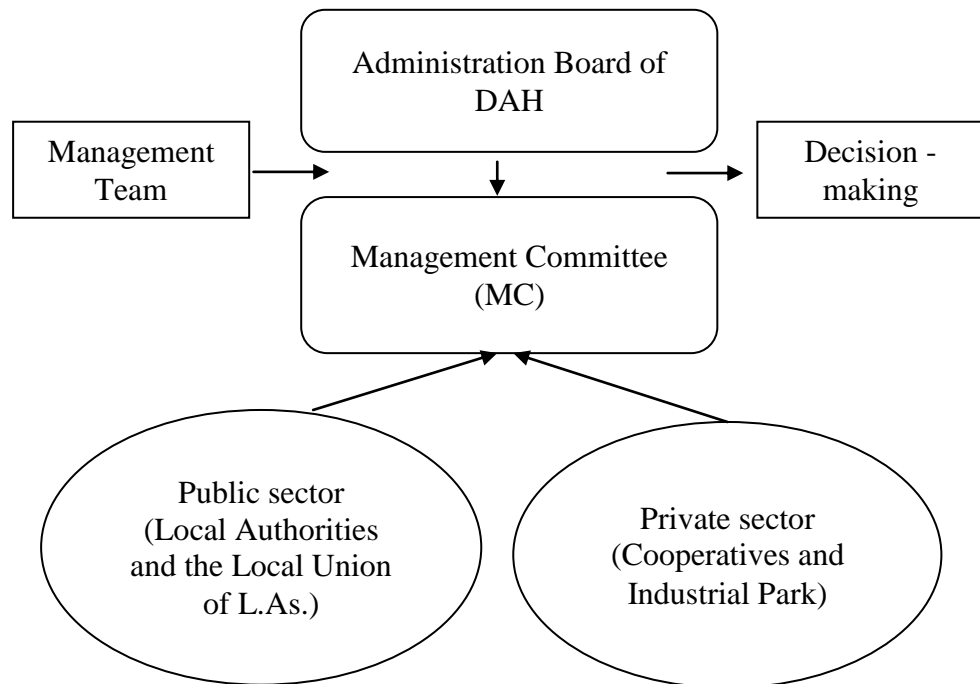


Figure 11: The LEADER+ partnership structure of decision-making

As shown in the figure and discussed above, it is the DAH that made all the decisions while the MC kept a more formal role by approving those decisions. Technical and administrative staff such as the “Committee for investors’ selection” supported both bodies. In the next part of this section, I provide a short description for each partner in terms of their legal status, membership and field of activity. I start with DAH for which only I give a detailed description of how it has been administrated because it was one of the key actors and the project coordinator of both partnerships.

The Local Development Agency of Heraklion (DAH) is as all the LDAs, a limited liability company that aims to develop the prefecture of Heraklion. It supports the development policies of local authorities, it makes use of available national and European funds and it implements programmes for the development of the broader area. The company employs 56 people and it is organised in 5 departments, each one specialised in a policy such as tourism,

rural development and social cohesion. It was established in 1989²¹ by the Municipality of Archanes and three small neighbourhood communities²² and it gradually expanded including all the municipalities in the Heraklion prefecture as well as cooperatives and banks. In particular, all the 24 local authorities of the Heraklion prefecture²³ and the Local Union of Local Affairs hold the 80% of the shareholders. Twenty per cent of shareholders belong to 8 cooperatives, which are mainly agricultural cooperatives with the exception of the Cooperative Bank of Crete and the Traders and Craftsmen Association of Arkalochori.

As we see in the following figure (12) which demonstrates the decision-making structure of the DAH, the shareholders have an annual general meeting and they decide on main policy directions. The translation of these directions to concrete policy actions and the everyday administration of the DAH is realised by the administration board, which comprises eleven members. These members are elected by the shareholders for a mandate of four years. The administration board comprises of 8 mayors -2 of them are the president and the vice president of the board- 2 municipal councillors and 1 representative from an agricultural cooperative.

²¹ It is no coincidence that the year of DAH establishment is the year that partnership became a requirement for all EU programmes. One main reason for the development of DAH as well as for the most of LDAs was the management of CSF programs.

²² These communities are Kato Archanes, Vassilies, and Skalani. Since the implementation of the Kapodistrias programme which provides for the compulsory amalgamation of communities, these have been joined with the municipality of Archanes.

²³ After the recent amalgamation of L.As in 2010, the number of L.As in the Heraklion prefecture has been decreased. However, the data provided here concern the period that both partnerships had operated.

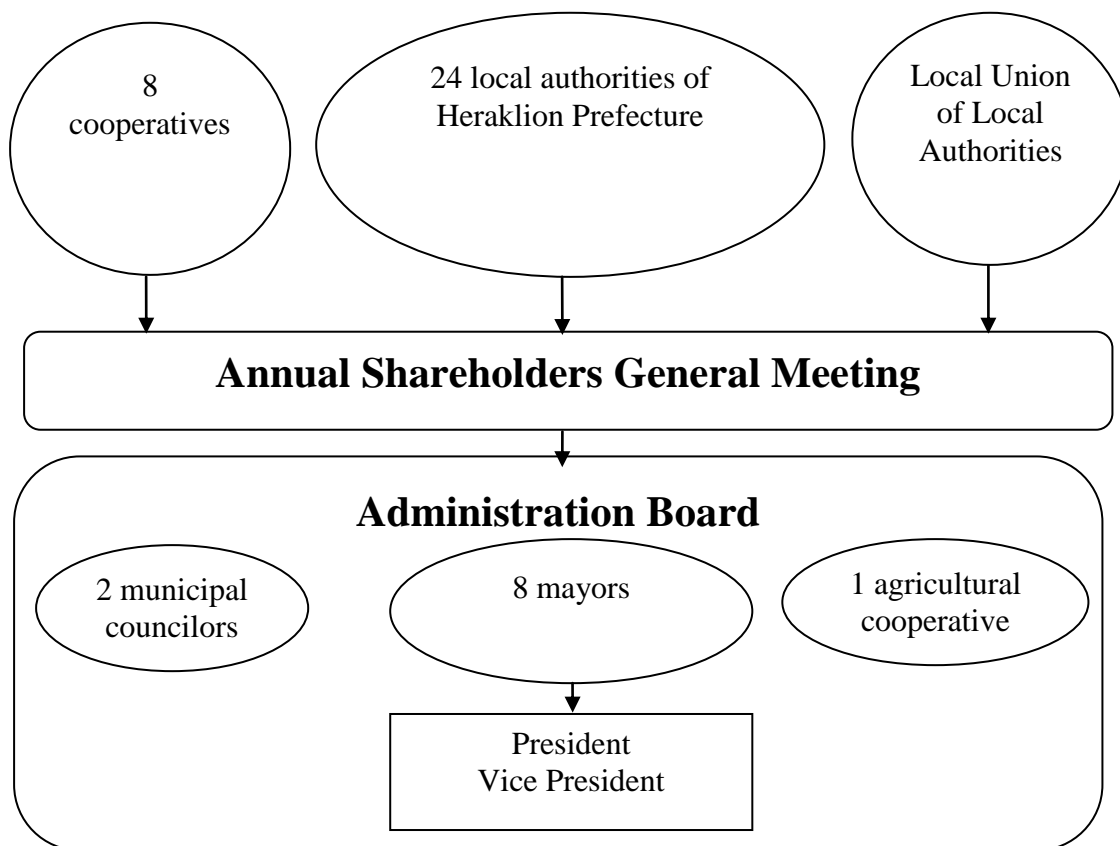


Figure 12: The DAH decision-making structure

It was the DAH administration board, which after consultation with the shareholders, had decided the composition of the MC.

The Management Committee (MC) is now composed by the Local Union of Local Authorities representing all the municipalities of the Heraklion prefecture, 2 agricultural cooperatives, “PEZA” and “Kato Asites”, the Industrial Park of Arkalochori, and the municipalities of N. Kazantzakis and Archanes. In the following table, the organisational type of partners and their names are presented.

Type of Partner	Name of Partner
Network of L.A	Local Union of Local Authorities of the Heraklion prefecture
Local Authority	Municipality of N. Kazantzakis Municipality of Archanes
Cooperatives	Agricultural cooperative of PEZA Agricultural cooperative of Kato Asites
Private Company	Industrial Park of Arkalochori

Table 14: Type and name of the MC partners

The Local Union of the Heraklion local authorities is a union of all the municipalities in the Heraklion prefecture for the coordination and facilitation of their (political) activities. It is an organisation with administrative and scientific staff for providing continuous information and technical support to local authorities as well as of proposing and assisting the central state with issues regarding local policies.

The agricultural cooperative of PEZA is located in the municipality of N. Kazantzakis in Heraklion and it produces wine and olive oil. It is an old cooperative, which has been established in 1933. Farmers' participation is very high with the shareholder farmers amounting to 45 and the activity being profitable. It is administered by a five-member committee elected by the general assembly of the participating farmers. The agricultural cooperative of Kato Asiton is located in the municipality of Kato Asites and its activity is considerably smaller. Finally, the industrial park of Arkalochori is a relatively new institution that started its operation in 2005. This is a limited liability company, but its management comprises public and private agencies such as the municipality of Arkalochori and the Arkalochori Association of Traders and Craftsmen.

In relation to the decision-making and management structure of the EQUAL II partnership, which is demonstrated in the following figure (figure 13), there were three bodies: the Management Board, the Coordinator and the Administrator. The coordinator was the partner responsible for the day to day running of the project and supporting the board with technical and administrative reports for facilitating its decision-making. They were the link person with the relevant ministry and responsible for responding to all the bureaucratic prerequisites derived from the Greek state and EU. The administrator was responsible for the partnership's financial management and they were accountable to the relevant ministry.

The management board was made up of one representative from each partner and it had three important functions in partnership operation: the approval of the partnership's main goals, their implementation and auditing. Since the main discussions for the finalisation of the policy activities and budget distribution had already been made in the stage of partnership initiation (see next chapter, section 1.1) the goals' approval was more or less a formal procedure demonstrating the partners' definitive engagement in the partnership.

The most significant competency of the board was to provide decision-making for actions' implementation. These decisions regarded a number of issues: a. money redistribution so that in case a partner could not manage to complete their activity, another one could take over; b. the type of target groups that would be selected for the implementation of partnership goals; c. the range of partners' intervention in the implemented actions; and finally, d. the ways of partners' cooperation for achieving a concrete partnership policy. Among the competencies of the management board was to elect the president of the board and the administrator.

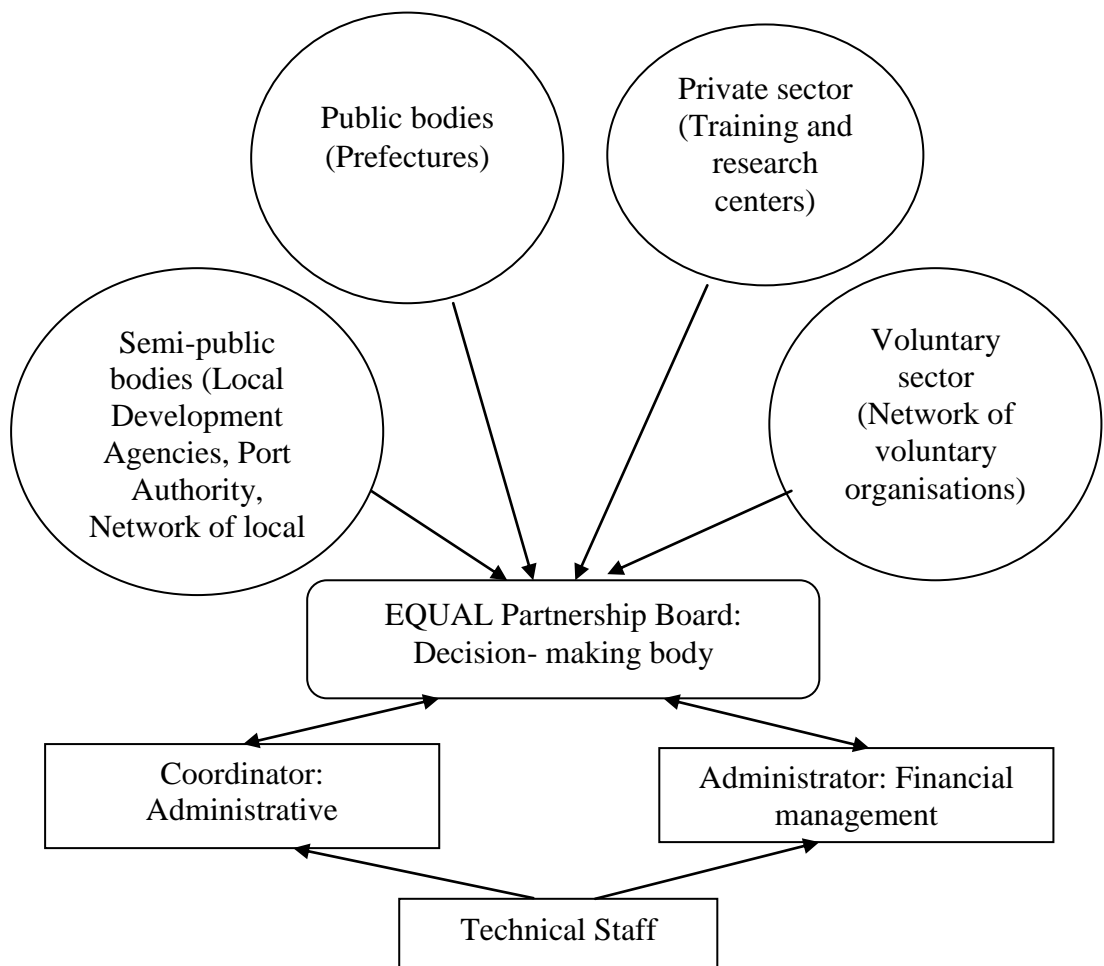


Figure 13: The EQUAL II partnership structure of management and decision-making

Commenting on the membership of the EQUAL II partnership board, I will briefly describe each partner as already done in LEADER+. At the beginning 14 partners participated and they later decreased to 13 because one partner, a municipal enterprise could not cope with the implementation of the action taken due to the lack of specialised staff. As it is demonstrated in the following table (15) presenting the organisational type and name of each partner, there were five LDAs, three prefectural agencies, two networks specialised in social policy, one research body, one vocational training centre and one public organisation.

Type of partner	Name of partner
Networks of L.A & NGOs of Crete	Agency of Social Policy of Crete L.A: “KOINOPOLITIA”
	Pancretian network of social organisations: “ZEYXIS”
Local Development Agencies	Development Agency of Heraklion Development Agency of West Crete “OADYK” Development Agency of Mountainous Milopotamou-Maleviziou “AKOM-M Psiloritis” Development Agency of Lasithi Development Agency of Sitia “OAS”
Prefecture: Committees of Adult Education (NELE)	NELE of Heraklion NELE of Chania NELE of Rethymno
Research body	Science and Development Park of Crete (EDAP ETEK-K)
Vocational Training Centre (KEK)	KEK “Development of Crete”
Wider public sector	Port Authority of Heraklion (OLI)

Table 15: Type and name of partners of the EQUAL II partnership board

The social policy network of Cretan Local Authorities (KOINOPOLITIA) is a non-profit organisation operating throughout the Crete region.

KOINOPOLITIA is an inter-municipal consortium of Cretan municipalities for the coordination, planning and implementation of social policy of the municipality- partner. Members of the network are 44 municipalities and their legal representatives are municipal councillors and mayors. It is divided in 4 prefectural branches based on the geographical and administrative division of municipality - partner.

The ZEUXIS network is a non-governmental organisation in which 31 social organisations from all Crete participate. These organisations represent people with disabilities such as the Centre for Special Children Zoodochos Pigi which is one of the main founders of this network. The main goals of the network are raising awareness and mobilising the Cretan society and NGOs for achieving the social integration of vulnerable groups through cooperative actions and sharing of information.

From the five LDAs that have participated in the partnership, 4 are activated in the prefectures of Chania, Rethymno, Lasithi and Heraklion respectively and 1 in the county of Sitia, which belongs to the Lasithi prefecture (Appendix C, map of Crete). Because Sitia is isolated from the administrative centre of the prefecture due to remoteness and bad road networks, the participation of its LDA had facilitated access to vulnerable groups. The purpose of all these LDAs is the realisation of development interventions in their areas through the use of national and EU resources. As in the case of DAH, the share capital comprises in its largest percentage local authorities, while other shareholders are Chambers of Commerce, cooperatives, the Local Union of Local Authorities, the Pan-Cretan Cooperative Bank, NGOs, etc.

The Prefectural Committee on Adult Education (NELE) is a prefectural service and it aims at providing training to all ages. The content of education focuses on literacy issues and completing basic education, social and cultural awareness, vocational training and it is addressed to both general population and vulnerable groups.

The Science and Development Park of Crete (EDAP) located in Heraklion is a limited liability company that supports the business development of approximately 45 companies and develops various projects in order to promote regional innovation and entrepreneurial activity.

The vocational training centre “Development of Crete” has been founded by seven LDAs, which geographically cover the largest part of Crete. It is certified as a training centre of regional range; apart from training, it is active

in other fields too, such as studies, workshops and provision of support services to local authorities. Finally, the Port of Heraklion is also a limited liability company of public interest. It applies a flexible management and it is considered as a driver force of growth in the Cretan region.

1.2.2 *Partners' resources, activities and motives*

As discussed in the second chapter, one main advantage underlying partnership narratives in urban governance theories and policy guidelines is the sharing of scarce resources and the synergy of different key stakeholders in a particular policy field. I argue that in both partnerships, the interdependence of partners' resources and common motives have supported coordination and sustained cooperation among partners. "In these programmes, we understood that the partner, who works with you, needs you as much as you need him" (Municipal councillor of Archanes).

All partners demonstrated expertise and experience in subject areas they have been involved in and worked together complementarily. This is evident when presenting, as the following table does, the strong correlation of partners' resources with the activities in which they have been involved. The partners' resources responded to material, political, geographical, scientific, and field access which responded to partnership needs. These types of resources confirm Stoker (1995)'s argument (chapter 1, section 1.1.2) about the significance of strategic knowledge (expertise, organisational connections, contacts) besides that of material resources in cooperation. Indeed, in my case, it seems that the strategic knowledge was more significant than the material resources for two reasons: first, the material resources were already provided by EU funding; second, since collaboration has been "imposed" from above, it required more strategic effort and skills from partners for its implementation.

In terms of partners' motives, Stone's (1989) argument, based to a large extent on normative institutionalism putting emphasis on "cultural" partners' behaviour, is also confirmed. The motives of partners' participation included material gains (mainly financial ones) but also altruistic ones such as the support of local disadvantaged people. Also they included "appropriate"

motives such as remaining integrated in the local community by their participation in new institutions like that of partnerships. Finally, as Stone (ibid) also mentions about the size of motives they were not always big like the development of local social policy but also small motives like the opportunity to participate in a network or the improvement of their learning on cooperation and management.

In the following table, I present the resources, motivations and activities of each partner of both EQUAL II and LEADER+ CIs.

	Partners	Resources	Motivation	CIs' activities
EQUAL II	Five Local Development Agencies	Good knowledge and expertise in their geographical area	Financial gains, opportunity to further sustain their aims regarding regional development and social policy	Establishment of Social Economy Support Offices and creation of three women's cooperatives in each prefecture. Participation in transnational thematic network
	Three NELE	Experience in education and training, established networks in their geographical area	Recognition of their work and gain of trust by other local organisations and local society	Setting up social enterprises (women's cooperatives)
	EDAP	Expertise in entrepreneurialism	Learning new areas of entrepreneurialism, that of social economy	Studies, creation of clusters
	Port Authority	Property	Support and promotion of the company's social responsibility profile	Exposition hall
	ZEYXIS	Field access: network of information, good knowledge of target groups	Financial gains, support local disadvantaged people	Promotion of the social responsibility to big companies of Crete and creation of disabled people's clusters

	Vocational and Training Centre	Experience in education and training	Financial gains	Training of the target groups
	KOINOPOLITIA	Network of information to local authorities, expertise in social policy	Financial gains, support and develop social policies in L.A	Responsible for the creation of contracts between local authorities and social enterprises. Creation of the Social Economy Support Centre in Crete. Responsible for the Social Economy Support Office in Heraklion prefecture.
LEADER+	Local Union of Local Authorities	Experience in project management and issues regarding local government	Securing all local authorities' interests in the area	Approval of the local strategic plan, selection of project investors
	Municipalities of Archanes and N. Kazantzakis	Expertise from their position in the DAH board for years	Political and organisational cohesiveness between DAH and MC	Approval of the local strategic plan, selection of project investors
	2 Agricultural Unions and 1 Industrial Park	Knowledge of farmers' experience and needs of small businesses	Financial gains, representation of different geographical areas of LEADER+	Approval of the local strategic plan, selection of project investors

Table 16: Partners' resources, motivations and activities of both CIs

In the EQUAL II case, which activities spread in the whole region of Crete, the geographical distribution of partners throughout the region was essential. There was a need to integrate one key actor from each prefecture. Furthermore, this key actor should cover in its geographical area of responsibility, rural municipalities that experienced greater social exclusion.

Therefore, one LDA was selected from each prefecture because of its acquired knowledge and established role in the support of local development processes. The selected LDAs have been also activated in mountainous and remote areas

of the prefecture, particularly through the development of rural development programmes for the countryside (LEADER+, OPAX...)

These LDAs became responsible for the local offices that supported entrepreneurship (Support Offices) by creating social enterprises and have also participated in international cooperation. Explaining the reasons for the partners' selection, the coordinator of EQUAL II mentioned "We would like to represent all of Crete, our project was regional. Consequently, each LDA has to secure its prefecture; namely, the Development of Heraklion is responsible for the prefecture of Heraklion, AKOM Psiloritis is responsible for the areas of Milopotamos, Malevisi and Mountainous Rethymno, OADYK activates in Chania and the Development Agency of Lasithi is responsible for the area of Lasithi (EQUAL II coordinator). Finally, in the prefecture of Lasithi, the Sitia Development Organisation participated too because the organisation had a deep knowledge and understanding of the local particularities and needs of the Sitia county. However, the Development Organisation of Sitia did not undertake activities on its own; but rather in close cooperation with the Development Agency of Lasithi.

The three NELE, specialised in programmes combating social exclusion, focused on services related to the provision of technical support and financial assistance to beneficiaries. Furthermore, their geographic scope (each NELE was responsible for one prefecture) facilitated coordinated actions in collaboration with the relevant LDAs. In cooperation with them, NELE were responsible for the establishment of social enterprises. "The DAH collaborated with us for one and simple reason. We have staff whose activities are associated with a deep knowledge of the local territory, of local particularities, of local people and they are credible and interested in their work" (Executive of NELE).

The Research Centre (EDAP) had experience in actions concerning the technical and administrative business support, as well as in studies regarding innovation, regional development and quality management systems. EDAP offered knowledge and expertise in social economy issues and undertook

relevant studies contributing to clusters' establishment. The director of EDAP was very clear about his contribution to partnership "Because of our expertise in entrepreneurialism, we contributed to the technical parts of the proposal" (Director of EDAP).

The non-governmental association for disabled people (ZEUXIS) and the inter-municipal association (KOINOPOLITIA) shared their information network. ZEUXIS has a database of 300 organisations and they daily inform more than 60 organisations, mainly NGOs. "Our main role was to disseminate the partnership project results and communicate its activities to other interested parties" (Director of ZEUXIS). KOINOPOLITIA has access to every local authority of the Heraklion prefecture through its established information and communication network. Additionally, both offered their expertise in social policies since these networks have been activated in this sector before and thus, they could easily detect local disadvantaged people's needs as for example disabled people or long term unemployed women. As the EQUAL II national external evaluator reported "Although the NGO had no management skills, they knew the target groups and their problems well and they cared a lot about the programme".

In this context, KOINOPOLITIA undertook the establishment of the Social Economy Support Centre in Crete, which had coordinated among other actions the actions of the four prefectural Social Economy Support Offices in the Cretan region. KOINOPOLITIA has also been responsible for the Social Economy Support Office in the prefecture of Heraklion and the contracts between social and private enterprises. ZEUXIS undertook the promotion of the corporate social responsibility principle in large companies in Crete and the creation of protected manufacturing workshop clusters for disabled people.

The Vocational Training Centre was responsible for training the project's beneficiaries and existing social enterprises' employees while the Port Authority of Heraklion has offered a place for the creation of an exposition hall for selling social enterprises products.

In the case of LEADER+, the balanced geographical distribution of partners in the Heraklion prefecture as well as the administrative coherence of DAH and MC, were the main criteria for the partners' selection. In particular, the Local Union of Local Authorities (TEDK) was chosen because it represented all the municipalities in the Heraklion prefecture and had previous experience in local government projects. The municipalities of Archanes and N. Kazantzakis were selected for purely administrative reasons, that of better coordination between DAH and MC. The chairman of the DAH Board was the mayor of N. Kazantzakis, while the municipality of Archanes has been a founding member of DAH. "We did not want to have different representatives in DAH and MC because we wanted to ensure a proper functioning of the MC" (LEADER+ coordinator). The cooperative of PEZA is a union with a dynamic development that represents a significant number of farmers. The Industrial Park of Arkalochori represents a different professional category that of small and medium enterprises. Finally, the agricultural cooperative Kato Asites represents farmers from the west Heraklion area.

All partners involved in both partnerships have demonstrated a good will to work together for a variety of reasons. The first motive was financial. Especially for small partners like NGOs and cooperatives as well as for LDAs, the financial support is very important because their existence depends on projects participation; they "ought" to participate in each available project even if this project did not respond directly to their needs, in order to maintain their financial sustainability.

Interestingly, during the interviews, the partners avoided to refer to financial gains. Only in one case, the financial gains appeared to be the first reason for participation "we joined the MC of LEADER+ in order to have access to programme funds" (President of the Industrial Park of Arkalochori). However, it remained an important motivation since, as I will present in the next chapter, the budget reallocation was one of the most conflictual issues in partnership decision-making process. The scarce financial resources were and still remain local authorities' main problem. In a short and simple way, the EU geographical responsible of EQUAL highlighted the apparent financial motive

in Greek partnerships “We did not have institutions of cooperation, but in order to get money, we convinced ourselves to establish collaborations and then we carried on with them ...”. Although the importance of budgeting is well known, why did the partners avoid mentioning it? Perhaps it was too evident or it appeared to be a very detriment reason for partnership participation; so the partners avoided referring to it.

Nevertheless, financial gains were not the only motivation. As Huxman (1996) underlines regarding collaborative advantages, another motivation is the self-interest of the organisation, i.e. the fact that an organisation may achieve its targets, that cannot be achieved in any other way, through collaboration. Although cooperation was imposed from above, the partners recognised that the collaboration was necessary for getting funds and implementing their goals efficiently. They recognised that they have to rely on other partners for the partnership to move forward; to sustained “collaborative advantages”. “We have decided to work all together because in this way, we join our forces and we have better results” (EQUAL II coordinator). For instance, for KOINOPOLITIA and ZEUXIS the main goal has been social policy promotion; yet resources have been scarce for these two organisations. EQUAL II project has provided them with money and policy tools to further develop their goal.

Not only are motivations rational, they are also altruistic. Especially for the public or semi public institutions, the programme offered the opportunity to implement social policy activities; a sector that is not well developed in Greece and in particular at the local level. “As a LDA, we are interested in the integrative development of Chania. We have implemented a number of programmes like LEADER and INTERREG. However, the EQUAL II project has a special value for the area because it focused exclusively on social policy which had been neglected” (Executive of LDA OADYK). For the Port Authority, this large semi public organisation, the aim was the development of its social responsibility policy “The Port Authority wanted to help because it owned a building which it offered to cooperatives to use. It was a social offer” (Consultant of the Port Authority).

The motivation of public institutions was purely ethical. For them, participating in this programme seemed to be a reward for their credible work. “It was self evident that we are good, consistent and reliable partners, thus able to respond to the project specifications. Because what we need in these projects are consistency, continuity, efficiency, a relation of trust.” (Executive of NELE).

All partners claimed that this partnership responded to the interests and goals of their organisation and their participation was something that happened naturally. I say “naturally” because in the interviews when the reasons of their participation were discussed, partners usually paused as if the answer to the question was obvious. Rethinking this first reaction, it seems that for them it was “appropriate” to participate in these partnerships. All these partners have previously cooperated in the first round of the EQUAL project or in other projects and they have created a stable network of cooperation (chapter 4, section 2.2.2). So, their participation appeared to be deterministic. This explains the reflection of the Director of LDA Lasithi when I asked him the reasons of its participation in EQUAL II project “The Development Agency of Lasithi participated in the first round of EQUAL, in OPAX, in LEADER. For more than 15 years, we have been collaborating with the Development Agency of Heraklion and we have been bidding for funding for the whole of Crete. That’s the reason!”

1.2 3. Changing Attitudes

The participation in partnerships has taught partners new ways of behaving and dealing with each other. In my question to a partner about what he has gained from the cooperation, he said excitedly that "It's nice to be able to create, not stay in your small community, being able to open up and do things that you would otherwise not have the opportunity to do on your own" (Consultant of the Port Authority).

The key in this process was the gradual development of a new paradigm of policy-making, that of partnership. “The most important benefit was that we learned to collaborate, listen, work, be more engaged” (Executive of LDA Sitia). Partnership and collaboration, in more generic terms, have created a

more consensual thinking and perceiving of the other partner. “Although we had substantial experience in programmes, EQUAL II was by far the most collegial one; I learned to accept others’ opinion, I learned to empathise with others and understand their reasoning for not meeting deadlines” (Executive of LDA AKOM). Additionally, the dense relationships gradually embedded in partners day-to-day behaviour had created a basis for commitment that led to the sustainability of the established networks of cooperation.

An example of emerging consensus among the “different languages” of partners is that between cooperatives and mayors in LEADER+ MC. In the case of cooperatives, the representatives used a “union language” and their adherence to organisational and administrative principles was limited “I usually participated in union meetings when we defended the position of our union, while our role in LEADER has been entrepreneurial; so we have had to adopt to a new methodology and ways of working” (Cooperative of PEZA). In the case of mayors, they supported a vision for the whole community and they believed that the cooperatives wanted only to promote their own sector of activity “their perception on cooperation is quite tight because they only look after their own interests” (Mayor of Gorgolaini). However, the mayors were positively disposed towards cooperatives because they believed in their social dynamic “we are sensitive and tolerant [towards cooperatives]. In LEADER partnership, there are problems of understanding each other but we do not allow issues to escalate; we have been patient with them” (Municipal councillor of Archanes).

Another example of attitudes’ change for the best of partnership processes and outcomes was the case between EDAP and DAH in the EQUAL II project. As a research centre and manager of the Science and Development Park of Crete, its position towards the development of enterprises followed the private sector principles. Nevertheless, its pure technocratic approaches changed by its contact with women’s cooperatives. It has been understood that the social economy sector could not follow the private sector rules to the letter; “we realised that farmer women are not entrepreneurs and that disabled people got used to being supported by the state, so we changed our goals and we set

limited business criteria” (Director of EDAP). DAH by its contact with the research centre started to support more entrepreneurial and sustainable solutions rather than solutions that would not be viable but would be socially aware. For that reason, it changed its primary decision to create two separate clusters, one for women’s cooperatives and one for disabled people and it decided after consultation with the research centre to unify them in order to be profitable. So in the end, there is a convergence of these two “opposite” attitudes. As the EDAP director reported: “In the meetings, there were different views; we have more technocratic ones, the DAH more social. However, the DAH left room for everyone so as to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution”.

Second rule: Local community involvement and empowerment

Faithful to the concept of “partnership ideal” about community involvement, the partnerships of my case study also required the involvement of local people in decision-making in order to adjust the policy interventions to the needs of the target groups. In LEADER+, this principle was expressed in the feature of bottom-up approach, which means that “local actors participate in decision-making about the strategy and in selecting the priorities to be pursued in their local area” (www.elard.eu). Local actors included the population at large, i.e. economic and social interest groups and representatives of public and private institutions.

The EU evaluation on LEADER+ (Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005) underlines that especially for vulnerable groups, the path transition from the idea of the investment to the investment project was often too complicated. Consequently, the local strategy of LAG has to address this challenge by the utilisation of information and participatory tools that made LEADER+ known to the wider public and offered the possibility for actual involvement.

In EQUAL II, the key principle was empowerment. The empowerment referred to programmes’ beneficiaries as well as to DP’s partners. In the case of beneficiaries, it was a process of mobilising resources and developing skills with a view to prepare the beneficiaries to actively plan their own future. In the case of partners, the empowerment encouraged a balanced share of power and participation among all DP partners (COM (2003)840).

Capacity building was an essential component of both bottom-up approach and empowerment principles. Capacity building was addressed both to individuals and the community by setting up structures that could sustain collective actions and local development after the initial intervention of programmes. In turn, the expected empowerment at the local level could lead to power changes in the community as well as in the relations of local authorities with the state. In EQUAL II, the EU-wide evaluation of CI EQUAL (2006) points out that the

weight of empowerment was concentrated on DP technical staff. “This has sometimes required conscious efforts, for example on the part of lead partners, to explain (“translate”) the terminology of the programme, perceived as highly complex, to their partners” (EU- wide evaluation of CI EQUAL, 2006: 342)²⁴. So, the work done by the coordinating partner was identified as crucial to help local people to gain the capacity to develop their own projects and to become project promoters. As shown below, the DAH as partner coordinator had also a central role in partners and beneficiaries’ empowerment.

In the following two sub sections, I briefly present the informative and participative practices of both projects and I further discuss practices that had empowered local actors as well as local authorities vis-a-vis the state.

2.1 Communication and empowerment of local community: local citizens, beneficiaries and partners

The informative and participative practices in both projects were implemented in two phases: the first referred to the initiation of the programme and included newsletters to municipalities and local organisations for the CIs purposes and actions in general. A website for each initiative had also been built and meetings with potential beneficiaries had been realised. The second phase referred to programmes’ actions implementation and it has included the dissemination of activities in media (press releases and radio broadcasts), participation in exhibitions, brochures as well as workshops and meetings with beneficiaries.

²⁴ Regarding the European experience, there are some interesting practices on the ways that capacity building is achieved. Regarding LEADER, in Netherlands (East) for example, some LAGs made use of local networking to reach new potential beneficiaries and publicised information on what LEADER was doing in the area. In Wallonia, most LAGs have implemented information tools such as folders or meetings informing local population about the opportunities offered by the programme. In Trento, Umbria and Lombardia, the LAG realised a communication plan and undertook a lot of informative and participative activities (Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005). In the case of EQUAL, in Spain, for instance, small ‘grass-root’ partners and partners representing beneficiaries argued that through the participative decision-making processes which were set up, they had been put on an equal footing with public administration, something which would not have happened outside EQUAL. In Denmark, the most important empowerment of the project participants took place at the psychological level in the form of increased self-esteem and self-confidence, whereas action-oriented and political empowerment is more limited (EU-wide evaluation of the C.I. EQUAL, 2006) .

EQUAL II

The following table presents the EQUAL II publicity²⁵ actions. There were a lot of publications (articles, brochures) as well as meetings with target groups.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Building two Websites2. Designing and printing 4 brochures3. Preparation of 1 publication regarding the Corporate Social Responsibility principles for the private enterprises in Crete4. Publishing articles in 10 local newspapers in the 4 prefectures of Crete informing about the operation of Social economy Support Offices5. Organisation of 2 information events in selected local authorities and distribution of questionnaire to target groups6. Organisation of 1 workshop in a Social Economy Support Centre7. Participation in 3 exhibitions8. Meeting with more than 30 groups of unemployed people (mainly women) who have expressed interest in establishing a social enterprise9. Broadcasts in Lasithi and Heraklion cities10. Promotion of information letters to municipalities and local organisations11. Press Release

Table 17: Publicity actions of EQUAL II

From all the above actions, I focus on those that had been beyond the uni-dimensional approach of communication, i.e. information, and adopted a more participatory process involving local population and beneficiaries. In particular, these are:

1. A working group under the operation of a Social Economy Support Centre with the aim to promote a bottom-up approach to local needs regarding social economy. In its initiation, the group organisers sent an information letter to local authorities, employment agencies and social enterprises asking for their participation. There were also contacts with the presidents

²⁵ The information and publicity plan took into account and followed the instructions and directions on information and publicity of the CSF 2000 – 2006 guide by the Greek Ministry of Economy and Finance (2002). This included the Commission Regulation No 1159/2000 regarding information and publicity activities that should be carried out by member states on Structural Funds.

of women's cooperatives for activating their participation too. The group held workshops with representatives of women's cooperatives and people with disabilities during which they expressed their views on actions, and generally the difficulties and problems, which could be addressed through EQUAL II.

2. Open information meetings in municipalities in order to identify target groups' needs and to explore the local population's interest in establishing social enterprises.
3. Meetings with many groups of unemployed women who expressed an interest in establishing a social enterprise; the meetings were more than 20 in the whole of Crete.
4. Field research conducted by DAH using a survey to record cooperatives' problems and to determine actual needs (e.g. need for networking, finding sales' channels, ensuring quality of their products).

Apart from publicity actions to local people and potential beneficiaries, the DAH had also responded to the second facet of empowerment, that of partners. In relation to public institutions, the DAH support was mainly accommodative and advisory for overcoming huge delays in decision-making by these institutions. These delays derived from their heavy bureaucracy as well as the limited independence of the executive from politicians' decisions. In NELE for instance, the final decision about its activities in the partnership depended on the prefect approval; so the partnership representative of NELE had to wait the prefect signature for each decision.

Moreover, in the case of public institutions that entered collaboration schemes for the first time, the main role of the DAH was to encourage them to stay in the partnership and to support them technically as much as possible. This was for instance the case of NELE Chanion "NELE Chanion is an institution with which we cooperated for the first time. It needs help; Sometimes Manolis from NELE Chanion called me and I told him what we had already said many times but I said to myself, it is worth the try, it is important to invest on what we are calling partnership education" (Coordinator of EQUAL II).

In relation to NGOs' partners, in some cases like in ZEUXIS and KOINOPOLITIA, even their initiation and organisation had emanated from DAH efforts. Consequently, beside the concern of their financial survival, the DAH also felt responsible for the smooth operation of these organisations and the preservation of a collaborative spirit among partners too. The feeling of responsibility was expressed in the following statement of the EQUAL II coordinator "The creation of ZEUXIS was a big achievement for us because the partners did not communicate at all at the beginning; even now there are problems in their relations but we try to sort them out".

The support of local vulnerable groups like unemployed women by EQUAL II social policies had led to the empowerment of these groups by (re) entering them to the economic and political local space. The women's cooperatives offered the opportunity to women farmers to go out of their homes and make something of their own, to manage their own future and to show to the younger generation, their children, other women roles: "All of these ladies who made cookies created a revolution at home; it is true that in the beginning, they "spoiled the family soup" but when children saw their mother like this, they got very excited" (EU officer, Head of Unit).

Finally, local authorities rearticulated their role in local society; the programme made them more responsible and sufficient in securing social cohesion. "The municipalities have no social service and the mayors are not interested in social policy. With EQUAL II, they understood the importance of social services and with their help the cooperatives were set up" (Executive of LDA Lasithi).

LEADER+

In LEADER + project, publicity and distribution of information was a continuous process. After the proclamation of LEADER + by the Ministry of Agriculture, DAH held an information campaign with the slogan "Let's plan together". Within two weeks, it organised five information campaigns in municipalities in the Heraklion region, which involved around 250 people. Its aim was to motivate local population to participate in the Local Action Plan formulation. Furthermore, before signing the contract with the ministry, LAG

organised two information events for local authorities of the LEADER+ area involving 47 people. The meetings aimed at informing mayors, municipal councillors and civil servants about the local programme in order for them to support the dissemination of information.

After signing the contract and even before the publication of the local programme proclamation, LAG initiated information events to target groups and local study offices in order to have timely information about the preparation of investment projects. During 2 months, 17 meetings in different local authorities were organised and around 700 people participated.

From all the above communicative practices, significant for promoting bottom-up approach were the five informative meetings entitled “Goals, strategy, and programme of local LEADER +. Exploring the needs of the Heraklion hinterland area”. In these meetings, representatives of local authorities, cooperatives, associations and any interested parties were invited. The information meetings’ schedule was published in local newspapers and, with the help of local authorities, it was displayed in public places. In these meetings, a questionnaire was distributed in order to record the investors’ interest for the local programme and the readiness of project investors.

Moreover, LAG has consulted specific target groups who represented sectors of local production in order to have a clear picture of the area’s economic features. The consultation was realised with the:

- Agricultural cooperatives (involving 19 people)
- Entrepreneurs of pottery (involving 16 people)
- Owners of ecotourism enterprises (involving 17 people)
- Wine producers (involving 11 people)

LAG also realised meetings and consultations with stakeholders from the MA of Regional Development Programmes, with officers from the regional department of environment, the Heraklion prefecture and other public bodies in

order to finalise the programme's strategic objectives and avoid overlapping with their own policy design.

Regarding the support to investors, LAG considered that the programme's quality and effectiveness had to rely on good cooperation with the investors, was in constant contact and communication with them (meetings, one to one and telephone contacts, guides of implementation). Furthermore, LAG has addressed all relevant regional public services (Department of Environment, Department of Forestry, Department of Industry, Department of Health, etc.) disseminating to them the list of investors and their investment and requesting their cooperation to accelerate approval and authorisation procedures. In this way, it had speed up and generally facilitated the investment projects' implementation.

Finally, during the whole programme, there were consultations with the main regional stakeholders (6), building of one website, publications in newspapers (24), radio presentations and press conferences (2), publication of reports, posters and participation in events of other public organisations.

So, empowerment and capacity building seemed to be quite important features in both initiatives. Talking about the quality of cooperation, the coordinator of EQUAL II underlined that "our goal is the empowerment of those partners who need help". In contrary to other countries, as for example UK (Shucksmith, 2002: 214) where "most of the LAG have prioritised job creation and tangible outputs over capacity building and few have looked beyond the community of place to seek to build the capacity of excluded individuals", the DAH has invested on capacity-building.

However, I argue that the main concern of this effort was more towards the direction of efficiency rather than the local community's democratisation. The EQUAL II coordinator straightforwardly stated "The DAH could not stand alone and realise programmes, if it did not empower the institutions working with them". Especially, in EQUAL II, what was at stake was to make organisationally self-sufficient public institutions and NGOs for being

operational partners in DAH programmes. However, even from this perspective, NGOs, getting more autonomous from the public sector and stronger in their organisation, had reinforced their position in the local political arena. Or, as Mathur and Skelcher argue (2007), they acquire their autonomy through the back door.

For instance, by its participation in the EQUAL II partnership, ZEUXIS came in contact with other categories of vulnerable groups such as that of disabled people, unemployed women, and other stakeholders, both public and private. By this, it broadened the understanding of its scope of intervention and developing of new networks for possible future cooperation. This process could create appropriate conditions for the institution's future autonomy by gradually strengthening it. "The network came into contact with women's cooperatives and with new organisations and consequently, it widened its horizons and prospects" (Director of ZEUXIS). The way that the NGOs' get empowered by their participation in partnerships constitutes quite an interesting question that can be studied further by a new research focusing exclusively in this issue.

Empowerment was not the only concern of the DHA. The sustainability of the established organisations of civil society was another one. For example, in the case of women cooperatives, the EQUAL II coordinator expressed her anxiety for the future of these cooperatives and she mentioned that the DAH would make an effort to support them after the end of the programme. "We do not want to leave them in the future. We will try to help them to prepare bids for new technical infrastructure and human resources. We have invested on them; we do not want to leave them, mainly because we do not want these women to be disappointed". KOINOPOLITIA's director also referred to the feeling of responsibility towards the cooperatives' sustainability "In EQUAL I, we have already established cooperatives and there was a commitment from our part to the members for their continuation". Discussing its relation with investors, the LEADER+ coordinator affirmed that "our rationale is not just to implement a programme; after the end we try to have continuity with the investors whom

we have funded, we do not quit, we keep in contact with them in order to inform them about new programmes”.

The concern for the beneficiaries’ future is not a common attitude in other member states. The results of the EU- wide evaluation of EQUAL about DPs’ interest for the accomplished programme activities are striking if one compares it with the Cretan case. In particular, 40% of the DPs do not register whether participants complete the project and/or whether they have benefited from the project and 60% of the DPs have no information as to what happens with the participants after they have completed the project (EU-wide evaluation of the C.I. EQUAL, 2006).

2.2 Empowerment of local authorities

Regarding local authorities’ empowerment vis-a-vis state, this is achieved in both ways: the empowerment gained directly by state through a number of additional targeted actions and by their participation in these partnerships. In regards to the empowerment by state, in the EQUAL II project, the following actions had facilitated and supported the DPs’ work: a. the law 2956/2001 for the establishment, composition and operation of DPs through specific legal form; b. the creation of a common database with all members state DPs’ profile and scope for facilitating the transnational partner search for networking; c. the drafting of guides, for example the Guide of Transnational Networking; d. the organisation of meetings with all DPs for the preparation of actions II and III of the initiative.

Under LEADER, the delegation of both the financial management and the implementation of the Local Action Plan in LDAs was another step by the state towards decentralisation. “The state did not just hand over the planning management to the LDA as it has been done in other countries, but also the project management; it was a very courageous decision for that time (National external evaluation of LEADER+).

Finally, the scientific staffing of MAs with specialised and experienced in European programmes personnel and the ongoing technical support of the MAs

to DPs and LAGs were indications of the state's willingness to strengthen the partnerships' development at the local level. The high quality of staff was also mentioned by an EU officer, who had a more integrated idea of what happened to other member states' MAs "The MA in Greece has highly qualified staff, much more than those of other countries MAs like U.K".

Regarding local authorities' empowerment by participation, CIs management offered the opportunity to local politicians and DAH chief executives to influence the decision makers in the relevant ministries -the MAs' general secretary and chief executives - regarding the programme's planning and implementation. "In LEADER II, the ministry sent us the draft ministerial decision concerning the programme to express our opinions because we would work with it every day; there was consultation for the first time ever" (LEADER+ coordinator).

Additionally, in EQUAL II, the national thematic groups prepared and discussed with the Ministry of Labour the revision of the National Action Plan for Employment and Vocational Training introducing the social economy policy as a new area of intervention. The inclusion of policy proposals based on EQUAL II results in national programmes and laws was a driving force for local empowerment. As the municipal councillor of Archanes said proudly "The DAH has been strengthened at higher levels; government bodies show confidence to it and talk about it".

Furthermore, both projects offered the opportunity to LDAs to expand their activities and to develop a net of experts that could support more development efforts in the area. "After LEADER, there are LDAs in some local authorities, mainly those that are isolated, which are the biggest employers of scientific personnel" (National external evaluator of LEADER+). All the LDAs' partners in EQUAL II also underlined their empowerment regarding the increase of human resources and the development of new sectors of intervention, i.e. social policy "The programme improved the capacity of the LDA and gave it relevant experience in social policy" (Executive of LDA AKOM). The increase of qualified staff could provide another sound basis for the improvement of rural

communities' organisational capacity because it offers to them the necessary human resources to identify programmes and pursue their own development needs. Because of that, the DAH president stated "the fact that the LDAs have the ability to know and support local development is inextricably linked to the increased role of local authorities". Furthermore, the LDAs, as support bodies of local development, strengthened their role in the community as they came closer to people and carried out successful programmes "The DAH has won people's trust" (Municipal councillor of Archanes).

Finally, the LEADER+ project and in some degree the EQUAL II project have led the municipalities of the case study to start inter-municipal cooperation which in turn led to their empowerment since it could support a unified self-governing force for micro-regional development. In general, there is evidence that LAG setting up and the requirement to present a commonly agreed Local Action Plan have mobilised potentials in the area which otherwise would have not even been activated (Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+, 2005). In many cases, the LDAs, which are mainly an inter-municipal cooperation for local development have been created or further developed as the result of the LEADER project implementation needs. In particular, rural areas often have only a limited stock of resources which do not enable them to solve certain problems or take advantage of some of their potential just on their own. In contrast, by inter-municipal cooperation the local communities put their strength together and thus local authorities can overcome the constraints and attain sufficient potential for development achieving desired results otherwise inaccessible.

Third rule: Networking

Both CIs gave particular importance in networking by establishing thematic networks including a few DPs and LAGs respectively and other stakeholder institutions at national and European level. Their aim was to discuss solutions around specific issues, strengthen cooperation and transfer best practices into policy and practice (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal). Indeed, the active participation of the partnerships in these networks was mandatory by both CIS.

EQUAL II

EQUAL II's specific aim of networking was to identify and validate outcomes and good practices with a view to disseminate and mainstream them (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal). According to the EQUAL II national evaluation in Greece, the networking had met these goals. The national thematic networks have played an important role to ensure the transfer of know-how between participants and the development of common policy proposals. The transnational networks had stimulated interest for others' practices and for direct inspiration for one's own practices (Final evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2008). "In the thematic networks, different partners with expertise in the same subject sat together for the first time: people with knowledge of the field, people with scientific background, and just simple people; they discussed and they cooperated [...] It was a significant learning process" (Executive of EQUAL II M.A).

As shown in the following table (18), the DP had participated in one national and one transnational network.

Name of network	Geographical level	Activities
Social Economy	National (10 DPs)	Transfer of knowledge Policy proposals
S.E.N.D	Transnational (5DPs from Greece, Poland, Italy)	Transfer of knowledge Best practices

Table 18: EQUAL II networking

Specifically, it has participated in the national thematic network “Social Economy”. This was coordinated by EQUAL II MA and ten national DPs, which implemented similar projects in measure 2.2. “Strengthening the Social Economy”. This thematic network was interested in transferring its experience and best practices, both to other organisations active in the field of social economy for adopting and incorporating new practices and policies (horizontal mainstreaming ²⁶) and to key national actors responsible for employment and social integration policies (vertical mainstreaming).

This network created a guide for both business owners and potential entrepreneurs for the establishment and operation of social enterprises. Also, the network obtained specific policy proposals, which although they were not adopted on the whole by national policy; they constituted an important step in formulating a new national policy on employment and social inclusion. For that reason “the members were engaged and believed in that because they could change something in social economy, they felt this network could make things happen” (Executive of the EQUAL II M.A).

Furthermore, the DP has also participated in “SEND”, the transnational network for social economy policies. This transnational cooperation aimed to develop a joint strategy to support and strengthen social economy at international level. In particular, the network’s main objective was to improve local practices through the exchange of international models, experience and visions. In the context of this network, three workshops for the establishment and coordination of working groups, a transnational learning experience in Portugal and a conference in Brussels (European Parliament) had been held. Finally, in the context of this transnational cooperation, three manuals (handbooks) were produced including the working groups’ outcomes.

²⁶ One key principle in EQUAL is mainstreaming which means the process of incorporation of best practices and lessons learned to policy and practices. Mainstreaming can be horizontal and vertical. In the vertical mainstreaming the transfer and integration of learned lessons is realised at the politico administrative level while in the horizontal level to similar organisations (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal).

In this transnational network, the partners of the Cretan DP had the opportunity to learn about developments in the field of social economy at European level; they were informed by more experienced partners, mostly from Italy, on social entrepreneurship and social economy and developed a dialogue with people working in the same field and shared common concerns.

“There are a lot of things that we do not know in Greece regarding social economy and partnerships; there are a lot of things that we can get from other countries” (EQUAL II coordinator), while the executive of LDA Lasithi added “We learned new ways of working, we got new ideas, and now we work in a more organised way”.

LEADER+

LEADER+’ main aim of networking was to stimulate and achieve cooperation between territories as well as to provide information and draw lessons concerning territorial rural development

(<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus>).

The LAG of my case was involved in two networks as illustrated in the following table (19)

Name of network	Geographical level	Activities
Cooperation of insular areas for the development of rural tourism	National (11 LAGs)	Promotion of thematic tourism activities Creation of cluster
Transnational cooperation: “Plan for the commercialisation of local products and rural tourism”	Transnational (14 LAGs)	Exchange of knowledge Promotion of rural tourism

Table 19: LEADER + networking

The “Cooperation of insular areas for the development of rural tourism” involved 11 national LAGs. More specifically, this inter-territorial cooperation was originally seen as a partnership between the four LAGs from Crete for joint promotion of rural tourism. However, after contacts with the MA and other LAGs, they decided that even better results could be achieved through cooperation among all the islands. This network aimed at promoting thematic

tourism and created a single cluster of agro-tourism that would coordinate and promote all the others, i.e. a cluster of clusters.

The “Transnational cooperation plan for the commercialisation of local products and rural tourism” involved 14 LAGs from 9 countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus). This transnational project was a continuation of the cooperation that had been established under LEADER II and resulted in multiple benefits for LAG; for instance on the basis of this cooperation, it has profited from involvement in other projects such as “Culture 2000” and “Socrates” (Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion, 2005).

LAG was very active in these networks since it was the coordinator of both the national interregional cooperation and the national group of the transnational cooperation. It is important to note that the events and meetings facilitated by the above networks have fostered personal exchanges of experience, which eventually led to mutual learning and transfer of concepts and policies. Discussing the advantages from networking, the LEADER+ coordinator noted that “We took people from here and we went to Italy, to Spain and they had the opportunity to see, to talk to other investors”.

This learning was not only attained incrementally, since partners and beneficiaries developed skills and knowledge through appropriate experience and training. It has also been acquired by a more “qualitative” learning when a network member would change their attitude after having an experience, which had brought them in contact with others having the same values. This could happen for instance through a visit to a place where the partner or the beneficiaries look at something they always wanted to realise or find a group with common values and purposes with whom they feel they can cooperate (EU synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005). In the same evaluation report, it has been emphasised that the transfer and adoption of methods for the transnational networks was closely linked with spontaneous exchange of experience that was not always planned in advance.

Moreover, the discovery of “feeling part of a group”, of having a common identity and a commitment to a goal, was quite a significant factor further supporting this kind of learning. This common identity is also mentioned in official documents as the “LEADER spirit” (Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005) or as the “EQUAL community” (EU-wide final evaluation of the CI EQUAL II, 2006). “Local authorities and local people feel the programme as “theirs”, and it is the only programme that is so familiar and known [...] both people and partners consider the programme as of their own” (LEADER+ coordinator). This idea of being part of a group was potentially a source of “power to” for partners’ aggregation and commitment to the partnership as Stone argues about the purposive idea of regimes (chapter 2, section 1.1.).

Following Radaelli’s (2003) conceptualisation of learning (chapter 2, section 1.1.), the learning process by experience could lead to “thick learning” during which partners’ values and norms change gradually also impacting on their preferences. In my interview with the EQUAL II coordinator, with regards to the social economy sector it emerged that “Some practices and values from other countries helped a lot and some of our partners adopted and implemented these paradigms integrated in the Greek context”. The type of learning that institutional borrowing could introduce and the extent to which local actors are receptive to new ideas and policy paradigms constitute quite an interesting study for future research.

Fourth rule: Management: programming, monitoring and evaluation

Another CI's rule was the effective management, which involves programming, monitoring and evaluation (Council Regulation 1260/1999). These rules, almost unknown until recently to Greek national and local policy-making, led to significant changes in the way partners have to operate in partnerships and politicians and executives have to understand their role as decision makers.

In Greece, the policies at both national and local level are often fragmented, without ex ante assessment of needs. "Social programmes in Greece do not have a long-term orientation, i.e. to improve the existing situation. They mainly cover current operating needs, gaps in the budget or they are looking for last minute funding" (EU geographical responsible of EQUAL). EU stimulus of programming, monitoring and evaluating a policy had obliged central and local administration to a shift from a bureaucratic and fragmentary policy-making towards a more managerial style of governance. The statement of the President of the Central Union of Local Authorities in LEADER Monitoring Committee in 2003 captured in a very adequate way the impact of EU programmes on the local administration system. "I am very satisfied regardless of whether the project activities have been realised or not, because with EU programmes we learn to manage" (in the interview with the national external evaluator of LEADER+).

In reality, it was through the EU programmes regulations and principles that the knowledge of how to manage and monitor one policy had been transferred. EU programmes have also introduced a rational and effective organisational culture to local actors. Talking about the development of experience stock in EU programme management, the LEADER+ national external evaluator reported "LEADER has had a positive effect; of what kind? Local authorities have become aware of management. Or, if these programmes did not exist, local authorities in small agriculture areas would not even know what a European programme is, what processes are, what the effort to have an integrated approach of development means. In any way, it was probably at least

an exercise for the mayors and the local actors in general to understand that programming is not a simple catalogue of actions”.

Regarding EQUAL II for instance, evaluation was carried out in three levels: one evaluation at European level, one at national and one at the local level, in the DP itself. The evaluation results from each DP had to be presented to the national MA which in its turn prepared the national evaluation of all DPs. Based on these national reports, the EC carried out the evaluation of the programme in total. During the evaluation process, the DP provided data to evaluators, it was judged at national level according to specific criteria and the results were compared with all the DP at the European level and were published. In this context, the regulation framework of evaluation enforced mayors and all the involved partners to change. This was to get away from traditional practices of policy-making and rethink policy in terms of good governance as defined in the Structural Funds’ guidelines, namely to use managerial principles applied by specialised staff in partnership operations as much as possible.

The n+2 rule ²⁷ is another example. Independently of the criticism that this rule has received by national and EU evaluators, the EU rule “n+2” obliged partners and national administration to learn programming in a fast and flexible way in order to comply to new time limits of EU funding. For instance, in LEADER +, from the time of signing the contract with the Ministry of Agriculture (March 2003) until the first proclamation (May 2003) for investment projects, the time was so little (about two months) for the funding application to be submitted to EU, that consequently the LAG had expedited all processes. Discussing DAH’s response to this rule, the general secretary of the DAH board and mayor of Gorgolaini said that “We have learnt to adapt to specific programme’s rules. Now, I adhere to these rules.”

²⁷ According to the Article 31.2 of the European Regulation 1260/1999, “The Commission shall automatically decommit any part of a commitment which has not been settled by the payment on account or for which it has not received an acceptable payment application, as defined in Article 32(3), by the end of the second year following the year of commitment”. This rule has been applied on 31.12.2002 for the first time.

A last example refers to the spread of the integrated development principle following programming. As noted by the EU geographical responsible of LEADER for Greece “What we are trying as EU is to achieve synergy and avoid overlapping programmes”. Programming through integrated development has transmitted the idea of complementarities between actors in local development to partners. Accordingly, local actors have learnt to operate in a strategic vision considering as quite important the integration of single intervention to the whole development plan of their locality “Our philosophy is not to treat each programme individually, as something temporary. Our key strategy is the development of the prefecture and we adapt each programme to this strategy” (LEADER+ coordinator).

Fifth rule: New policy goals

CIIs did not only bring new policy tools and practices in the Greek political organisation and management like partnership, empowerment, bottom- up approach, management and evaluation but they have also introduced new policy goals like social economy and integrated rural development. Discussing more generally about the new policies that Structural Funds introduced to Greece and the limited scope of Greek policies with the LEADER+ national external evaluator, he referred to the following example: “The Structural Funds offered resources for policies like digital convergence and human resources. I would not ever think that the Greek state would give money on its own for these policies”.

Reviewing EQUAL II funding themes, most of the involved LDAs in EQUAL II had undertaken social policies for the first time because by then there was a gap in their local provision. “From EQUAL II we have gained experience in social issues that we have not had previously; we came closer to people” (Executive of LDA OADYK,). Once given the opportunity to implement such policies, the development was exceptionally fast. In the EU evaluation of EQUAL, particular emphasis was given to the evolution of DPs in Greece regarding new policy themes’ implementation from the first to the second programme round. The difference between EQUAL I and EQUAL II in theme reallocation of funding was one of the highest in member states reaching +60% (EU-wide evaluation of the C.I. EQUAL II, 2006). This indicates the continuous adoption of new policies by the Greek state and the local community’s need for social policy. As seen in table 20 below, which compares the difference between EQUAL I and II regarding the number of DP’s in each theme, funds were re-allocated to theme 1.2 (combating racism) from themes 1.1 (facilitating access and return to labour market) and 3.1 (adaptability). DPs were also selected in theme 4.1 (reconciling family and professional life) while none had been selected under this theme in EQUAL I. Theme 2.2 (social economy) also received additional financial support.

Consequently, while in the first round the DPs have been formed mostly to address the employability and lifelong learning priorities, in other words the traditional social policy provisions, in the second round, the emphasis was placed in social economy, addressing also adaptability and reconciliation of family and professional life issues. Finally, new horizontal priorities were defined e.g. concerning people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking and the Roma community.

THEMES	1st round	% total	2nd round	% total	Difference
1.1Employability-reintegration to labour marker	11	27,5%	15	23,5%	- 4
1.2Employability-Combating racism	3	7,5%	6	9,3%	+ 1,8
2.1Entrepreneuriaship - business creation	6	15%	9	14,1%	- 0,9
2.2Entrepreneuriaship-social economy	5	12,5%	10	15,7%	+5,2
3.1Adaptability-lifelong learning	5	12,5%	6	9,3%	- 3,2
3.2Adaptability-adaptation to change and NIT	5	12,5%	8	12,5%	0
4.1Equal opportunities- Reconciliation of family and professional life	0	0%	5	7,8%	+ 7,8
4.2Reducing gender gap and desegregation	4	10%	3	4,7%	- 5,3
5.1 Adaptability -Asylum seekers	1	2,5%	2	3,1%	+ 0,6
Total	40	100%	64	100%	

Table 20: Comparison of DPs percentages per theme in EQUAL I & II in Greece. Source: Final evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2008

In the case of rural development, agricultural development policies traditionally had a sectoral character dealing essentially with agricultural production and support. “When we say rural development policies in Greece, we mean actions for farmers only, that this is money to pay only to them” (EU officer, Head of Unit). This approach to rural development is still identified primarily by the national policy of subsidies’ provision to farmers so as to enhance their income (Gousios, 1999; Avdelidis et al, 1981). This is a parochial concept of rural development which serves, in short term, both the farmers who manage to retain their incomes stable and the state which through subsidies’ regulation control the countryside: “it is a smart way to keep the farmers in hostage” (EU officer, Head of Unit). However, in the long term, this particular model of rural development does not create a dynamic development;

as a result the rural areas are gradually driven to desolation and to strong dependence on the state. “This is a problematic approach inherent in the administration by the Greek Ministry of Agriculture; they have never understood other dimensions of rural development” (EU officer, Head of Unit).

On contrary, the LEADER+ project looked for a multi-sectorial management of private investments in rural areas, which enhanced entrepreneurial attitudes and developed expertise among farmers, politicians and executives at local and national level. In particular, Action 1 in LEADER+ promoted projects that supported integrated rural development strategies of a pilot nature setting up 4 priority themes: 1. the use of new know-how and technologies to make the products and services of rural areas more competitive, 2. the improvement of life quality, 3. adding value to local products, in particular by facilitating access to markets for small production units, 4. making the best use of natural and cultural resources (Commission Notice, 2000/C 139/05).

Therefore, “when LEADER started, in 1990, it was rather innovative for the Greek reality since it had promoted and supported rural development” (Executive of the LEADER+ M.A), which as already mentioned for the Greek context had a totally different meaning. Under LEADER+, the traditional approach of subsidies for farmers had been replaced by aid to small businesses in crafting and by infrastructure’s modernisation while preserving the environment so as to hold the rural population within an integrated rural development. This led to a gradual development of a provincial “middle class” by mostly young businessmen followed by a relatively independent endogenous regional development. This evolution had created new groups’ interests, which have rearticulated their relation with local government in terms of more rational and less partisan exchanges.

In addition, at the ministry level, on the one hand, the minister had to reduce the control over rural development “to understand that agriculture is not his fief” (National external evaluator of LEADER+) and on the other hand, to relocate the programming and monitoring of the agricultural policy from the agronomists (for years the dominant professional category in the ministry) to

managers. According to people that know LEADER well “This profession (of agronomists) is too technical for the emerging needs of the new programmes for rural development” (EU officer, Head of Unit). This is the reason why the ex -general secretary of LEADER+ who had been an engineer and project manager in major national projects complained about the reaction of agronomists when he took over the management of the LEADER + project: “When I was appointed as general secretary, my main problem was the reaction of the agronomists to my way of working” (Ex- general secretary of LEADER+).

Having in mind that in Greece, social policy is underdeveloped (Venieris, 2003) and rural development is directly related with land cultivation (Gousios, 1999), the introduction of new policy goals had disturbed the established state and local community practices in terms of social and rural development provision. Unfortunately, as shown in the next chapter, the introduction of these goals is not accompanied by innovation; a key principle in both projects. On the contrary, innovation has been translated by the Greek polity in quite an elementary way because even the basic CIs theme features were very new for the Greek reality. In the interview with the EQUAL II coordinator, an example was referred to that demonstrates the novelty of these policies for the Greek context. “The Italians are far ahead of what is social economy. While we were trying to understand what social economy is, they talked about systems of certification and innovation in social enterprises”.

Conclusions

If my analysis remained in the identification of formal rules and their impact on local policy-making and intergovernmental relations, I could argue that these initiatives have introduced new policy tools, practices and goals: from partnership and networking to management and integrated policies. And it would have been expected that all these new rules had empowered local civil society, rationalised policy-making, changed the intergovernmental relations and finally kicked off a process of learning in local and national actors which as Bache (2008) argues could in their turn lead to changes in politics. However, as it is shown in the next chapter about informal rules, things have not happened like this; the changes that occurred had a considerable variation from the expected ones.

However, formal rules had an impact and changes occurred not only to the organisational level but also the institutional one, “to actual rules of behaviour” (Lowndes, 2009: 97). Formal EU rules mattered, especially in the Cretan local context where economic, demographic, institutional and cultural conditions offered specific opportunities and expressed needs directly related to formal rules’ aims. Additionally, the general scarce resources of all local authorities combined with the EU programmes funding opportunities made the adjustment necessary. Partners’ motives and their resources’ interdependence reflected also local needs for new governance practices and policy goals. Or, although CIs’ policy and institutional misfit has been huge, the specific local context appeared to be favourable for changes introduced by the CIs’ formal rules.

The main changes, which resulted from EQUAL II and LEADER+ formal requirements, have been the proliferation of new local actors and the strengthening of their involvement in decision making regarding local economic and social policy-making. There were organisations representing vulnerable target groups that were initiated by both CIs programmes like the case of cooperatives and NGOs, which were further empowered. Additionally, there was a proliferation of semi public institutions like LDAs and KOINOPOLITIA, which were based upon inter- municipal cooperation combining public and private criteria in their operation. Finally, both

partnerships gave rise to stable (informal) policy networks at which for the first time, new and various actors sat at the same table in a given territory.

A second change is related to learning processes. The diverse experience and exchanges of know-how among partners and their participation in national and transnational networking have also directly contributed to boosting learning and developing partners' competencies for collaboration. Partners gradually honed the ability to cooperate and identify small wins from collaborative actions. Learning combined with higher levels of trust and mutual accommodation due to partnership negotiation and regularity created a sense of commitment to partnerships for the partners and facilitated their participation to new ones. So, partnerships gradually had been established as practice of governing.

Citizens' participation in the LEADER+ strategic plan and the empowerment of vulnerable groups in the EQUAL II project reinforced democratic practices in local policy-making in three ways: a. by the identification and integration of social vulnerable groups in political space, b. by ensuring public participation through publicity and consultation meetings, and c. by opening the local hierarchical decision-making to arenas of communication so that many more could have a voice. In this way, acceptance and support by the local community or in other words partnerships' legitimation was obtained while social capital was further reinforced by its use. Additionally, new policy interventions altered the established relations of local government with local actors towards more technocratic and consensus-seeking solutions rather than established hierarchical and partisan practices.

Additionally, the CIs formal rules helped to build up local competence in terms of self-organising local development, from needs' assessment to integrated implementation, fostering the capacity of local authorities to support diverse actions for the benefit of their area. Moreover, through networking, local authorities bypassed central hierarchies and became known to national and international partners as an autonomous identity. The state had also decentralised competencies to local authorities for the first time. Consequently,

local authorities got stronger vis-a-vis state and gained the ability to structure themselves for different purposes and in different ways. Finally, the demand for managerial tools adoption in partnerships also rationalised local policy-making by creating a managerial and organisational culture for the involved partners. In this way, the political style has changed from fragmented and bureaucratic attached to party clientelism practices to a more technocratic and integrated one.

The following chapter will reveal the informal rules that guide agents' behaviour and the way that these contradict, enable or substitute the formal ones.

Chapter 6: Partnership in practice: the interaction of formal and informal rules

Introduction

Having conducted the research in the field, I have come to realise the huge difference that exists between the partnership organisation that the formal rules would like ideally to develop and the “real” partnership in operation. So, in this chapter, I identify those informal rules that had actually guided the partnership development. Following Lauth’s (2000) typology (chapter 1, section 1.2), I also explore the nature of their relation with the formal ones.

It is argued that since these programmes have introduced the collaborative forms of policy-making on local communities for the first time, there were problems in their operation and implementation (chapter 2, section 2.3). In particular, collective action did not emanate directly from local needs for problems’ solution but from above, the EU, for securing European and governmental grants. In this case, as Cowles, Green and Risse (2001) have already affirmed, the domestic structural and institutional resistance is higher than expected offering to informal rules a much more significant role in partnerships’ regulation.

When interviewed, an EU officer commented that “the great effort which has been made regarding LEADER+ implementation is the overcoming of the dominant Greek attitude. Because, it is different to plan something that previously did not exist at all. Everything is innovative and partners have to disrupt the existing establishment. In such cases of discontinuity between old and new practices, old and new “both coexist” as Streeck and Thelen (2005) argues about the process of institutional change and it has been a challenge for the current research to identify their power relations and chart the level of institutional change.

In the next section, I present 6 informal rules, their relationship with the respective formal ones and their influence on partnership operation in terms of collective action. Additionally, following Helmke and Levitsky’s (2006)

argument about the sources of informal institutional change (chapter 1, section 1.2), I discuss some potential changes in the formal- informal rules relationship and I outline evidence of institutional change on local policy-making. Finally, I devote a small section to the comparison of LEADER+ and EQUAL II in order to further reveal the significance of institutional legacies and political norms in the shaping of informal rules.

First rule: Partnership internal dynamics: the domination of a centralised and mayoral local government

Although the diversity of interests and the equity of partners were supposedly recognised by partnerships' formal rules, the reality was different. If one carefully looked at both partnerships decision-making process and the internal every day practices of their operation, one would identify political processes that had generated limited interest representation, unequal power relations and low involvement of local people. In my interview with the EQUAL II national evaluator who had a comprehensive view of the project throughout Greece, it was reported that “In fact, there are 2-3 main partners and the coordinator who make decisions and move the partnership forward”.

In the partnerships under study, I argue that the partners who set the agenda, make decisions and manage partnerships were also few and they were exclusively semi and/or public agencies. These were the DAH at the local level and the relevant ministry with its MA at the state level. For understanding the powerful role of these two players, I present in figure 14, the different locus of power among all the actors involved in EQUAL II and LEADER+ development and implementation and I further explain their power relations.

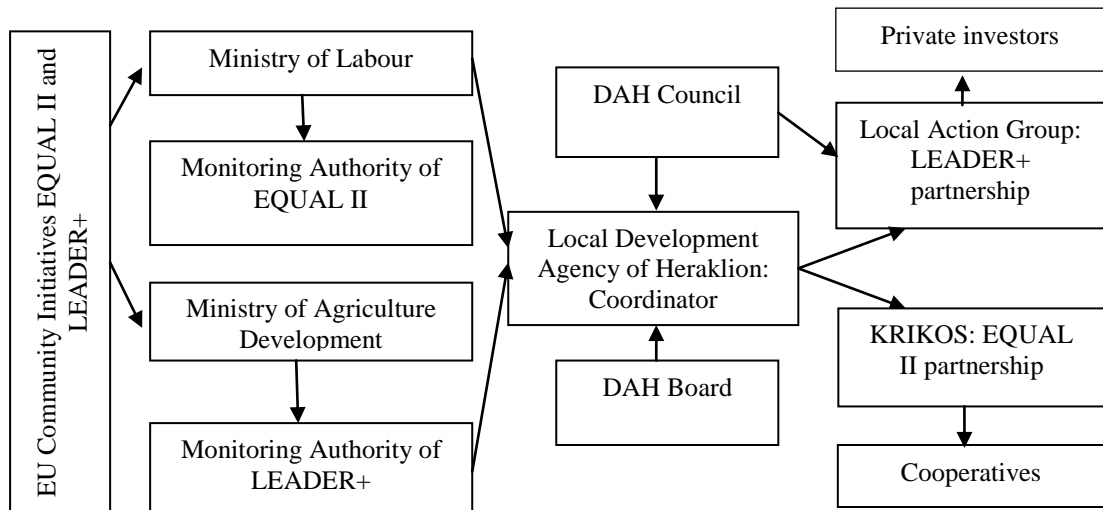


Figure 14: Loci of power in EQUAL II and LEADER+ development and implementation, author's elaboration

In particular, the power is dispersed in all the geographical levels. In each geographical level, one can identify horizontal and vertical power relations. The main institutions where power was exercised were EU, the Greek state and local partnerships. Furthermore, in each stage of partnership development, these three institutions had different weight in power balance.

Starting from the horizontal level, the agencies that entered power relations in each partnership were different. In EQUAL II, there were the 12 agencies that were formal partners of EQUAL II DP. In LEADER+, there are the 6 agencies of MC and the DAH Council itself which represent a partnership of 40 members, mainly local authorities. Additionally, the beneficiaries of both projects; the cooperatives of women and disabled people as well as the private investors entered the power interplay.

At vertical level and particular at state level, there were two main loci of power, the ministries (the Ministry of Labour for EQUAL II and the Ministry of Agriculture Development for LEADER+) and the respective MAs, which were part of the ministries. Finally, at the EU level, research does not analyse in depth the power relations between EU and the Greek state. For the current study, EU was the starting point that set the regulatory framework for the

implementation of the two CIs defining in this way the framework of action and the range of powers that could be exercised by the state and local partners.

Below, I first discuss the horizontal power relations inside partnerships and examine more critically their internal representational and management dynamics. I then analyse the power relations of local partnerships with the beneficiaries and the state.

1.1 Partnership initiation

In relation to both partnerships' initiation, it was the DAH that had played the main role in defining the budget distribution and in selecting the partners.

“During the negotiations with DAH, there was an original plan with de facto standards so that only small changes could be made” (Executive of NELE).

The central role played by DAH in partnership planning has also been reported in the EQUAL II local evaluation report. According to this, DAH, or in other words its local authorities' shareholders were emerging as a player with the most effective and the highest participation in project plan formulation. Almost about two thirds of the EQUAL II involved partners i.e. 62, 5% assessed as “quite high” the participation of local government in the partnership design phase, while the degree of participation of social and economic partners was evaluated as “average” by the remaining percentage. The contribution of private enterprises appeared to be limited (First evaluation report of EQUAL II “Incubator for the Development of Social Economy in Crete, 2006).

In LEADER+, the attendance of local authorities was stronger than that in EQUAL II and partnership planning was exclusively in the hands of local authorities who made key choices on criteria for investors' eligibility, areas of intervention and partners' selection (interview with the LEADER+ coordinator).

As a result, in both programmes, the main decisions for budget distribution, areas of intervention and type of project actions had already been defined by

the DAH, while the other partners made small scale adjustments. In other member states, like in the EQUAL II of Northern Ireland, a majority of DPs had involved partners representing the target groups or NGOs working with these groups in partnership initiation. According to the Northern Ireland evaluator's survey to DP partners, 41% of the respondents supported that the target groups be centrally involved in all discussions in designing and steering the project (EU-wide evaluation of the C.I. EQUAL II, 2006).

1.2 Partnership development

EQUAL II

As far as partnership development is concerned, if one carefully examines once again the formal composition of EQUAL II DP (see figure 13 and table 15), it is obvious that the EQUAL II partnership was dominated more by local authorities' organisations and lesser by local society organisations and private sector businesses. Actually, the number of institutions that were controlled by local authorities was ten out of a total of thirteen. Only the research centre EDAP, the NGO ZEUXIS and the Port Authority of Heraklion are agencies that operate independently from local authorities' control.

The supremacy of local authorities inside the EQUAL II partnership was also confirmed by the local evaluation report. Assessing the actual degree of each partner's involvement by other partners, it is presumed that the category of partners that appeared to play a more active role is local government, with 75% of respondents believing that the involvement of local authorities in developing and implementing the partnership was "quite high". Regarding private enterprises' role, 50% of partners assessed as "average" their contribution to the project. The remaining partners, namely national public institutions, research and training centres and NGOs, were estimated by the partners to have participated in partnership procedures at an "average" level too (First evaluation report of EQUAL II "Incubator for the Development of Social Economy in Crete, 2006).

Moreover, the budget allocation per partner is also another piece of evidence for the local authorities' primacy in DP. As shown in the figure 15, the majority of the budget programme (19.85%) was allocated to DAH. In a way, this was expected because DAH undertook a number of supplementary actions as project coordinator such as technical support and local evaluation. However, this percentage remained by far the highest all the others. In the second rank, KOINOPOLITIA which is an inter-municipal cooperation managed 10,97% of the total budget followed by the Science & Technology Park (EDAP) which was allocated 9,18% of the total budget. The remaining partners managed a budget rate of between 4% and 9%, so funds' allocation to other partners had no particular differences.

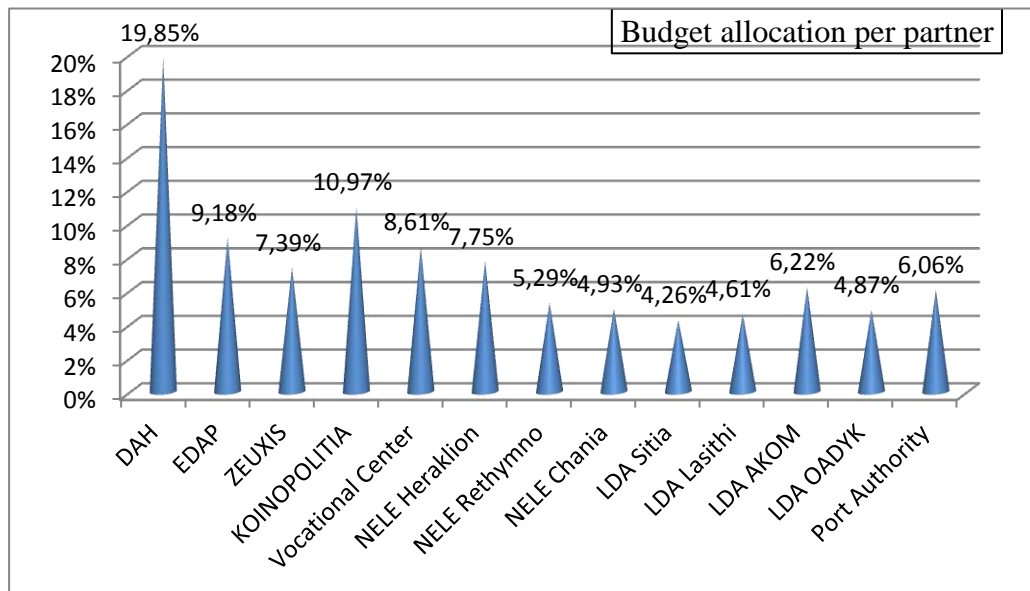


Figure 15: Budget allocation per partner in EQUAL II. Source: First evaluation report of EQUAL II “Incubator for the Development of Social Economy in Crete, 2006

The concentration of power by local authorities was also evident in the day-to-day operation of the EQUAL II partnership. Looking back at figure 13 illustrating the management and decision-making structure, the partnership coordinator and administrator was the DAH while the president of the partnership board is the director of DAH. As project coordinator, it was certainly expected that the DAH would have high degree of authority; however, the occupation of all managerial positions overcame formal rules' prerequisites.

Additionally, the DAH power seemed to be reasonable and legitimised by all partners. “The coordinating organisation has to be the most dominant partner because it establishes the contacts with the ministry; it is responsible for networking, manages and controls all the procedures (Director of KOINOPOLITIA). And it is designated to do all these without the involvement of anyone else. The DAH power has been legitimised to the extent that the partners allowed the coordinator to exercise even coercion power. “Many times, the director of the DAH threatened us,[...] he told us that unless we got results, he would get us out of programme and that he would replace us with another organisation (Executive of LDA).

The norm that local politics is the absolute competency of local authorities - registered for years in local community values - is also verified by the answers in the questionnaire regarding political engagement. Thirty five per cent of partners “strongly agreed” and 35% “relatively agreed” on the statement that “local authority has to articulate the political agenda on its own and make the decisions without their active political engagement”. Moreover, it is not only this value that is embedded in local community. What is also embedded is the institutional legacy of a strong mayoral system that makes mayors resist the idea of sharing the gained power over years with other local actors out of fear of losing the traditional patronage relation with the community.

Another characteristic of the EQUAL II partnership’s composition was the legal identity of partners; from the 13 partners, 9 were private agencies of public interest i.e. semi-public agencies²⁸. These semi-public organisations challenge the classical distinction of the three sectors (public-private-social) because they have an intermediate role between private and public sector. In the Greek socio-economic context, where the public sector is heavily bureaucratised and politicised on the one hand and the private sector does not feel confident to cooperate with public bodies on the other, these semi –public

²⁸ That means that they are non profit organisations achieving public interest objectives but the principles and values of their organisation and management are led by private sector. In particular, they have to serve as modern organisations having emancipated from bureaucratic and political obstacles of the public sector and maintain accountability and public interest goals at the same time.

organisations could easily overcome the ankylosis of the public sector and operate with cost oriented rules in the policy arena.

Additionally, their legal status makes them eligible for partnership projects with both the private and public identity. Their profile fits with any type of partners' project prerequisite. However, there are questions about the legitimation and public accountability of these organisations. Their participation in local partnerships weakens the presupposed democratic attributes of collaborative actions. Consequently, it is not only the issue of power concentration by local authorities and the under representation of other local actors but also the legal identity of the institutions by which local authorities have been represented.

My argument about unequal representation of interests and control of decision-making by the public sector has been further confirmed by the EQUAL II national evaluation report regarding the coordinator's legal form of all EQUAL II DPs in Greece. It has been concluded that the Cretan case did not differ from the other national DPs in which the public sector still remained dominant. As shown in the following table (21), the first three categories, public, wider public agencies and local authorities comprise together the highest number of DP coordinators at 45%. They have been followed by the private sector at 32%. However, it is worth noting that the private sector was largely represented (31, 3%) by a business' special category, that of vocational and training centres which organisational goals are shared between social and economic orientations.

Type of Coordinator	EQUAL II DPs	
	Number	Percentage
Public	4	6.3%
Wider public bodies	8	12.5%
Local authorities	17	26.6%
NGO	5	7.8%
Labour and employers organisations	9	14.1%
Private sector	21	32.8%
Total	64	100.0%

Table 21: Legal status of all coordinator DPs of EQUAL II in Greece. Source: Final evaluation report of EQUAL II (2008)

Moreover, if I compare the Greek coordinators legal status with the relevant EU average of all DPs, the Greek variation becomes obvious. At the EU level, 30% of DPs have been led by nongovernmental organisations and only 6% by semi-public organisations like the DAH. Furthermore, the legal status of partnership members was mainly shared into three types: 28% of nongovernmental organisations, 32% of public organisations and 27% of private organisations. Only 4% are semi-public organisations and 1% cooperatives (COM (2003) 840: 3). For instance, in Finland, 28% DP partners have been drawn from enterprises and trade unions; in Flemish Belgium, 30% DP partners have been representatives of social partners (employees' organisations, trade unions), in Spain and Great Britain, more than 30% DP partners have been organisations providing support and guidance for disadvantaged groups (EU-wide evaluation of the C.I. EQUAL II, 2006).

However, although partners' equal proportional representation was secured in other countries, this does not have to be confused with partners' equal involvement. In the EU- wide evaluation of EQUAL II (2006: 129), it has been reported that "the most important difficulty is not only the weak representation of certain partners, but also the "unequal involvement" of partners". But what

is “sufficient participation” and “how much unequal” the power between partners is could not be easily compared so as to conclude that my case study when compared to the UK paradigm is characterised by partners’ unequal involvement. The assessment of what “sufficient participation” means depends each time on national contexts. For example, the Danish evaluators in EQUAL II project assessed the share of private companies (14% of partners) as too low, whereas the relevant European average is 11.8% (EU- wide evaluation of EQUAL II, 2006).

Bearing that in mind, the difference between Greece and other countries is remarkable in the way that it understands the participation of non-public actors in these initiatives. This demonstrates by far how the established norms of civic engagement and political competence of the Greek context have been reproduced informally in partnership rules.

LEADER+

In the LEADER+ partnership too, the situation was not different. This was also expressed by a LEADER+ MA executive commenting on all LEADER partnerships in Greece that “nothing was changed; it is essentially the LDA administration core and stakeholders that had decided for the project”. Particularly in LEADER+ MC (see figure 11 and table 14), there also a pure representation of private enterprises did not exist. Instead, there were cooperatives which identity is particular as in the case of semi-public organisations in the EQUAL II project, because their aims comprise a particular combination of trade unions demands, private interests and social aspirations.

Additionally, due to long term state intervention in the regulation of agriculture cooperatives and politicisation of their internal affairs, the cooperatives in Greece are strongly dependent on the state and political local and national party conflicts (Papageorgiou and Kaldis, 1999). Therefore, this type of interest representation from private sector had allowed for the local authorities to have a great role in the partnerships’ strategic orientation.

If I compare the Cretan MC's composition with other countries' LAGs, like for instance Finland, where LAGs were composed according to the tri-partition principle (one third local residents, one third public administration and one third local business) (Kull, 2009: 10), the difference seems striking.

Furthermore, when the identities of the local authorities that participated in MC have been thoroughly explored, I reached the conclusion that once again DAH has a strong presence in decision-making. All representatives were elected politicians: two were mayors and one was a municipal councillor, president of municipal council. The two mayors have a position of power in DAH. One was the president and the other was the general secretary of the DAH board. The municipal councillor was from Archanes, the village where DAH has its offices and has started its operation.

Alongside members' representation, the real control on decision-making was located in the DAH board from the beginning of the MC establishment. As revealed in the previous chapter (section 1.1) the MC should be a decision body that sets up the strategic plan for development and ratifies the investors' projects. However, through an informal agreement among the DAH partners, all MC decisions have to be approved by the DAH board. So, MC seemed to be just a formal body "We have actually made a deal that ok we have set up the MC because the programme requires to do that but all the main decisions relating to the programme strategy have to be approved informally by the DAH board [...] in reality, it is the board that makes decisions" (LEADER+ coordinator).

The main programme decisions such as areas of intervention and investments for funding were determined by DAH while only the programme's management was given to MC. Its actual role was the ratification of investments already selected by the relevant DAH committees and their follow up. But even in these managerial activities, MC's role had been weakened. The management team, which was exclusively composed by DAH staff, had a great influence on the MC due to its expertise in advisory capacity related to problem solving. Furthermore, since the MC office had been located at the

DAH building, there was also an identification of the MC's working place with that of DAH, which symbolically had further empowered the position of the latter.

Accordingly, in the end of the day, DAH had the final say in both partnerships. Even if all partners were formally equal, it was DAH that had decided on areas of intervention, partners' selection and budget allocation. And finally and most significantly, it was DAH that had interpreted the formal rules such as what was meant by citizens' participation, bottom-up development and innovative solutions. However, DAH did not wish to be seen as the dominant partner: "[...] from the ministry, they told us that some agencies are always dominant; in our partnership, this is our constant worry, and we do not want to leave any one feel unfairly dealt with" (EQUAL II coordinator).

1.3 DAH board and informal networking

My argument about local authorities' predominance is further supported when the stakeholders and the management structure of DAH are examined in detail. Looking again at its stakeholders' percentages (figure 12), DAH has clearly been a local authority's domain and its administration has exclusively been at mayors' hands.

Assessing in depth mayors' power relations in the DAH board, I have identified one mayors' informal network that could be called "Old Mayors". This network have sustained an integrated power front vis-a-vis to other mayors and influenced the DAH policy directions. In the first chapter (section 1.2), I have highlighted the significance of networks as an informal rule since networking "affect the distribution of power, the construction of interests and identities and the dynamics of interaction" (Ansell, 2006: 75).

Starting from this point, I argue that the interpersonal relations developed in this informal network have played a more central role in the DAH decision-making and therefore in the partnerships under study rather than the relevant formalised mechanisms of decision-making established by partnerships as requirements by both programmes.

This network has mainly been based on a common ideology, which maintained a consensus on which policies had to be promoted and how they would be implemented. Additionally, it has supported and diffused particular values and “logics” of behaviour among the DAH council partners. Although it has strongly influenced decision-making, it did not challenge delays and blockages thus causing serious internal conflicts and disagreements that could have affected the DAH and partnerships’ unity and sustainability; its influence has been smooth and diffusing.

The “Old Mayors” network has been composed by mayors of the prefecture’s northern and central parts. These mayors initiated DAH and supported its development from its early onset. The network acquired its coherence through many years of established communication and collaboration (chapter 4, section 2.2.2). These mayors have been elected in the same municipalities for many constituencies and they have known each other very well. Their long discussions and contacts, even in an informal and friendlier level, attributed a strong unified identity to this group. As the DAH president, member of “Old Mayors” network stated: “Those conflicts that had to occur, have already occurred in the past; now, we have found a common way of understanding and I think that this alliance relies on this factor”.

Moreover, these mayors had previous experience on projects, which helped them to learn quickly the operation of the new project’s requirements and mobilise effectively their local population. “The difference between the new mayors who enter the LEADER project later on and the old ones is great” (LEADER+ coordinator). I need to clarify that when the LEADER+ coordinator referred to new mayors, she didn’t mean mayors who were elected for the first time even if this may have been the case for some of them; instead she talked in terms of their recent membership in DAH.

Their constitutive recruitment in DAH, their long-term acquaintance and their experience have created an advantageous position when being compared to other mayors-partners of the DAH council. Their power was translated in more

money claims for their municipalities and formulation of policy options for the DAH future. For instance, in the LEADER + project, I have found that more investments have been realised in “Old Mayors” municipalities. Based on the following table 22 showing the number of private investments in LEADER+ by municipality, it is indicative that the “old” municipalities such as Archanes, N. Kazantzakis and Episkopis had more investments in comparison to other municipalities with the extreme case of N. Kazantzakis municipality where 11 from 46 private investments have been realised.

Municipality	Number of private investments	Municipality	Number of private investments
Arkalochori	1	Kasteliou	5
Archanon	5	Mallion	1
Asterousion	2	Moiron	1
Gaziou	3	N. Kazantzaki	11
Gouvon	1	Xersonisou	4
Episkopis	4	Total	46
Heraklion	5		
Thraspanou	3		

Table 22: Location of private investments of LEADER+ by municipality, author’s elaboration. Source : www.anher.gr

However, “Old Mayors” had characterised their attitudes towards new mayors as more instructive than directional. According to them, they have tried to transfer their experience on collaboration and their knowledge of how things have to be done to the new generation of mayors. “We, the old mayors, we have the experience but we never told the new mayors that they are stupid they know nothing. We are not monopolising the knowledge. However, we have the duty to transfer our knowledge to the new mayors for a better cooperation and development” (mayor, partner of the DAH council).

Without doubting the good will of “Old Mayors”, it is evident from the above quotation only, that the existing hierarchical relations were embedded in a context of a traditional “teacher-student” style where the “old guys” know what must be done. Especially when dealing with mayors operating in a context of strong localism (chapter 4, section 2.2.2), these unequal relations derived from

unequal knowledge on programme management could easily result in unequal projects' funding distribution in favour of "teachers".

This network has been led by few visionary mayors. These mayors have had a concrete and strong political vision for the regional development in general and for the future of DAH in particular. They have essentially been distinguished from the simple observers - DAH council partners who have unconditionally followed the DAH developments. A mayor and partner of the DAH council reported on that: "There is an informal group that navigates the boat. [...]". When there are some common principles among mayors, like the commitment to local development, the communication is like a chemical reaction and it moves everything ahead". Another mayor added "There are local authorities of "two speeds". There are those the mayors of which participate in the DAH council and are actively involved in the procedures and there are just the simple partners". It is argued that these "boat captains" constituted the core of decision-making inside LEADER+ MC and LAG (or DAH) and strongly influenced the DP of EQUAL II.

Consequently, despite all the claims of the European Community Initiative programmes for openness, diversity, and empowerment of different interests inside partnerships, one becomes immediately aware by the numerical representation of partners and their power relations as well as by the management structure that both partnerships were dominated by few mayors implementing their political choices through a semi-public institution i.e. the DAH which has been directly controlled by them. In these partnerships, there was actually an amalgamation of various interests and motivations but this amalgamation refers mainly to various mayors' interests and DAH executives' expertise.

Second rule: Intergovernmental dynamics of partnership: the domination of a centralised and highly politicised State

The CIs rules have been translated by the Greek state through the prism of a certain number of values and practices, which have been established for many years in the public service and the state's political organisation. These informal rules have not led to the empowerment of local government as one would have expected looking exclusively at CIs' formal rules. Instead, the central state through its relative ministries and MAs has remained the most powerful actor in the LEADER+ and EQUALII programmes by developing high hierarchical relations with local government.

The empowerment and bottom-up approach principles had to be developed not only between local partnership and local community but also between central administration and local partnership. However, it is argued that the state essentially had approached bottom-up principle one-dimensionally as managerial decentralisation. In the interview with the ex- general secretary of the LEADER+ project, bottom-up approach seemed to be related with a very naive approach: "We treat the investor in a favourable way; his payment made at the local level, by the LDA, he did not have difficulties as in the case of other development projects in which their application is controlled by the central ministry in Athens". So, according to him, since the project beneficiary had negotiated and did business only with the LDAs without personally addressing the ministry, the bottom-up approach had been secured. As stated, in a humorous way, in the interview with an EU officer "In other words, they want (state government) to support the bottom-up approach with the condition that the bottom will be them and the up will be them again; them being the ministry and the MA".

Essentially, the Greek state has been highly centralised and remained so during both projects' implementation "No ministry in Greece wants to lose political control; the Minister wants to have them all in his/her hands" (EU officer). That is why the EQUAL II coordinator pointed that "We found that if we were

based in Athens, it would be easier to run the project because I could go to the ministry every day and solve my problems; everything is controlled by it”.

2.1 Political power

State power has been expressed in two levels: politically and bureaucratically. In the first level, the state has all on its own made decisions about the following issues: the overall budget of CIs and its geographical distribution at regional level, the definition of policy priorities and areas of intervention, and finally the selection of DPs and LAGs. For instance, in relation to the definition of programme policy priorities, in the EQUAL II case, the role of the state in the promotion of particular measures was very significant because it changed the financial distribution for promoting measures that had been inactive in the first round of the initiative.

Another example is the geographical distribution of money to the regions. Which region had been eligible for more or less funding depended on ministerial decisions. These decisions were influenced by party political games since the regions had only been typically consulted. They were also influenced by technocratic knowledge at central level regarding funds' absorption at the earliest possible time (see more for funding absorption below, fifth rule). “The system here is upside down, they do not make an assessment for identifying needs first; they instead distribute money geographically and they then explore what actions they can carry out with this money” (EU officer). According to mayors' views, the state did not take into account the local needs of each area at all. “There was no room to express our views; this probably was done at a higher level, by our local deputies” (Mayor of Arkalochori).

In particular, during my interviews with partners, I have identified a strong vertical informal political network that influenced state decisions in both programmes. This network comprised of mayors of participant municipalities, local deputies and the relevant minister. This extended intergovernmental network had been structured around political and partisan interests' motivations; political in terms of mayors and deputies re-election needs and partisan in terms of favouritism and party clientelism. It was this network that

promoted political and partisan pressures and demands instead of real local needs that the LEADER+ national external evaluator criticised: “From my experience in all territorial levels, from the upper political level to the lower one, no one had the courage to say that this village does not need this investment; make the investment in another village that actually has a structural need. [...] This is unfortunately how the whole political system in Greece works”.

Discussing the selection procedures of DPs by the relevant Ministry, one EU officer presented the situation in a clear way: “for the period 2000-2006, there have been proclamation notices and there has been a big interest but the selection of proposals has not been made in the most appropriate way. Political parties’ interests were strongly involved”.

The following figure represents graphically the network actors, their influence and power relations. I argue that this network is characterised by hierarchical relations with the minister having the final say for all key decisions. From my own experience when preparing a proposal bid for EQUAL II on behalf of a local authority, I remembered that when all propositions had been conformed to project prerequisites and evaluated by external evaluators, they then were filed in the “minister’s drawer”. Since that, all had been waiting for the moment the minister would look at them and make his/her decision.

The minister’s predominance was also related to programmes’ support and progress. Analysing the reasons of the EQUAL II success, an EQUAL II MA executive reported that “The political leadership (i.e. minister and the appointed general secretary) has an important role in the success of the programme; success depends on whether they have the political will to support or not the programme. Since 2002 when the EQUAL II project was launched, the government has changed and changes of ministers’ followed too; sometimes they had the will to support the programme and sometimes they did not”.

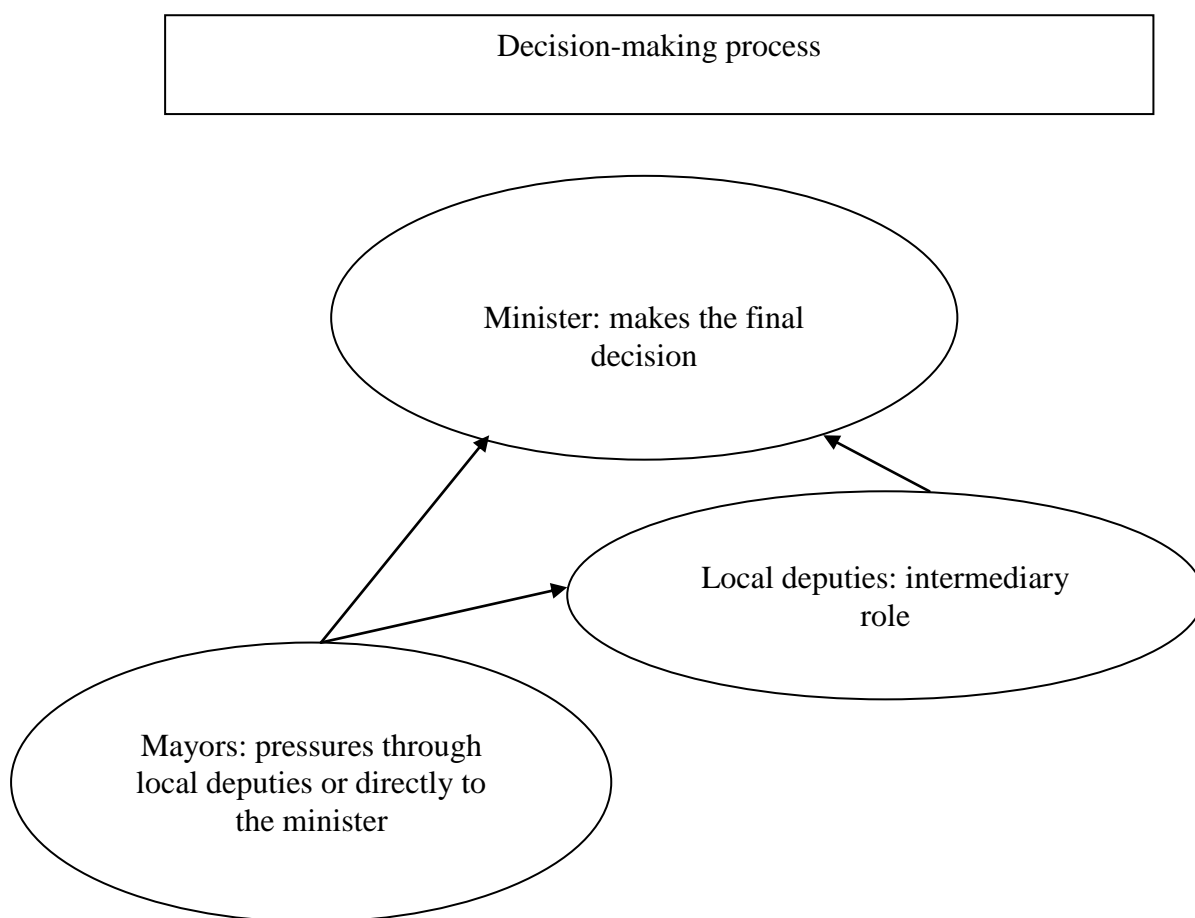


Figure 16: Vertical political network of decision-making process

Regarding local deputies' role, one EU officer described in detail their pressures in LEADER+: "The local deputies intervene in two ways: the first one concerns the budget distribution in regions. In the case of LEADER, this actually regards LAGs' selection. [...]. They go to the ministry and they begin exercising pressure. It is like this!" The second way is through the electoral type of the prefecture that they represent: if the prefecture is uninominal, or whether it has a lot of deputies. By running the government with the rule "I give CIs money in order to gain influence on prefectures' voters, even to those who are not in so much need", more attention is given to uninominal electoral prefectures because in this case, the government has a good chance to maximise its political appeal. As the same EU officer further stated "Is it possible for a small prefecture to be allocated the same amount of money when Heraklion prefecture is more densely populated? Yes it is, because Heraklion

has a lot of deputies, while a small prefecture could have only one. For the government, it is very important to win this prefecture over”.

Mayors either pressurised the local deputies who belong to the same party or they went directly to the minister, especially when there was common political affiliation. It is not a coincidence that during my field work trying to arrange my interview appointments with mayors, their secretaries very often told me that they were in Athens for a meeting at the ministry. Being a civil servant in the Ministry of Interior Affairs, I have almost every day seen mayors “come and go” to the general secretary and minister’s offices for promoting their local demands. I remember an incident that a mayor described after the end of the interview. It was about an informal visit of the LEADER+ MA general secretary with his wife who came from this municipality. To welcome them, the mayor organised a celebration and he told me in detail how he managed to make the general secretary’s wife to dance and sing. He ended the story by saying that “while I am affiliated to another political party, I did that for the sake of my municipality, so that we can access the government in the future”.

So, the clientelistic practices exercised by political parties and government remained strong in all the stages of national CIs’ planning; ranging from the simplest decisions to the more complex ones. This was also mentioned by the EU geographical responsible of EQUAL: “In Greece, politics have been diffused in the lower level, in partnerships’ selection, while in other countries, this does not happen, politics remain at higher levels”.

These pressures led to extremely irrational situations as for example that in EQUAL’s first round. The DP of DAH had obligatorily merged with another DP, which was more than 1.000 km away from Crete in order to satisfy political parties’ demands. “It had been a very big DP and in reality there were hardly any contacts. The ministry unified us; as a result the DP was in essence a ministry creation. It has not been operational at all” (Coordinator of EQUAL II).

Therefore, in these decision- making processes, the fundamental principles of partnership and bottom-up approach seemed to lose their prestige. Their goal to improve vertical and horizontal coherence with multiple tiers of government institutional coordination and involvement of local actors had been weakened towards this informal vertical network. Even though this network brought up demands from the lower level, these demands had been based on political parties' pressures²⁹ and political motives for government re-election.

2.2 Bureaucratic power

Regarding bureaucratic procedures, there was a complicated, to a certain point exhausting, system of management with a lot of institutions involved and an extensive number of laws defining planning, management and implementation. "The institutional part governing EQUAL II is too bureaucratic i.e. the certification of costs, how the payments have to be made, how to do the project in detail.... I have spoken to Italian and Spanish people who implement EQUAL II and there is no comparison!" (EQUAL II coordinator).

In LEADER+ too, the extensive programme bureaucratisation was evident if one looked at the number of involved institutions and institutional documents that the partners had to follow in order to conform to the programme requirements. DAH as the coordinator had to communicate with the following upper level institutions:

- a) Ministry of Agriculture (General Directorate of Land Reclamation Works)
- b) Monitoring Authority (MA) of LEADER +,
- c) Ministry of Finance (paying authority, General Accounting Office)
- d) The Monitoring Committee of LEADER + and
- e) EC Monitoring Committees

²⁹ The influence of political parties by informal channels of communication with the state is evident also at the European level. Informal discussions with Greek executives in Brussels had confirmed that the internal competitive party games of the Greek governments of the two major parties (PASOK and N.D.) had influenced the Greek policy in Brussels. An example referred to was a post change for a permanent EU executive of Greek nationality due to their disagreement with the political decisions of a newly elected Greek minister who belonged to a different political party to the one of the executive. Another example was the political resistance of the new at that time government to decisions of the previous government regarding national reformation of particular social policies strongly promoted by the EU Commissionaire for years.

Additionally, the institutional framework governing LEADER + implementation comprised of 46 different documents and was divided into joint ministerial decision, laws, directives, regulations and guidelines.

This complex system of control was a clear choice of the Greek politico-administrative system and was in no way an EC formal requirement. In the interview with an EU officer, he wondered “Who has even asked to certify that the investor has fulfilled his military service? The Commission? Certainly not, this is purely national”.

The overregulation has stemmed from two factors: one was operational and it was related to corruption and problems of programme sustainability and the other was political and it was related to political control exercised by ministers and local interests. In regards to the first one, in Greece, especially in the first decade of EU inflows i.e. in 1985-1995, there were several cases of mismanagement and corruption and long delays in funds absorption (see for example the Mediterranean Integrated Programme and LEADER I).

Being responsive to these problems, the Greek government went to the other extreme, namely to check everything so as to prevent cases of wasting public and EU money “ The state has chosen to implement strict audits because LDAs were used to great freedom by interpreting Greek laws in their own way” (Ex general secretary of LEADER+). This of course resulted in extremely formalistic controls, which made it harder for investors to invest and led them into "illegal" procedures in order to finish the project on time. “On the one hand, the state pressurised them to complete the projects and on the other hand, it exhausted them with audits so that they found their own "ways" to achieve their goal” (EU officer).

Moreover, since partnership was not a regular policy practice for local actors, the fear of the state for partners’ withdrawals had led to the institutionalisation of all partnerships’ constituent parts for securing its sustainability. As one of the EU evaluators of EQUAL reported: “In Greece, there is a greater tendency

to institutionalise all policy processes, perhaps because politicians feel that if they do not do that nothing will operate well enough, while in England or Ireland the cooperation can be based just on good practice”. At the political level, the local government, faced with all these state institutions and documents, has confirmed state power because it is the latter which had regulated all the rules of the game, supposedly always adhering to European regulations.

However, the overregulation has not only derived from the state's attempt to control corruption, protect programme completion, and show off its superiority but also by the possibility of sharing control and money among more players in the state government. In particular, all the plethora of involved institutions and legal acts had allowed for CIs control by several ministries, which in turn were susceptible to pressures and interventions in programme design by many, often disparate, local political interests.

As a result, in this context, the substance of these programmes for innovative and integrated local development was essentially lost. “The preservation of a tied frame of monitoring and political control [...] do not adjust to the “bottom-up approach and the pilot approach of local development” (Mid - term evaluation report of LEADER+, 2005).³⁰

³⁰The highly politicised feature of the Greek state by the ruling government becomes apparent if one closely looks at the relation of ministries with the monitoring committees and MAs of both CIs. Although CIs horizontal dynamics at state level are not part of my analysis, I provide some evidence to further support my argument. The LEADER monitoring committee had limited influence, particularly the involved socio-economic actors. The same applied to the EQUAL project. According to the EU - wide evaluation of EQUAL (2006), the role of social partners in the Greek EQUAL monitoring committee was restricted to the typical role of consultation only. Although social organisations' participation in the formulation of employment policy constituted an improvement when compared with previous formal consultation exercises, their role appeared to be less important. However, they have played a crucial role in the dissemination of information in their own networks. The fact that the monitoring committees did not contribute to the established operation of CIs programmes and their task was not finally performed properly has also been confirmed in the literature (Ioakimidis, 1996). Talking in general about the cohesion funds, the national external evaluator of LEADER noted that “in the monitoring committees, the economic and social actors have limited power and little opportunities to express their opinion”.

Furthermore, the MAs role was also restricted to the operationalisation of the programme principles according to the political will of ministers. For instance in the LEADER case, even if the MA was trying to promote local integrated development, it had been under pressure by the political leadership of the Ministry to maintain the traditional relations between the

The centralisation feature of the Greek state has also been confirmed in both the EU programmes evaluations referring to Greece as a member state that centrally organised programmes. Suggestions have been made for the need of regional /local stakeholders' greater involvement in all the stages of programme implementation. "Neither regional offices nor local authorities are involved in the management and monitoring of the national EQUAL II plan" (EU-wide evaluation of the CI EQUAL, 2006).

On the contrary, in many member states, decisions for the EQUAL II national plan had been made together with the regional and/or local level of government. For instance, in Germany, Länder as well as other local actors participated in an EQUAL II national monitoring committee and they have taken part in the DPs' selection. In France, although employment policy, strictly speaking, was the responsibility of central government like in Greece, EQUAL II national planning has been marked by strong involvement of regional partners. In less centralised countries like the United Kingdom and Belgium, it was their regional authorities that had produced their own EQUAL II planning (EU-wide evaluation of the CI EQUAL, 2006).

Ministry and the countryside. Additionally, some of the MA staff have been ex-employees of the Ministry which means that they brought with them the relevant attitudes of a civil servant "And we should not forget that the MA is composed by officials from the Ministry who continue implementing in their work attitudes adopted from when working in the government" (EU officer). Traditionally, the strong bureaucratic system of Greece has given specific characteristics to civil servants: conservatism, fear of responsibility, low productivity and obedience to politicians. Therefore, those programmes that demand a comprehensive and innovative design are not entirely supported by appropriate and independent from short political interests' public administration.

Third rule: Community engagement: more information than participation

3.1 Community involvement

As mentioned in the previous chapter, community involvement was a significant formal rule in both programmes. In the EQUAL II partnership, the community participation was realised by applying the empowerment rule, while in LEADER+ by applying the rule of bottom-up approach. However, I argue that these rules have actually been restricted to practices of information and limited consultation rather than of active local community participation because they have embedded in their operation established practices of civil society and state apparatus organisation. “The principle of bottom-up approach was never realised. It was more about local authorities providing information through the local press without feedback from the local population” (Executive of LEADER+ MA).

In LEADER +, LAG or in other words DAH had functioned more as a body of programme implementation and lesser as a body that would empower and motivate the local society to plan their vision for sustainable development. For instance, the selection of a priority theme around which all programme action would have been built, has not been the result of consultation with local people; it was rather LAG’s choice which subsequently has become known to the public by project information actions. The priority theme selection was mainly based on a study about the socio-economic character of the area realised by the DAH at the request of the relevant M.A.

In regards to the Local Action Plan, it was the local authorities of the prefecture who designed it. As mentioned in the mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ for the countryside of Heraklion (2005: 83) “The forms completed by local authorities and other public bodies and the information provided by mayors, DAH partners, who know very well the local community, had contributed significantly to the programme’s design” and it continues by reporting that “it should be noted that LAG workload in combination with administrative routine and bureaucratic requirements in some way deprive

valuable time from the maturation of new ideas by consulting local people”. So, although there were a few participatory processes (see chapter 5, Second rule), they were to a great extent formal ones operating mainly as “obligatory” due to the programme requirements, thus allowing the programme design exclusively to mayors.

This was not only a Cretan phenomenon. This happened in all the LAGs of Greece. If someone looked at the local evaluation reports of each LAG, the bottom-up approach was restricted to an extended publicity of the project to local institutions and people in the area of intervention (Mid-term evaluation report of LEADER+ , 2005). In the interview with the LEADER+ national external evaluator, it was mentioned that “They (the LDAs) have to set up campaigns informing citizens as this is one of the programme prerequisites but all this has not been developed any further, thus remaining at a basic level” and it was added that “In Greece, the concept of LAG does not essentially exist. Without downplaying the LDA as a tool in the hands of local authorities and prefectures for local development, the character of LEADER as a pilot, innovative and self-development of local communities programme does not exist”.

Making an effort to explain the limited participation of local community, the institutional legacies of civil society and state are at stake. As already mentioned in the section for the Greek political system (chapter 4), the civil society is weak and the state is very centralised. Under this situation, there were a lot of structural limitations preventing community participation in both CIs planning and decision-making. First, a centralised state means that there was not a lot of room for new ideas and initiatives derived from the local level. In an environment where the state has given policies’ direction, community involvement has been limited to formal processes of information about pre-decided sectors of activities.

Additionally, state policy directions were combined with exhausting financial controls in both projects. In practice, the LDAs had to respond to a great number of regulations and controls, which immediately prohibited the adoption

of pilot projects, which by their nature need flexibility and openness. And the question “Which LDA will take the responsibility to invest in an initiative without any direct result” (National external evaluator of LEADER+) and risky outcomes emerged quite naturally.

Although the sectors of project intervention were selected by the state, they had to be adapted by DAH according to local needs. Here, state centralisation fitted with local government centralisation, not used to practices of citizen consultation. Thus, the elected politicians of the national and local government ended up being those who made the choices about the projects rather than the community as required by CIs formal regulations.

This norm was so deeply embedded in local partners’ attitudes that had led the DAH president, a mayor too, to interpret the rule of bottom-up approach as a collective effort by neighbouring local authorities to support a common development action plan for the whole Heraklion prefecture. The local plan had to be based on mayors and LDAs experts’ views: “LEADER has the logic of bottom-up approach: the planning from below. So, we respect the particularities of each area, we use our experience from the national and international arena [...], the elected politicians and LDAs executives have accumulated knowledge and experience, and we finally combine the development needs of each area with our knowledge and experience”. It is interesting to note that all these have been said by a mayor with strong democratic aspirations following that he has supported the development of participatory institutions in his community; not a common practice in other local authorities.³¹ Consequently, in the LEADER+ project, bottom-up approach was related to deconcentration, inter-municipal cooperation, community information but in no case did it respond to the core of the concept which has been community involvement.

³¹ In particular, he has initiated a new participatory institution in his community called “Open committees of active citizens” where citizens can discuss and express their opinion on four policy sectors: education, culture, environment and development.

Regarding local civil society, the main problem was that local civil society was not strong enough to respond to that kind of CIs' requirements for participation. Although the prefecture of Heraklion enjoyed higher levels of social capital comparing with the rest of Greece, its social capital still remained low in regards to other EU countries like for instance the Nordic ones. Consequently, the lack of a solid collective spirit among citizens and the emergence of an individualist culture did not easily support the development of collective perspectives for the future of the area. This was evident in the effort on behalf of both projects to create clusters among same businesses for expanding their product market. Although this example is not directly related with community participation, it shows the difficulties of cooperation. Except a winery cluster³², all other clusters, that of women cooperatives, agrotourism accommodation and potteries, had cooperation problems due to attitudes of mistrust and internal competitions quite early on. As the representative of the winery cluster reported "In the case of the potters' cluster, DAH supported and guided them in how to work together and be a team. If they did not want to work as a team themselves, the programme would not have managed to make them one."

3.2 Programme beneficiaries

In the case of programmes' beneficiaries, the same difficulties were also there. In my long discussions with representatives of women's cooperatives, the reluctance and fear of cooperative action surfaced in addition to the direct dependence on DAH. For example, regarding the women's cooperative in Zakros, in the beginning, women were very reluctant to participate in this type of economic activity. Finally, only 5 decided to go on. These women expressed their continuous dependence on LDA in terms of the organisation and promotion of their products. They were also hesitant to continue the project after the end of the programme funding. "When the project was over, we were very frightened; what were we going to do on our own; we kept on calling Giannis to help us" (President of women's cooperative of Zakros).

³²The cluster of winery was the most effective from the others because wine producers had previously developed cooperation outside the LEADER project and later on they had come across this funding opportunity to support furthermore their initial cooperative effort.

In Krousaniotissa's cooperative, collaboration problems had also arisen, mainly competitiveness among women and ignorance of how collaboration could be achieved. "In the beginning, we didn't know what was going on, we didn't have a clue. The main problems were the lack of team spirit and women's low educational level. We also had problems of cooperation between our president and the administration board" (President of the women's cooperative of Kroussaniotissa). Cooperatives' dependence on DAH seemed to reproduce, in a smaller scale, the dependence of Greek civil society organisations on state institutions.

Regarding LEADER+ private investors who are the main programme beneficiaries, the lack of trust on public institutions was the main problem. In this case, we could see again the reproduction of private sector- central state relation at a lower level. As at the upper level, when private firms do not trust the state for taking over common projects, similarly, at the local level, in the beginning investors appeared quite reluctant to join the project - although this attitude has gradually changed since the first project results have been positive. "When we visited new areas, investors were quite cautious and hesitant. It was like here in Archanes, when the Mediterranean Integrated Programmes started years ago that we proposed to people to renovate their houses and they got afraid that the EU would take them when the renovation would finish" (Coordinator of LEADER+). The private sector mistrust towards the public one was also verified in the EQUAL II case regarding actions related to corporate social responsibility promotion in private companies. There was a major difficulty to convince the companies to cooperate with social enterprises for supporting their products (First evaluation report of EQUAL II in Crete, 2006).

Furthermore, the investors' reluctance has been growing due to bureaucratic burdens regarding proposal submissions and financial management of the approved investments. When asked about future plans with regards to ensuring funding for their business from other European projects, a private investor responded to me indigently "No, and I do not think that I want to have this experience again in the future. The bureaucracy is unbelievable [...] the public sector requirements have discouraged us".

One main difference that I identified between EQUAL II beneficiaries (women's cooperatives) and LEADER+ private investors concerns the most effective participation of the latter in actions' design. In the two mini case studies of LEADER+, that of winery clusters and of an agro-tourism accomodation, the investors had a very clear and realistic view of what they wanted to do. Thus, DAH had played a more supportive role by defining the possibilities and the limits of their investments in regards to project prerequisites and dealing with bureaucratic issues. As a private investor told me: "For us, LEADER was a tool used to realise our ideas". On the contrary, in the case of women's cooperatives, the role of DAH was more of guiding and steering due to the women's inexperience of business planning.

The problem of beneficiaries' limited participation was not only a Greek one. Studying the EU evaluation report of EQUAL, it became obvious that there was a tension between EQUAL II requirement of "participative decision-making" and the daily reality in other countries too. In practice, even in those cases in which the beneficiaries were regularly involved in different advisory groups, key decisions tended to be made by a core of agents despite the risk of partnership fragmentation (EU-wide evaluation report of EQUAL, 2006). In UK EQUAL II, for example, the evaluators stressed that the involved beneficiaries had found it difficult to follow some of the intricacies of project management, which finally had a disempowering rather than an empowering effect (EU-wide evaluation report of EQUAL, 2006). However, as in the case of community participation, the evaluation of the degree of beneficiaries' engagement should take each time into account national and local values and established practices that are embedded in it.

Forth rule: The partnership policy process: more technocratic than political

In both CIs, the preparation of their bids and partnership management were very complicated and required specific knowledge by experts in order decisions to be made and be implemented. Indeed, the significance of managerial practices in partnership policies is not only a feature of EU programmes but a general trend evident in national policies of member states too (Skelcher et al, 2005). According to the authors, this produces a technocratisation of partnership policy giving considerable weight to professionals and experts in finding solutions for political issues downgrading in this way the political aspect of partnership decision-making. As shown in the next chapter about the relationship of mayors with the DAH chief executives, this phenomenon could strengthen local managers who gradually start to regulate local affairs without being controlled by local politicians.

In this section, I argue that the requirement of sufficient knowledge and expertise in both CI programmes' management became a very significant resource of power, even more important than the political one. In countries like Greece, where local (and national) government was not well equipped to run these programmes; the agencies that held this type of resources were quite influential inside partnerships. In my case study, this power was conceded to DAH. In an interview with a mayor, also member of the DAH council, the significance of this new power resource in decision-making processes stated quite obviously: "In the decision-making, those who have knowledge have a dominant role. These are the President, the Director and the General Secretary (of the DAH). Knowledge is the criterion for the decision-making and we have to respect it [...] Even in the case that the issue appears to be strictly political, it is never just political; it is technical, legal and economic too". Moreover, in my interview with one EQUAL II partner, the uni-dimensional managerial solutions to political problems had remained an undoubted practice inside partnerships since "There were no alternative propositions of tackling issues other than those related to goals' achievement only".

Additionally to the knowledge for efficient project management, DAH also had the expertise in comparison to other local agencies and local authorities to get funding from EU or from Structural Funds directly, in a short time scale and to effectively prepare the programmes' proclamation notices. "DAH has a great influence. The coordinator knows very well its work, especially how to find new projects. These people are professionals (Executive of LDA OADYK).

Once again in the Greek context, where resources were scarce and expertise was limited inside local political and socio-economic agencies³³, the existence of an institution that brought money to the locality was respectful and being supported by mayors as well as by all local agencies, particularly the NGOs. As reported by the national external evaluator of LEADER+ "The mayors purposefully build a good relation with the LDAs because they want to find resources for their local society and LDAs know well enough where they will find money".

Furthermore, this knowledge was also highly valued by the NGOs, the existence of which depended mainly on their participation in programmes funded by EU and the state. Discussing about the funding resources of his agency, the ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA mentioned that "The only resources are the programmes that are coordinated by agencies like DAH and the inter- state programmes in which KOINOPOLITIA participates as partner of implementation for an activity concerning its area of intervention; by its participation in all these, the agency covers all the functional costs".

Consequently, the domination of DAH in partnerships was also based on its institutional resources in terms of expertise, organisational capacities and knowledge. As shown below, Hay's (2002) conceptualisation of indirect power

³³ In the Greek province, one main problem was the lack of experts for managing EU and national funded programmes. That is why a lot of interviewees mentioned the development of a local bureaucracy as a very significant output of these projects. "After the implementation of LEADER, there are LDAs that are the biggest employer of scientific staff in local societies.[...]This is vital especially for small communities. Namely, when there is one employer who can keep trained staff and run a number of programmes in localities that do not have other opportunities, I think this is very important (National external evaluator of LEADER+)

(Chapter, 1 section 2) could be identified to the power of DAH which supported and took advantage of the technocratisation of politics for reinforcing its position and shaping the partnership context in which the other partners act.

In particular, if I look at the way that partners assessed the power relations in decision-making, the statement “conflict is not necessary to power” (Lukes, 2005) adequately characterises power relations inside both partnerships. All partners from both partnerships persistently declared that there was no conflict among them. As the coordinator of LEADER+ stated in the interview “We have the blessing, let’s say, not to have any conflicts neither at the political level, nor at the board and LAG level. The decisions are always unanimous, there is not any disagreement, no conflicts; the situation is consensual”.

The absence of major conflicts remained a special case when we considered potential conflict issues that emerged in cooperative projects in other parts of Greece such as “the management framework, the reallocation of budgetary resources, the existence of partners with different speeds and the partisan conflicts” (National external evaluator of EQUAL II). How did this happen especially in a region that localism has been very strong and has been referred to as an issue of conflict? The fact that there was no actual disagreement does not have to be translated into there being no power relations.

As already analysed above, despite all this “visible diversity” of partners, DAH managed to have a very dominant role. Besides its direct formal power, this dominant role was additionally derived from its capacity to take advantage of the technocratisation of programmes and so legitimatise its decisions by its expertise. In this way, DAH successfully managed to keep conflicts covert and control the agenda. Through discussions and negotiations with partners, DAH has attended the decision-making meetings with all issues settled and in this way all potential issues of disagreement were kept out the time of decision-making. As the EQUAL II coordinator characteristically underlined - confirming empirically the inadequacy of pluralist theory to identify power relations in the formal decision-making process- “For us, the partnership board

is not the place to solve our problems. We know our problems, but we come here to make some decisions because that is what we have to do. We discuss our problems mainly in informal meetings with partners as these happen more often. At the partnership board, we meet each other for some formal decisions that we have to make; so there are no disagreements at that time”.

Fifth rule: The partnership policy process: more stability than innovation

One principle of the CI programmes was innovation. Innovation did not only refer to new policies in terms of their outcomes and delivery but also to changes in policy processes and values that promote alternative arrangements (The Principle of Innovation in the new ESF Programmes, 2006). Although the CIs did not seem to have introduced as much innovation as would have been expected, innovation did take place in member states (EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL, 2006; Synthesis of mid-term evaluations of LEADER+ programmes, 2005). Indeed, the UK EQUAL II project went even further by approaching innovation as an experimentation process. The importance of deriving lessons, even from failure, was stressed: “Partnerships must ensure that lessons are not wasted or become secondary to the achievement of hard outputs. Much can be learnt from innovative approaches, which are unsuccessful” (EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL, 2006: 106).

I argue that in Greece, innovation was limited and restricted to a more pragmatic and utilitarian interpretation by national and local government due to organisational needs for stability and tangible results. As the ex-director of KOINOPOLITIA pointed out “The collaboration is imposed by the requirements of European programmes, this is very important because we always try to implement collaboration under the pressure or the motive of funding and in this way we have produced outputs in a functional way regarding only two performance indicators: effectiveness and implementation of goals”.

In particular, the agony for stability and absorption of all the available funding had led to the bureaucratisation and standardisation of partnership processes and outcomes at the expense of initiation and innovation. “At the beginning, we have motivation, imagination and enthusiasm, in other words, all these elements that make something new. The moment that tables, statistical data and figures of funding absorption come to the front [...] we start to manage things

without looking at what we will gain from this management” (Mayor of Episkopis).

In LEADER +, although the programme outcomes were very satisfactory, with the rate of absorption up to March 2005 reaching 40,23%³⁴ of the budget and with the LAG of DAH ranked first in the table of all the 40 LAGs of the country for the distribution of the reserved funding, its investments were classified as less innovative. More specifically, a large part of investment interest focused on creating and improving infrastructures of accommodation and catering. As one LEADER+ MA executive underlined “We reached the point of mainly running accommodation projects because that was familiar and easy to do”.

Even though in EQUAL II, innovation was achieved at a higher level, the initiatives in social economy very much relied on secure practices rather than on alternative and creative actions proposed by the partners (Final evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2008). In my interview with an active and passionate member of the EQUAL II partnership, it was stated with obvious disappointment that: “There is a reproduction of the same standards: there is no innovation; if only the activities are safe and efficient to realise, do they get implemented”.

For instance, inside the EQUAL II partnership, there were ideological tensions among partners that supported a more socially based approach for the operation of women's cooperatives and those (research centre, DAH) that promoted a more entrepreneurial approach for their development. During the meetings, the values of efficiency and of maximum possible absorption of project funding appeared to be the most beneficial for the partners. Consequently, any alternative practices seemed to be inadequate for the programme development. As one EQUAL II partner who has been involved in these discussions pointed

³⁴ Indeed, since 2005, the rate of absorption of the case study LEADER has preceded by far in comparison with LEADER programmes in other parts of Greece (Mid- term evaluation report of LEADER+, 2005).

out: “There were disagreements regarding the content of social policy: who would be the beneficiaries and what type of organisation would support them. However, the coordinator focused mostly on the entrepreneurial part of it i.e. the cooperatives being sustainable, selling their products, while we proposed alternative solutions for which the coordinator feared that they would be risky”.

Discussing this issue with the external national evaluator of LEADER+, he offered support to my argument about limited innovation: “In Greece, we got to the other extreme where we looked at mainstreaming actions that have a greater financial absorption; thus securing that all funds will be used up. This practice prevents to a large extent any chance for innovation and bottom-up approach”.

The informal rule “absorption versus innovation” was supported by the central state too. The rationale was to make use of any penny. That is why the ex-general secretary of LEADER+ when asked to evaluate his work, the first thing that he proudly mentioned was that, “my plan was not to lose any European funding. And during my tenure, we never lost any money and we had also received bonuses from the Community”. Indeed, the official interpretation of innovation in EQUAL II national report was directly related to efficiency “The abstract reference to the modern character of a proposed method or a product would not be adequate for its characterisation as innovative. For it to be innovative, it should be accompanied by an increase in effectiveness or the solution of concrete problems regarding the obstacles in the access to the labour market of disadvantaged groups” (Final evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2008: 37).

The downgrading of innovation by the key involved partners and therefore its low performance in the CIs of my case study were not only based on the general difficulties these projects dealt with in other member states but also on endogenous domestic constraints deriving from the negative experience on previous collaborations, public agencies’ disorganisation, and low level of trust.

Starting from the latter, there were the individualistic attitudes and the lack of trust that could each time obstruct the process of cooperation that led to the adoption of more common well tested solutions. Talking about the problems of cooperation, the EQUAL II coordinator stated that “I believe that the problem that we have in Greece is related to trust and cooperation. It is hard for us to trust the other, their good will; we believe that something could be hidden. This is a major problem”. In this context of mistrust where previous collaborations have failed, something new, for which the effort made by partners would be greater and processes and outcomes would be uncertain, is much more difficult to be initiated and implemented.

Second, since there has always been a fear of operational failure and disorder in the established partnership due to long term organisational problems of local government services and public organisations, the main goal of the DAH was to secure a stable operating environment for partnership. The organisational problems of public agencies were mainly related to there being no skilled staff and to an overload of bureaucratic procedures. As a result, partners from public sector very often had delays in implementation, which were caused by delays to the recruitment of staff and to continuous changes and transformations in the composition of their management structure; more specifically changes in political personnel were often accompanied by changes in staff (First evaluation report of EQUAL II, 2006).

As one partner from the public organisation NELE noted: “There are many problems at management level in my agency resulting from the problematic operation of the public sector in general; ranging from getting the prefect’s signature to tremendous changes in staff” This explains why one main criterion of partners’ selection by DAH was low staff turnover and expertise in management. Talking about the selection of partners, the EQUAL II coordinator referred to a paradigm: “For instance, NELE Heraklion and NELE Rethymno have permanent staff and freelancers that are constantly involved in consultation programmes, so they have got the required stability and experience; that’s why we have selected them”.

At the national level too, initial delays in programmes' national planning due to extended bureaucracy and political games for money distribution per region led to the adoption of a more pragmatic attitude by the state. This attitude was further reinforced by the new principle “n+2” (EC, 1260/99) of EU that accelerated the time of funding absorption by member states. Consequently, the state was orientated to the implementation of projects meeting their requirements to the minimum degree possible, especially those that were related to community involvement and to innovation which by their nature took more time, effort and risk by policy-makers. In my interview with one LEADER+ MA executive, the consequences of this practice were mentioned: “At the end, the main goal was the annual funding absorption. Due to concerns that the state would lose money, there were discounts. These discounts affected the quantity of actions to the detriment of their quality”.

The references to “discounts during policy planning” and “dominance of quantity versus quality” revealed straightforwardly some more general aspects of the Greek policy-making. Although this issue does not relate directly to my study and it has not been supported by further data, it is interesting to note that traditional practices of the Greek state (like favouritism, party politics, sectorial corporatism) impact on policy-making usually in terms of funding distribution to potentially more beneficiaries and adjustment of the policy design to corporatist demands. An executive of LEADER+’ MA confirmed the above by underlining that “In LEADER, they gave some money to many various agencies to cover immediate needs for investment; there is no comprehensive intervention”.

The need for fast funding absorption combined with the aforementioned overload and complex system of management has created confusion and overtime work for coordinators and involved partners. The LEADER+ coordinator reported that “the essence of LEADER has been lost for me; instead of dealing with the development and the achievement of its strategic plan, I have to deal with technical data sheets and their modification”. So, DAH gradually came to have a pure operational role intending to integrate more and more “easy” programmes in terms of low risk, losing its

developmental orientation for innovation: “LDAs are relaxed; they found a role in processing applications with the principle “I promote what is of more demand” (National external evaluator of LEADER+). This happened at national level too. One LEADER+ MA executive stated in a cynic way that “LEADER turned out to be a bureaucratic operation and that the MA lost its main developmental role and just did the management”.

Sixth rule: Partnership behaviour: the attitude of dependence and the fear of responsibility

During my interviews with partners and MAs' executives, I identified an attitude of dependence from downward to upward and a fear to take over responsibilities. I argue that these attitudes have undermined the empowerment and autonomy of the involved partners leading to inertia and passive implementation of programmes. Although the programmes' formal rules relocated authority and responsibilities downward, from EU, to state and then to local authorities and other local actors, these rules did not manage to alter actors' attitudes; to transfer the responsibility for initiations and problems arising to others above them with the ultimate recipient both the state and the EU.

In particular, NGOs, programmes' beneficiaries, especially women's cooperatives, and local public agencies seem to be dependent on local authorities in terms of problem definition and proposed solutions; DAH allocated all the programmes' design problems to state centralisation while the MAs complained about the lack of necessary direction and protection by the EU. As noted by one executive of the EQUAL II MA, it was this lack of responsibility that led for instance the state to institutionalise the DP by law "there was the need for accountability. Inside DP, all have to work adhering to the principle of shared responsibility; partners feel committed».

In particular, at the horizontal level, as already mentioned above, since the involved NGOs and the cooperatives have not articulated well enough their interests and their functional survival depended on programmes undertaken by DAH, they faced DAH as their lifeline and they relied on its directions. Additionally, local public agencies, which were not considered as trustworthy institutions in terms of organisational capacity, followed the DAH programme guidelines since DAH took the risk of including them in partnerships.

In terms of the relationship between local authorities and the state, the local authorities demanded their independence from the state but at the same time

they were afraid of being totally autonomous. The state must be there to protect them. In my interview with the Mayor of Arkalochori, discussing the future of LDAs, he noted that “We want the state to be available but not to affect the pace we have adopted so far”. In particular, the development of local initiatives might not be exclusively based on local resources but it has to be mediated by the state to one degree or another: “all our efforts need further strengthening and support by the state” (Ex- president of KOINOPOLITIA).

What is interesting is that if for local level (NGOs, local authorities, local public agencies) the attitude of dependence was expected due to the existing strong hierarchical intergovernmental relations and weak civil society, it was unexpected in the relationship between the state and EU. The need for protection by the EU and the fear of undertaking initiatives and risks were strongly evident in this relationship. According to the existing literature, the Greek state is typically regarded as a “policy taker” rather a “policy initiator” vis- a- vis the EU. “Downloading from the EU has been more relevant than uploading for Greece” (Featherstone and Papadimitriou, 2008: 28). Evidence from this download process had also been identified in my research.

For instance, the EU geographical responsible of EQUAL for Greece acknowledged the development of networks between DPs of the same member state or among member states in order to support specific measures of EQUAL or to continue the funding of specific actions developed under EQUAL from other EU programmes. She referred specifically to the passion displayed by the director of EQUAL MA in Portugal who has managed to create a very dynamic thematic network lobbying specific policies in the EU; she also referred to a public official in Germany who participated in an EQUAL DP and initiated a new national network. She did not make any reference to initiatives in Greece, other than the implementation of the programme itself ending up disappointed by noticing that “In Greece there were no similar initiatives as in other countries. The political leadership is not keen to support this kind of initiatives; in Greece, the system is delusive”.

Additionally, in my interviews with the MAs executives of both programmes, the gradual detachment of the EU interest from supporting these programmes was often reported. That was considered by them as a bad practice because effectively the MAs felt helpless in their work. In particular, they critically commented that EU has been transformed to a bureaucratic mechanism looking only at one direction: effectiveness in terms of funding absorption: “Generally speaking, the role of the EU has become more and more technocratic. In the second round of EQUAL, the EU was transformed into just an observer and funding organisation” (Executive of EQUAL II MA). The same criticisms were reproduced in LEADER+ MA: “The EU is moving now towards a financial deal rather to a developmental orientation” (Executive of LEADER+ MA). Even if they acknowledged that, because of the subsidiarity principle, EU gradually retired from an active role keeping to just a monitoring one; in the interviews a general disappointment and an anxiety resulting from this development were evident.

Moreover, they complained about the complexity and confusion in the principles followed by the projects and consequently to the difficulty to understand and implement them “For instance, the issue of innovation was unclear [...], the guidelines did not specify a particular type of partnership, a lot of countries needed a detailed guide for implementing the partnership principle” (Executive of EQUAL II MA). The same difficulty regarding the clarity of rules was also present in LEADER+ MA executives’ comments. One executive noted that “the term “animation” referred in programme documents has not been clear, even now it is not comprehensible” and added that “the term “integrated development” also raises questions because it does not directly relate to agriculture”.

On the other hand, when I asked EU officials to comment on these complaints and difficulties, I have received a completely opposite argument; according to them, EU strongly supported these projects up to the point it had to do so, so as to leave the member states free to make choices. It was when the principle of subsidiarity was integrated in the regulative framework of EUQAL II and

LEADER+, that the European Commission stopped having voting rights in MAs as it had in the previous rounds of programmes “EC is no longer involved in the decision-making of MAs” (EU geographical responsible of LEADER).

Furthermore, in all the interviews with Brussels officers, it has been stated that besides funding, EU has supported the programmes with a number of specific actions to a great extent. Some of these actions have been the establishment of European thematic networks, the physical presence of experts and in some cases of commissioners in each member state, the policy forums which politicians from each member state could attend and participate, the ongoing renewal of programme guidelines and finally the recommendations from evaluations reports. In general, during my visit to Brussels, the interviewees gave me the impression that EU was committed to these programmes and supported them as needed. For instance, in the EQUAL programme, the dedication and passion of experts and commissionaires for the programme development was emphasised. The EU geographical responsible of EQUAL acknowledged the work of “two extraordinary experts who had extensive experience and in many cases there were more than they ought to be committed to the programme” or the degree to which the Commissioner who designed the EQUAL programme was passionate and skilful.

The interviewees in Brussels explained the EU “indifference” advocated by Greek executives with a different way that of more freedom to member states. In particular, the EU strategy was to provide more guidance at the launch of the programme and then to monitor the programme regularly. “In the beginning, the EC took over “babysitting until the children grew up” and then it stopped; this is what happened with programmes” (EU officer, Head of Unit). This is a strategy that many countries such as the Netherlands, UK and Ireland preferred in order to avoid being closely monitored since experience in the programme has begun to accumulate (EU evaluator of EQUAL). In fact, in the LEADER case, after 10 years of implementation, the familiarity with the programme acquired by member states was so great that it ceased being a CI and it was incorporated as a horizontal axis in the EU Fourth Programming Period.

Therefore, member states have been given the opportunity to integrate all LEADER experience into national policies.

The accession of new member states and the diffusion of these programmes to more countries have created even more difficulties in EU monitoring; therefore, solutions led to greater national monitoring of programmes so as to simplify the process. As an EU officer commented on the decentralisation of LEADER+ monitoring to member states due to their numerical increase: “We have 56 rural development programmes or 27 member states ; in what sense can I say to each member state what to do exactly from my office in Brussels?”

So, EU officers considered the criticisms towards EU by Greek executives unrealistic. An EU officer explicitly expressed him being annoyed “to tell me that Lithuania, a new member state, cannot implement the programme, I can understand it, but to claim the same for Greece after three CSFs and three LEADER programmes; it is outrageous!”

In relation to the clarity of principles, EU officers argued that programmes guidelines gave good instructions and were supported by EU experts and the validation of good practices has always been there. So, according to them, the principles were clear enough, even though some principles such as the principles of empowerment and mainstreaming they were innovative for many countries. Therefore, as already noted the EU geographical responsible of EQUAL criticised the Greek MAs for inertia “we cannot expect everything from above (i.e. EU)”.

The expectation of the MAs executive that EU had to do the job and that they had to follow was also reinforced by the widespread idea among them that EU has the power to change everything. “MA may have the impression, the hope, that EU could strongly affect the national decision makers at many times but it cannot. As I follow the issues of monitoring, in many cases, I get indignant because if the state does not invest money and does not manage in the correct way, we cannot compel it to change” (EU evaluator of EQUAL). In a disorganised and inefficiently administrated state, the MAs executives

expected from EU, which appeared to be more organised and powerful, to intervene and correct all the internal disfunctionalities of their organisation; however, these expectations were quite high compared to EU's will to influence that type of policies. This dependency attitude created among MAs' executives a continuous grief, a transfer of responsibility for problems that arose to EU and finally a lack of enthusiasm and initiation to put forward partnership developments.

Comparison of the LEADER+ and EQUAL II programmes

The significance of institutional legacies and dominant values in national and local political organisation are quite apparent when I compare the LEADER+ and EQUAL II projects. In this research project, I methodologically treat these two programmes in a more complementary way for a comprehensive selection of data than in a comparative way for explaining differences and commonalities. However, selective conclusions derived from their comparison illuminate and support my argument about the way that the institutions embody the political norms of their environment.

The different policy sector that these partnerships supported, the economic versus social development and the different size of their budget had an impact on the articulation of power relations in policy-making processes. The role of policy sector in policy process is also evident in other research too (John and Cole, 2000; Rhodes, 1997) which conclude that policy sector matters. Harding (2005) makes a distinction between the “governance of urban competitiveness” and the “governance of urban social cohesion”. According to them, the policy sector could strongly influence the type of membership and the mode of cooperation inside collaborative activities.

I argue that the EQUAL II programme had remained closer to formal rules than the LEADER+ programme whatever this meant about the diversity and equity of partners and beneficiaries’ engagement. In particular, during interviews, I became aware that in the EQUAL II project, there was a greater diversity of partners than in LEADER+; the partnership was larger and more substantial with the participation of NGOs, networks of local authorities and research centre.

Moreover, always in comparison to the LEADER+ project, the participation of beneficiaries was more systematic and the implemented actions more

innovative³⁵. Although the beneficiaries were not aware of their needs and it was the first time that they participated in such projects, DAH was more responsive to their needs and demands. Finally, in EQUAL II, the role of the executives was more independent from mayors' political wills and the thematic groups more organised and efficient than those of LEADER+. As the coordinator of LEADER+ noted "the thematic networks of LEADER are not as developed as in EQUAL II".

But why all these differences? Looking back at the institutional legacies and established political values at local and national level could provide answers to the above question. First of all, the EQUAL II project has not been a top priority for mayors and ministers. And this has been for two reasons: The first is related with the budget size and the second one with the undermining of social policy by state and local government. For them, social policy, when it existed, meant infrastructures such as building schools and hospitals or big programmes of social integration. All other actions of social policy were judged as soft actions without a real meaning for local social development. The low priority the state assigned to social policies' development was also confirmed by two more facts: a) by the percentage of social policy funds in the Greek GDP. Greece as Italy and Portugal representing the Southern European block of countries in EU spend less than Luxembourg, Denmark and the rest of Northern countries on social protection. In 2003, total social spending amounted to 28% of the Greek GDP while the relevant one for Denmark is 31% (<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home/jsp>), b) by the high percentage of the European Social Funds contribution (ESFs) to national social policies' budget. The contribution of ESFs to the expenditure of national social policies was quite crucial in Greece in comparison to other countries reaching 58.4%. (EU-wide evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL, 2006: 61).

³⁵ The actions of EQUALII could easily be characterised as more innovative than that of Leader+ since social policy in Greece is not well developed; so, slightly innovative for other countries social policies remained quite innovative for the Greek reality.

The national external evaluator of LEADER+ comment took me by surprise by saying that all the programmes funded by the ESFs was a waste of money because they were “soft” interventions that included far too many partners and had no efficient results “The approach of ESF to involve many partners, in practice creates a big bureaucracy [...] At least, in LEADER+, there are some investments. Bad or good, they exist. EQUAL II includes many “soft” actions without tangible results”.

The focus on efficient outcomes and the unawareness of social policies by politicians and executives were there once again. In the same direction, the Director of Lasithi LDA stated about EQUAL II that “At first, I was sceptical; I thought this is another social programme without significant funding, with only advisory actions but eventually it helped, in a practical way, the women involved a lot”.

In this context, mayors regarded the social policy interventions of EQUAL II as something not worth of their direct involvement and they left partnership development and implementation to executives. The elected politicians were involved only in cases in which their intervention was important for overcoming a specific problem and in budget redistribution. “The presidents of LDAs (mayors) left much room for partners; there was freedom and trust. The presidents attended the partnership board meetings only in cases when there were changes in the budget or a partner was to withdraw” (Executive of LDA ANKOM). Instead in LEADER+, the political control was stronger since half of the partners of LAG were locally elected politicians with high managerial posts in DAH.

In relation to budget size, the budget of LEADER+ was quite bigger than the EQUAL II budget. In LEADER+, the total budget with the additional funding after the budget review reached 13.274.051euro while the total budget of EQUAL II did not exceed 1.250.000 euro. As one executive from the LDA of Sitia said “This is a small programme with a low budget, essentially an auxiliary programme”. That means that besides the low priority in social policy, there were additionally financial reasons for which this project was not so significant to mayors. This also explains in its turn why they left much

flexibility and freedom to coordinator to run the programme without political interventions and pressures for adjustments to their interests. An executive of the LDA AKOM, discussing the lack of interest on behalf of mayors, stated that “where there is a lot of money, there is both greater responsibility and more conflicts too; here (in EQUALII project) the money is not much, so the mayors’ interest remains low”. So, while the LEADER+ programme was a mayors’ game, the EQUAL II project remained with managers who adopted the formal programme rules as much as possible.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that in fact there is a difference between formal and actual decision-making processes. Decision-making and organisational issues management in both LAG and DP have primarily been dealt with by few motivated mayors with the support of chief executives of DAH rather than by formal partners' assemblies. Negotiations by this group in private accommodated common agreement and conflicts with the other partners had been managed before they arrived to the formal decision-making arena.

So, the study of informal rules in decision-making raised important questions about power in these collaborative spaces. Power imbalances were obvious in both partnerships' composition and partners' resources. Although all the partners ought to participate in an equal footing, hierarchical relations existed where stronger actors with particular skills and expertise dominated the partnership agenda. Additionally, informal networking at the horizontal and vertical level influenced the distribution of power and aggregated prevailing ideas about approaching and implementing a policy. Some of these networks were old and highly hierarchical like the vertical one and other were newer and less hierarchical like the networks of "Old Mayors".

In regards to community involvement, although formal participation was secured, it appears that the actions of public participation and beneficiaries involvement were developed to a certain degree as far as they facilitated the implementation process rather than as an issue of citizen rights and democratic governance. On the one hand, mayors did not want to lose the control of local affairs and on the other hand, civil society and beneficiaries in particular were not empowered to the extent that it was needed in order to actively undertake their participative role with the result being that few citizens and beneficiaries were actually involved.

Both partnerships embodied a tension between democratic governance through the engagement of community and beneficiaries in the process of design and implementation of CIs goals for assuring community interest and effective

implementation for ensuring tangible outcomes. Between these two poles, efficiency dominated in the detriment of democratic quality and as a result output legitimization was strengthened and input and throughput legitimization were undermined. This fact led to partnership democratic deficit since the quality of democracy needs a balance between all the types of legitimization (chapter 2, section 1.2.2). The democratic deficit was accentuated by one more factor: the central player, DAH, was a hybrid body because it incorporated principles, organisationally and politically speaking, both from the private and the public sector creating fluidity in terms of its role in defining the ends and means of the public policy delivered. Moreover, the enhanced role of the executives inside DAH and their lack of electoral mandate undermined partnership legitimization further. Consequently, a real “bottom-up” approach of democratic empowerment and decision-making had not been possible.

Regarding intergovernmental relations, even though the principle of subsidiarity was an integral part of both programmes’ prerequisites, strong vertical hierarchical relations between state and local authorities had developed demonstrating the persistence of “statist” selection and coordination of main CIs directions. The centralised state had confirmed its established power in two ways; a. politically by decision-making on key programmes’ issues and b. bureaucratically by adopting overload and complex controls.

Moreover, the desire to secure a stable operating environment in order to absorb as soon as possible the funding in total and to efficiently implement programmes activities, had created an imperative of goal implementation in the detriment of innovation and opening up of the partnership agenda to partners with different values and demands. National contextual features such as low cooperative culture and trust, ineffective administration of local authorities and public organisations as well as complex and robust state control systems are some explanatory factors for low innovation.

Low innovation was combined with the technocratisation of policy-making; as a result all the different ideological issues were transformed to technical issues with DAH experts “knowing” better which were the solutions to political

problems. Consequently, partnerships were undermined into organisational and managerial instruments with concrete tangible ends losing their political and ideological character. In this way, management knowledge became a new political resource that stood next to other political resources. In a paradoxical way, the political character of the projects was maintained, in a slightly distorted way, through party politics and politicians' personal motives at national level and localist claims at local level.

Finally, attitudes of dependence and fear of responsibility spread in the relations among all the territorial levels from the lower to the upper one, made much more difficult the undertaking of initiations. It is interesting that although formal rules offered a great freedom to the state and local partners in terms of selecting programmes actions, partners finally selected the path dependent behaviour of passive implementation and secured low risk actions.

Consequently, if in the case of formal rules, it was EU and to a lesser degree the state, which set the rules of the game, in the case of informal rules, it was the state and local partners that played this role. In the case of state and local partners, there constantly was a role change between acceptance and implementation of formal rules and creation of informal rules, which demonstrated the procedural character of partnership and the dynamics of rules configuration at horizontal and vertical level.

I concluded that in my case study, the informal rules interplayed with the formal rules and created a new particular system that permitted, with different processes as opposed to the rational and democratic ones proposed by formal rules, partners to work together and deliver partnership outcomes.

Chapter 7: Agency: Institutional entrepreneurs and local leaders

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have analysed the configuration of formal and informal rules, or in other words, the rules-in-use that guide EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnership processes and I have identified the main factors from the larger socio-economic, cultural and institutional context that had influenced the development of informal rules and their power relationship with the formal ones.

In this chapter, I will discuss the role of the agency and I will focus on the way that the agents' strategic behaviour interacts with the established formal and informal rules in order to produce evolution in the partnership process in terms of preservation or change of rules-in-use. As the national external evaluator of EQUAL II stated "To achieve a partnership, people's passion and engagement is needed".

More specifically, the analysis of formal and informal rules revealed how agency embedded deeply in the existing normative environment, interpreted formal rules in a particular "domestic" way. In this chapter, I will mainly illustrate the purposive actions of agent, the conscious pursuit of their motives, individual or societal, that transform partnership processes. I argue that in these partnerships, agency was realised by two categories of actors, the "institutional entrepreneurs" at local and national level as well as the established local leaders. Both categories of actors supported particular formal rules and tried to change the direction of informal rules in favour of the first. In particular, the redistribution of power and resources that introduced the formal rules of the partnership accompanied by new ideas and narratives of policy-making have been used by these two actors' categories in three ways: a. by selecting and reinforcing special features of formal rules that impact of agent's freedom, b. by promoting and sharing concrete values and practices to partners and finally

c. by providing a positive and enabling partnership context for the smooth introduction of formal rules.

The chapter is divided in two sections; each section focuses on the strategic behaviour of each actor's category and its impact on partnership initiation and development.

Section 1: Institutional entrepreneurs

The institutional entrepreneurs comprised local and national executives that were actively involved in the promotion and evolution of partnerships. In particular, at local level, I refer to some partners' representatives and programme coordinators while at national level I refer to executives of MAs.

1.1 Local institutional entrepreneurs

In my interviews with local partners, the involvement of some "important people" that were appointed for the everyday operation of their organisation as members of the partnership or officially represented it has been quite often revealed. These people have supported the participation of their organisation in the partnership and they have worked hard for the partnership's actions to be carried out.

Regarding public organisations in which apathy and resistance for new initiations have been dominant practices, their participation in the partnership depended directly on the personal motivation of their management team, i.e. on personal interest, time available and capacities of the people in charge. There were some employees in the public sector that were more active and ambitious; interested in a more substantial way in the well-being of their communities. By substantial way, I mean that they have taken a distance from the existing overloaded bureaucratic practices and inertia in policy-making towards more dynamic, collaborative and responsive to local needs behaviours. These were the employees that had proposed to their senior political managers the involvement of their public organisation to the partnership and they were then responsible for all the contractual commitments and activities resulting from this participation.

The traditional attitudes of civil servants was so deeply established in public sector that these employees needed to convince their colleagues and the partners that their active role did not stem from rational motives (mainly economic) but from their interest in the community. Once again, it was due to the Greek culture that behaviours overcoming the expected individualistic way of doing things in the public arena were greeted with suspicion. In the interview with one civil servant in NELE, I was impressed with his persistence on explaining why he decided to be involved in the EQUAL II partnership “I did not have any economic profit from this story, it would not offer me anything financially. If I had had a different attitude, I would have done my job as prescribed by the Civil Servant Code and I would not have bothered dealing with something new that incurred extra time” and he continued by emphasising the personal engagement of his staff in the project: “It was a team of 10 people who worked hard, they would stay up all night but they would feel good. There was a feeling of reward, of personal satisfaction”.

In the DAH, the personal commitment of the coordinators of both projects was also apparent. Their effort to support the partnership was so strong that they got to the point to devote their own free personal time and resources for the partnership's sustainability. For instance, the coordinator of EQUAL II stated that she used her own car to move the products of one women's cooperative located in a village far away from Heraklion to a product exhibition in Heraklion, commenting that “I was quite involved in this project. Its success has become a personal matter; not only for me, but also for all of the staff”.

Evaluating partners' work, the ex-director of KOINOPOLITIA underlined the executives' commitment of DAH “The DAH does the work for other partners that have been paid to do it. Why do they do that? For the sake of the collaboration and the project that they have undertaken”. Some executives' commitment to the project activities was also evident in other LDAs too. An executive from the LDA of OADYK reported that he was so deeply involved

in the programme that he even neglected his family. He jokingly said, “in the end, my children heard “EQUAL” and they run away!”

In the case of the research centre EDAP, its director has also been characterised by the partners as a key actor for his innovative ideas and personal interest in the project. ‘The Technological Park has a very important person too; its director [...] who had also given the partnership name. In general, he is full of new ideas and enthusiasm for work (EQUAL II coordinator).

At the level of beneficiaries and particularly of women's cooperatives, it was usually one woman that had encouraged and motivated all the other women of the community to set up a cooperative. For example, in the case of Krousaniotissa cooperative, “there was a capable woman with leading skills who managed to get twenty women out of their houses, to unite them, to take a loan and become businesswomen” (EQUAL II coordinator). Indeed, when she resigned from the cooperative due to family reasons, this resulted in a gap in the organisation’s coordination.

1.2 National institutional entrepreneurs

At the level of the MAs in both programmes, there were employees who were dedicated to the project and they have been committed to it. In the case of EQUAL, the EU officer, evaluator of EQUAL, stated for the MA of Greece that “those involved with the programme were passionate because it had a lot to do with supporting and helping vulnerable groups in a different way from the traditional one”. Moreover, another EU officer, Head of Unit, said for LEADER that there were employees who had ideas and wanted the programme to be successful “I could say that some executives in MA did everything they could to promote this programme. They had ideas and persistence ...”

But who were these enabling “people” in the MAs? The existing literature on Europeanisation supports that the facilitation of the EU rules implementation is supported by a number of individuals, often national executives and politicians, who have previous experience in EU policy-making and they adapt these rules

in the national context (Borzel and Risse, 2000). The findings suggest that this has also happened in my case study.

In EQUAL, the first director of the MA was a public entrepreneur that had interpreted and managed the formal rules of the programme. She was a civil servant in the Ministry of Labour and she had worked as a national expert in Brussels. When EQUAL was launched by the EU, she returned to Greece and she was appointed as a MA director. Her managerial skills and her knowledge of European policy-making sustained her effort to organise in an effective way the MA and implement EQUAL according to EU requirements. Furthermore, the management model she adopted was far from that of the established narrow political party influences, which helped those involved to believe in and support the project principles. As one of her colleagues said with respect: “She had a specific culture that she brought with her from Brussels. She supported that the state must provide for citizens. She had excellent organisational skills and maintained her professionalism to a high standard. Although quite centralised at work, she encouraged the transfer of know-how among her colleagues. She believed in the efficient use of management tools and in transparency. She had a vision and she managed to diffuse it among staff” (Executive of EQUAL II MA).

Her role was so crucial that there was the impression by the EQUAL II MA staff and the EU officer, geographical responsible for the program, when she left that the project lost its realm. “The programme began with a vision and a good feeling and then just after she left, the programme extension was a failure”.

In the LEADER project, the first general secretary of LEADER had already worked in the General Directorate (DG) of Agriculture of EU. So “he already knew about EU processes and programmes” (ex- general secretary of LEADER+). He and the two Directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Directorate of Agriculture Policy and the Directorate of Programming which “already were responsible for the implementation of the Mediterranean

Integrated Programmes and they knew how to manage European programmes” (ex- general secretary of LEADER+) grounded LEADER rules and they organised the implementation of the project “At that time, there was a good juncture in terms of good executives that liked the idea of LEADER programme and they were passionate about it ” (Executive of the LEADER+ MA).

So, it seems that the effectiveness and sustainability of collaboration in partnerships may not be just a matter of formal rules that determine how the partnership should be implemented. They also need the engagement and passion from all involved actors who operate on an everyday basis upon these rules and make the necessary arrangements and adjustments in order to link the formal rules with opportunities and constraints of the domestic context in which they have to be implemented. What was important for them was to make things happen by using different strategies: either by filling with their own work the existing gaps left by other partners, like in the case of coordinators or by managing efficiently their organisation such as in public organisations; either by framing and adapting the formal rules to the domestic context and motivating others to follow, as in the case of national entrepreneurs; or finally by mobilising and supporting others to participate as in the case of the president of the women's cooperative

Section 2: Local leaders

Moving on from the institutional entrepreneurs who in everyday operation have facilitated and supported partnerships, I focus on established local leaders and their strategic behaviour that has led the partnership as a whole. I consider two features: the partnership formal/informal rules that have created concrete demands on leaders' behaviours or in other words the leadership type, and leaders' behaviours within partnerships or in other words the leadership style. In a way, I revisit rules but I indicate their normative and regulative features that constrain/enhance leaders' behaviour. I do that because as already shown in the theoretical part (Chapter 2, section 3), both type and style constitute indispensable features for understanding how leadership is exercised in collaborations.

Based on the identification of leaders by reputation (Chapter 2, section 3) it has emerged from interviews that there was more than one leader in each partnership. There was a strong recognition by the partners that different people brought different skills and there were times when different individuals took on the leadership role. Consequently, it appears that a sharing leadership model came to the fore. The following individuals were identified as leaders: in EQUAL II project, the director of the DAH as well as the ex- president of KOINOPOLITIA. In my interview with the president of KOINOPOLITIA and EQUAL II partner, it has been quite clearly reported that “Leadership figures are the ex- president of KOINOPOLITIA and the director of the DAH. They both are knowledgeable, they understand the demands of the project, they combine the needs with the requirements of the projects; they have vision”.

In the LEADER+ project, the reputation for the leadership enactment resided between the president and the director of the DAH. Only in some cases, the general secretary of the DAH Board has been stated as leader. “As in other LDAs, the people that usually lead are the president and the director. They deal with the project; the director does so every day, the president quite often” (Mayor of Episkopis).

Although many “names” have been mentioned in the leadership arena, when the questions became more focused about the way that leadership was exercised, almost all the accounts referred to the director’s behaviour and only few to the president’s. The NELE executive noted: “I think that during the process, the director had the most catalytic role because in all issues of main significance, there was a direct cooperation with him”. Moreover, the director’s leadership realm appeared also in the frequency of the listed virtues underlined by the interviewees for the partnership’s leader. In this context, it appears that the director had played a role of “process catalyst” (Mandell and Keast, 2009) in both collaborations. It is striking to realise that actually only one person, the director of the DAH exercised many tasks of leadership while the role of the president was limited to a more strategic orientation of the whole DAH; also sharing this with the director. So, there was actually a shift from single leadership to shared leadership but this shift concerns exclusively the sharing of power between the political and executive leaders.

Finally, another individual who has been mentioned quite often by the interviewees as the leader was the founder of DAH and ex- president of DAH, Mr Stavros Arnaoutakis. He was a “leader on an honorary basis” since his activity has not been connected directly with the two current partnerships but with the creation of the DAH years ago and other programmes of that period. Nevertheless, he was efficient in his job and he introduced a managerial style of leadership for the first time. The LEADER+ coordinator ecstatically noted: “In my experience, all members of political and executive staff recognise Mr. Arnaoutakis as the leader of DAH; he was the person who took over DAH, while it was still in paper. He developed it to what it is today including infrastructure, staff and everything else”.

With the exception of the cases of ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA (who was still directly connected with the DAH as a result of him being a municipal councillor of Archanes and founder of KOINOPOLITIA) and of Arnaoutakis (who was no longer responsible for the current partnerships), the reputational identification of leadership has been identical with the formal position of leadership: both the president and the director had the political and managerial

authority respectively in DAH which was the coordinating agency of the two programmes.

However, the formal authority and responsibility that derived from this position were to organise and support the collaborative activity of the partnership. Or as Vangen and Huxham (2003: 63) note for leaders in collaboration “strictly, therefore, they report to (rather than direct) the members”. For the leaders of the case study, there is evidence that their role has been expanded outside their formal direct authority of steering towards influencing and directing the partnership members through a specific vision with concrete rules and ideas.

Given the differentiation of leaders’ behaviour in relation to the prerequisites of their institutional position, I will explain the configuration of opportunities and constraints that local context and partnership rules informally offered to leaders and the way that leaders had developed them for pursuing their own goals and interests in these local collaborative settings.

2.1 Leadership type

But how have context and rules directed concrete behaviours in leaders? One main characteristic that transcended the director's and president’s behaviour was a tension between two styles of leadership: the traditional one which was related to authoritarian style of leadership and a new one, the responsive style which further supported the collaborative activities. Research has demonstrated that this tension in partnership leadership is also evident in other countries too, like in UK where the political leadership is traditionally less strong and the political culture is less individualistic than what it is in Greece. According to Vangen and Huxman (2003), there is a permanent dilemma between facilitating leaders who establish and nurture the spirit of collaboration and directive leaders who play “collaborative thuggery” roles focusing in a pragmatic way on the realisation of the desired goals.

Without undermining possible differences in leaders’ behaviour in local partnerships of other countries and in Greek ones, this conclusion is quite

significant because it generally assumes that partnership rules concerning collective action are so demanding that do not leave space for manoeuvres by leaders. Since leaders choose to exercise their power, they have to experience the enactment of both styles in order to be efficient in leading the collaborative activity and achieving outcomes.

In Greece, this tension was further reinforced by a contradiction inherent of the local context. On the one hand, the institutional and cultural context promoted a strong political leadership model that enhanced more directive and authoritarian behaviours³⁶ and on the other hand, the lack of trust and cooperative culture created needs for more responsive leader behaviours.

In regards to the directive style, as aforementioned (chapter 4, section 1) the electoral system supported the development of a strong mayoral management of local affairs. The mayor was a highly visible person in the local society, he/she enjoyed a strong mandate the local council and he/she is the key decision maker in local politics. The mayor could be likened to the father of a traditional family who develops hierarchical relations with its members, cares personally about the well-being of the family and all the members depend on him.

Furthermore, since the Greek political culture valued highly hierarchical authoritarian relations, a strong directive leadership could be easily established. Based on the analysis of the responses to the question regarding the role of leadership in the decision making of a collective setting, almost all partners recognised that it is one leader that sets the agenda and then all members

³⁶ In general, the strong dependence of policy-making by party politics is a characteristic of the Greek political system. As a result there is a discontinuity in policy-making, especially after changes in government. The lack of a strong bureaucracy independent from political parties and politicians and the weak institutional implementation that could resist the particular motivations of politicians (Tsoukalas, 1993) make a policy vulnerable to their irrational intentions. This argument could be further strengthened by my own experience working with mayors in development programmes or as a civil servant in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Each time that there was a change of minister in the above ministry or of a mayor in a local authority, many policies that had been implemented in the previous period were withdrawn and this entailed a high cost in terms of money, human resources, and infrastructures as new policies and institutions replaced them. Consequently, quite often, citizens deal with inconsistencies or duplications in policies and public services.

together make the decisions, while 80% acknowledged that strong leadership is the necessary condition for the successful completion of a collaborative activity (Appendix B, responses).

These attitudes had direct implications for the leadership role in partnerships since partners expected and accepted a more top down exercise of power by one individual on whom the partnership's success depends. In the interview with the EQUAL II coordinator, the anxiety that has been created after the changes of directors in KOINOPOLITIA and DAH was clearly reported: “To me, the leader is very important. He/she is the number one. Since the old director left KOINOPOLITIA, I wondered what would happen. He has been replaced by someone else with potential too; but the organisation has encountered obstacles during the change. The same happened with our agency, when the previous director left, we thought that the agency would not manage to continue. But OK, things worked out; although in the beginning we were panicking”.

In regards to the responsive style, formal and informal rules directed new, more consensual behaviours to leaders. In a context of mistrust and low cooperative culture in the community as well as of EU demands for policy-making through partnership, strong leadership appeared to be more necessary than anywhere else in order to achieve the desired goal of collaboration. The leader was expected by all members to forge collaboration with their main task being the support of “working together” practices; this was expected more than other potential leadership activities like providing strategic direction or empowerment of participative structures. The ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA stated about the responsive feature of leadership: “When we talk about local partnership, this is a very complicated issue; it is still in research because there is no suitable culture for this cooperation; so the coordination and facilitation of the collaboration by one leader is an absolute necessity”. Consequently, the informal partnership rules and the embedded norms of strong leadership provided a leadership type that had to be directive both in terms of goal achievements and responsive to specific features of collaboration like creation of trust and confidence among partners in order to sustain collaboration.

Following the typology of Sweeting et al (2004) (chapter 2, section 3.2), this leadership type corresponds to the “formative and emergent leader” who is called by the partnership rules to play a key role generating consensus and trust among partners in order to promote collaboration with concrete results.

Two more partnership rules, formal this time, have enhanced a particular behaviour from leaders. The first has been related to the development of inter-municipal cooperation and the second one to the improvement in programme outcomes giving “greater opportunity for managerial discretion” (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: 12). In regards to the first one, both projects but especially the LEADER+ project, has contributed to a large number of municipalities seating at the same table. The inter-municipal cooperation was consistently strengthened by the inclusion of all the municipalities of the prefecture in the DAH board.

Consequently, the traditional position of the mayor as “King” of its municipal board was restricted by other mayors’ will who also had sacrificed their autonomy aiming to benefit from the collaborative advantages of these projects. The president of the DAH, who was a mayor too, had to negotiate his traditional authority role with the other mayors involved in programmes dispersing in this way his authority to them in order to balance conflicts and motivate the involved partners. In the interview with the director of the DAH, it has been adequately noted that in the DAH Board, mayors ‘are obliged to cooperate in a number of issues that each mayor cannot solve alone. There is now a culture of cooperation”.

The second rule was related to a shift from a pure political leadership towards a combination of political and executive leadership. Mayors were obliged by the projects’ managerial requirements to give considerable discretion and authority to full time managers to run these projects because they were unable to manage the projects themselves. They did not have the expertise and experience required to monitor these projects. Discussing the issue of technocratisation of projects, the ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA emphasised the role of executives: “The contributions of the DAH director and executives who are

specialised in each programme's activities are quite decisive. In our days, the programmes are extremely demanding and they need in depth expertise regarding specialist knowledge and management during preparation and implementation". Moreover, mayors quite often found themselves in a difficult position due to pressures exercised both by voters and the party they were affiliated to. However, the partnership's managerial orientation and the achievement of tangible outcomes did not allow for mayors' amateurism and detrimental political interventions such as clientelism and favouritism. As characteristically the DAH director emphasised by criticising the irrational practices of mayors: "What we want is the implementation of our goals. This is our basic principle but the elected politicians always want to intervene, to achieve what they want for the favour of their followers; to develop a clientelistic network. Our agency has not adopted this attitude".

In this context, there was a dilution of limits between political vision setting by political leadership and its completion by senior managers. One mayor, member of the DAH board, reported about the processes of decision-making: "The director has a lot of potential and he has his way; he makes decisions and has a "hands on" attitude. Now the president (mayor) and the director must complement each other, combining both political and executive capacities, because the agency also has a political dimension, not only a technocratic one".

The DAH executives who were mainly responsible for these two partnerships were the director and the two administrative coordinators, one for each programme. It was these people that were equipped to deal with problems arising from the partnership operation, provide strategic advice to politicians and finally prepare the agenda-setting for the final decision-making; gradually being transformed according to Klausen and Magnier's (1998) distinction, from "classical bureaucrats" to "political bureaucrats" (chapter 2, section 3.2). Emphasising the significance of the LDA's director, the ex-general secretary of LEADER+ noted "the success, everything depends on the director of the LDA. In reality, it is the director that implements the whole project".

Furthermore, the technocratisation of politics and the ability this offered to the executives to apply local public policies without the everyday involvement of politicians had led to a gradual self-reliance on LDAs. In my interview with the national external evaluator of LEADER+ who was aware of what happened in all the LDAs of the country, it was noted that “there are many big LDAs like DAH which because of their size, have managed to become independent from mayors’ influences”.

Particularly in the DAH, the director affirmed that even changes of mayors did not affect anymore the operation of the DAH because there were established values and practices that promoted a rationalisation in policy-making: “The change of mayors does not influence our work, because of the way that our agency is organised; with managerial and operational principles”. The autonomy process of executives from politicians was also evident in the case of KOINOPOLITIA. The director enjoyed a degree of independence from the board, which mainly consisted of mayors “As director, I have great flexibility in what I am doing granted by the administrative board” (Director of KOINOPOLITIA). So, it seems that these programmes have nurtured the development of a local bureaucracy, which differed from its traditional role of execution by its active involvement in local policy-making.

However, elected members weakening of power towards experts and chief executives in partnership operation, which is also confirmed in the UK literature (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998) raises questions about the legitimacy and accountability of the partnership’s leadership. While the president of the DAH had a strong representational mandate, the director appointed by the DAH board, lacked the authority provided by elections. Nevertheless, he was accountable in an indirect way: he was appointed by the DAH board which mainly comprised of mayors, through a representative process, and he had to operate within the overall policy framework that the DAH board had defined. Additionally, a closer look to the DAH board revealed the strong legitimacy of the mayors involved in this board. All mayors were elected again and again; some of them held this position more than 10 years and had a long history of activism in local affairs (chapter 4, section 2.2.2). Consequently, the input

legitimation of director was empowered indirectly through the political weight of mayors.

The paradox was that even if mayors' role had been weakened in partnerships and political decisions were made by the DAH director who was not subjected to electorate mandate, he managed to preserve his legitimation in two more ways: first, by implementing programmes which their formal rules demanded information and consultation with programmes' beneficiaries as well as communication with citizens; second, by his capacity to deliver outcomes. In particular, the director of the DAH was visible to the local society with his presence in partnership meetings and during the processes of information and consultation of the beneficiaries and citizens.

Additionally, what kept him accountable to the citizens was the securing of specific outcomes based on the value of good management and day-to-day solutions of the partnership beneficiaries' needs. Consequently, the legitimation of the director depended on his visibility and contact with local citizens and his capacity to produce efficient outcomes rather than on electoral representation. In this way, throughput and output legitimation were more enhanced than input legitimation. The EQUAL II coordinator explained the high visibility and acceptance by local people of the DAH and its director by noticing that "the director has been in contact with people and he knows what their needs are [...]. Overall, the DAH is an agency that operates also as an information and consultation point for the community. We receive phone calls every day, we follow a particular methodology, and we guide people".

2.2 Leadership style

In this section, the behaviour of the DAH director and president are further analysed in order to identify the ways that these leaders enacted leadership type as it had been formulated by the constraints and the potentials of partnership formal and informal rules. One EU officer, Head of Unit, stated about the impact of leaders' behaviour on the LDAs development that "There were good and bad presidents and good and bad directors ... who accordingly made a successful or unsuccessful LDA".

Further down, I identify 6 traits of leaders' behaviour that reinforced and/or changed the requirements of partnership rules. Most of them exclusively characterised the director, while others were shared with the president.

2.2.1 Building trust and respect

The primary intention of the director was to build trust and respect among partners and towards him. His straightforwardness and honesty acknowledged by all partners. Taking into account the informal values of distrust and avoidance of taking responsibility in the Greek society as well as the unequal power relations within the partnership, the above-mentioned values carried an unusual for the existing reality importance. This was especially significant for the partners of public institutions whose involvement in collaborative settings depends solely on the motivations and ambitions of their managers. The respect and trust towards these institutions by the partnership leader was mostly an ethical award and recognition for their effort to participate in collaborative projects. As reported by a partner of the public institution NELE "First of all, there was a relation of trust [...] the fact that we could guarantee that what had to be done, would be done. The leader trusted us and he cooperated directly and honestly with us".

The significance given to trust and honesty by the director was also confirmed in the actions of the DAH as whole which particularly strengthened some formal rules like clarity, transparency and stability as already seen in chapter 5.

2.2.2 Facilitator of the partnership process

The following features of leaders' behaviour had facilitated the collaboration of partners.

- Make things happen

According to interviewees, the director handled efficiently the different, eventually conflicting, powers in the partnership and supported the partners to work successfully with each other. In this way, he finally managed to direct collective action for achieving expected results. The coordinator of LEADER+ stated about him: "He deals with any matter that arises personally ranging from

a cleaner's and X staff's problems to partners and the ministry; he is quite diplomatic and clever, two features that are quite important for moving collaboration forward". The ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA speaking generally about his experience reflected on the negotiating role that the leader has to play in collaboration; he noted "All partners initially agree with the work that has to be done. In the beginning, they say "yes" to everything and then I feel that sometimes I have to give in to agreements or to back down in processes so as not to adversely affect the partnership".

So, negotiation and diplomacy appeared to be key concepts in leaders' perception regarding leadership enactment. Having in mind the complexity of the situation, they tried to find solutions to the problem. The issue of partnership continuity was so demanding that a lot of back steps and work were done by the leader with the aim of keeping the desired balance between partners. Talking about the negotiations for the agenda setting in the DAH council, a mayor, and member of the DAH board, referred to different mayors' political pressures and the catalytic role of the director "Of course, the president as a person involved in politics knows very well mayors' positions and their weaknesses. That is the political pressure; in this case, the director plays an intermediate role to all these; trying to find solutions until we have a result which is as well balanced as possible". In the interview with the EQUAL II coordinator, it was also reported the capacity of director to advance problematic situations to solution: "When there are major problems, and because the director is a person that has generated ideas, he intervenes and he finds solutions; solutions to main problems".

- Good management skills

The director was also characterised by all partners for professionalism and high quality management capacities, free from political pressures. As it has already been mentioned in chapter six, the traditional provision of the strategic policy direction in the partnership by political partners "is now subject to negotiation" by executives (Leach and Lowndes, 2007: 11). This informal rule was further enhanced by the director to the point that rivalries have arisen between the involved in the partnership mayors and the director himself. His own personal

view for his role cuts across the established role of the executive who traditionally ensured effective policy implementation and the traditional role of the elected politicians, which was to provide the strategic policy direction of the partnership. That is why it created an underlying competition between mayors and the director in particular and more generally between mayors and LDAs.

In particular, according to him, the strategic direction of the DAH and the specialisation of the partnership actions were issues that concerned him directly. The director stressed that “There are two kinds of conflicts in the DAH board. One is the philosophy that we have in relation to the DAH and the development of the region; the second one is related with choices, evaluations, financing; mayors believe that we have to favour or support residents who live in their municipality or for other reasons. In both cases, I had a personal discussion challenging this attitude and I have proposed different and more concrete solutions”. So, the director perceived himself as having the legitimate role in directing the agenda making and making absolute judgments of how to put forward the DAH. When he was analysing his ideas about the ways that the partnership should function, he quite often used the term “for the good of the DAH’ as he was the only person from all partners who knew in depth how things should have been done. “ I have told the board that, unless we work with an objective and integrative management system instead of a fragmentary way, I will resign the next day for the sake of the DAH”.

According to the director, mayors were good to have mainly for negotiations with the upper level of government (region, state, EU) rather than for their local policy-making. “Mayors are important when they represent us at the upper level; in other words, if we have 4-5 mayors who do this work efficiently, it is good to have them here”. This managerial style of politics transcended the whole culture of the people working in the DAHs. For instance, there was a belief held by DAH staff that partnership working was an issue for experts and not for politicians. In my interview with the EQUAL II coordinator, talking about the representatives of partner organisations, she affirmed that partnership decisions should be an issue for executives: “What

we want and we have finally achieved is for the LDAs' directors or for the people who are involved in the implementation to work on a daily basis towards the aims of this partnership[...] Because if the prefect, the vice prefect or each LDA's president were attending, we could not have results[...] So, we solve the problems among us, the executives who are actually working on the project everyday".

For mayors, there existed a fear of losing their political power gradually "Our fear for DAH and for our municipal council is it ending up a technocratic managerial mechanism, and this is not good, not just for us, but also for the citizens" (Mayor of Episkopis). However, for them, partnership and management were "necessary" to the extent that they had understood that without these practices, they could not have access to EU and state funds. It was not a response to regional development deriving from a political ideology but to new "imposed" values that they had to believe in and accept in order to get more money. If partnership and management were not as strongly promoted by EU regulations and principles, partnership structures and managerial practices would not have been developed by mayors.

It looks like as if mayors felt a tension between the adoption of a rational and managerial policy-making and the abandoning of their traditional localist and politicised way of applying policy. Mayors finally ended up supporting the executives' managerial values and they tried to keep the most of their conflicts in undertones. In my interview with the president of DAH, the tension between political and managerial motivations among the DAH board members was revealed "These is a process where we combine each mayor's vision with the existing technocratic experience in the DAH and we arrive to a political canvass where both of them co-exist; this has a great difficulty".

Even if playing politics was something that was not the main practice for the director, sometimes he got involved and dealt with different political interests in order to protect the partnership operation from mayors' political conflicts. In this case, his aim was to overcome political disagreements that could block the delivery of outcomes. "There are 27 local authorities participating in the

LEADER project. They elect a committee that manages the budget and consequently we have to keep a sense of political balance. How do you achieve this balance? In this way, we all play politics in favour of the development but we do not operate with clear partisan criteria because we will fail” (Director of DAH).

However the distinction between “clear partisan criteria” and political ones is marginal. In the same interview, the director stated: “We provide for and we have very good relations with the government and the political parties on a basis of cooperation and information but it is not us who will raise the flag of transparency and apolitical behaviour. We have transparency but we are not fighting for it. We do our job quietly by nicely keeping a distinctive distance from politics. This does not mean that they (the politicians) do not have the power to intervene and that we do not use political intervention in some issues”. So, finally playing politics was not only related with the management of different partners’ conflicting demands avoiding in this way the collapse of the partnership but also, more directly, with party politics and political interventions.

The competition between elected politicians and executives was also evident at state level. The ministers and the general secretaries of the MAs who were appointed by them, promoted a more partisan management of programmes, while managers a more professional one. However, unlike the local level at which there was finally a combination of these different motivations with the predominance of the managerial discourse, at the national level, politics had the first say. Talking about the partisan Greek state, an EU officer reported “There is a permanent pressure that the staff (of MAs) has been subjected to by ministers and this does not leave room for them to express themselves as they would like to. Someone that has ideas, which are revolutionary for the status quo, they clip their wings because they disturb the existing partisan establishment!”

- *The right partners' selection*

Another feature of the facilitation style of the director was the “right” selection of partnership members. This was decisive because it related both to the democratic quality of the partnership by the inclusion/exclusion of partners and to the efficiency of the partnership since the selection of the most suitable to the project partners guaranteed its continuity. In this regard, the director had a major concern to ensure that not only the organisations involved but also the representatives of these organisations were able to work together. “In each partnership, we have to select and consolidate the right institutions and the individuals that represent these institutions. What is important is that the individuals who become involved stay long, and are active; we can’t afford changes every 2-3 months” (Director of DAH).

However, the embracing of new members in partnership was not implemented along with their support for being able to be “on board”; to understand how the partnership worked. The integration process of new partners was not institutionally organised by the leader but it was left to the motivation and patience of the projects’ coordinators. “When the X mayor comes for the first time and he does not know anyone, in the beginning, he is a little suspicious, especially when he is a new mayor and had competed with the ex mayor. This happens until he gets the grips and trusts us. So, I picked up the phone and I said to the mayor that I wanted the annual report and I had to explain to him what an annual report is, what he had to write and when to send it” (LEADER+ coordinator).

Finally, it is very interesting to demonstrate how each of these features of leader’s style regarding partnership facilitation had a different weight in partners’ perception. This varied perception depended on their different needs. For the LDA Sitia, which did not have sufficient experience in programmes and it felt like the outsider of the programme because of its geographical isolation and organisational backwards, the director was positively characterised by his fairness and his capacity to put everything in order. “The director knew how to manage a conversation. He did not let anyone feel having

been unfairly dealt with and he managed to be imposed on others (Executive of LDA Sitia).

The rest of the LDAs, which were more familiar with programmes and partnerships, underlined other qualities of the director like his open mindedness professionalism and vision. One executive in LDA AKOM noted that “The director is social, he has a dynamic character and he has so far shown quite a good professional career”. Another executive from the LDA Lasithi added “The director is very active with a concrete policy vision; even if he used particular tactics and he is a bawler, his leadership is good because he organised the whole thing”, while the executive from LDA OADYK underlined “The director is very organised, he loves the whole thing, he has many years of experience in the field. If he listens to an idea, he will promote and support it”. Consequently, it appeared that the director had also another way for taking the partnership ahead. He was responsive and he had the capability to understand the particular needs of every partner and respond to these effectively.

2.2.3 Visionary

The president and the director promoted a particular vision in the partnership policy agenda. They did not only solve existing problems but they also directed the partnership to new projects; they supported the sustainability of the partnership by exploring new funding resources. As the national external evaluator of EQUAL II reported: “The Director is visionary, he looks ahead »

The last time that I visited the DAH, I found all the chief executives of the DAH with the director around a table discussing how they were going to organise their actions to get new projects for the 4th EU programming period that would open in a few months. The director said to me “It is for certain that in the next period I must devote 50% of my time in planning [...] because right now the new funding period starts. If we are not going to do the right planning before the 4th EU programming period starts, then what?”

Interestingly, it was mainly the director who felt obliged to plan and give a strategic direction to the DAH, and not instead the president and the mayors of the board who as politicians have to offer and support a strong vision for their local societies. The strategic direction did not only fit in to the perception of a director's role but it has been expected by the executives of the DAH "He has to prepare proposals, to create new partnerships, to make contacts, to select new partners and submit all these to the board" (LEADER+ coordinator).

Independently of the different level of strategic intervention by the president and the director, both leaders shared the same vision: a new, good management of policies for local development and inter municipal cooperation. In particular, they supported the development of advanced local authorities moving towards a more rationalised and integrated policy-making. Usually, in Greece, mayors believe that the citizens will judge them positively and vote for them again, if they develop more and more infrastructures. Consequently, the mayors who were partners in DAH, fight for getting more money for public investments even if these investments did not respond directly to their communities' needs.

On the contrary, the president and the director shared a more integrated approach of policy-making. According to it, policies in different municipalities could complement each other for the development of the whole area. The president of the DAH stated: "We (the mayors) have to understand that a mayor will not be judged on the basis of having completed 2 instead of 5 public infrastructures; it is far more complicated an issue than the simple competition of mayors for more infrastructures; it is an issue of attitudes, policies, and services too". He also added: "The role of DAH is no other than to develop a new vision of development in rural areas". In the same spirit, they thought of the DAH as an extended partnership in which the participating local authorities would work under a collaborative spirit and they would be ready to pursue goals that would benefit the region's development as a whole.

According to the director's vision, local authorities "have to understand that we must have the tools for programming so as to be prepared for the national allocation of resources, to be prepared for good qualitative projects so as to

implement them quickly. This is the first step; the second step is that local authorities have from now on to cooperate in issues that are not able to solve on their own. This is my philosophy”. Nevertheless, in this image of the future, what was missing was the community and beneficiaries’ involvement in local decision-making as already identified above.

This vision of cooperation and integration had its roots in the past. This was “inherited” from the previous president, whose vision was to make the DAH an established organisation that would include all the local authorities of the region. His concern was to reach the most isolated places of the region and inform the citizens about the DAH projects. “We were lucky to have as president of the agency, Stavros Arnaoutakis who was very consensual and visionary. He told to the citizens: “Visit our agency, consult with our staff as many times as you wish, find the right experts to support your proposal and we will accept all of them. And this had happened (LEADER+ coordinator).

2.2.4 Instrumental empowerment of beneficiaries

The high level involvement of beneficiaries was not only absent from leaders’ vision but also from their everyday practices. The beneficiaries were empowered only in cases when major problems had arisen and when there had been a risk of someone withdrawing from the programme. So, leaders related beneficiaries’ participation with the instrumental principle of effective outcomes. During interviews, the project beneficiaries (women's cooperatives and investors) as well as the project coordinators acknowledged that the director made the effort to strengthen the skills and the confidence of the beneficiaries for continuing their involvement in projects. The coordinator of LEADER+ also acknowledged this behaviour of the director by noticing that “he listens to the different views of the partners but this does not mean that he accepts all of them. If he gets convinced that this is right in regards to effective outcomes, he will support it”.

However, when problems occurred, the leader’s involvement was direct. For instance, describing a problem of one women's cooperative regarding the

succession of their president, the coordinator of EQUAL II underlined that “finally, they came here to ask advice from the director because they trust him a lot; he had helped them many times”. The same happened with the president of the DAH “The president himself had gone to cooperatives and he had discussions with the women involved in these, when they had serious problems with their collaboration” (LEADER+ coordinator).

The director’s own perception as leader encompassed quite obviously his directive role for efficiency “the most important is to be successful in our job; we treat partners equally so that all partners take advantage of the outcomes but what primary concerns us is the efficient implementation of the programmes. So, in his perception, the leader’s key role was meeting the partnership’s goals rather than building a new totality through participation in partnership processes. In this way, the collaboration did not consist of a value on its own, but rather a means to another end.

2.2.5 Authoritarian style

Regardless of the cases for which the two leaders developed a responsive style towards partners and beneficiaries’ problems, there were also cases of directive style in which the leaders made everything needed to be done in terms of meeting the partnership’s goals. The first evidence of directive style was the concentration of most powers mainly to the director and to a lesser extent to the president. Although the director empowered the weak partners and tried to mobilise them, he did all these on his own; he did not create infrastructures through which the partners could actively participate; on the contrary, he liked controlling everything. Partners reported to him directly or via the coordinator and with his personal intervention, the problems got solved. In general, there were not any formalised communication processes that facilitated problem solving and consensus building among partners; on the contrary, it was his personal involvement that played that role.

Consequently, the power centralisation reached a point that all the DAHs’ operation in general and both partnerships’ operation in particular became depended on one person, i.e. the director. A DAH executive referred in a

characteristic way to the centralisation of his power “I think that he lacks the ability to delegate, [...], he wants to control everything but the system is overloaded because right now “everything” means so many things. He is only one man and he needs to be “cell cloned” in order to be everywhere”.

Nevertheless, the perception of the director vis-a-vis power sharing came in contradiction with the findings from the executives' interviews who were working in the DAH. Regarding the use of power, the director noted that “Here, my role is clearly a coordinating one. No director can solve every problem. If you do not encourage executives who can take initiatives and develop their activities, no agency will manage to be developed; the secret lies in there being competent executives. [...]. If the director sees the development of the executives as antagonistic to his position, that they will replace him, then in a short time, very quickly, he will fail. That’s certain.”

The director impressively gave in a very clear statement the reason for the exercise of his centralised power. The centralised power was not a way of doing things in a better way but an addiction to power, the preservation of power. The leader usually did not share responsibilities and initiatives because he was afraid to lose it and not because he believed that it is a more effective practice. Here, one can see elements of the Greek political culture emerging: “The rationale is quite simple. The Greek leaders like power. It is always that only one must decide for everything” (Director of DAH).

Moreover, what he means by sharing power with his executives has a different meaning and degree in other countries like U.K. where there already established institutions supporting the decentralisation of power in policy-making exist as opposed to Greece where in an authoritarian hierarchical policy context, power sharing starts from scratch. If for the director, the decentralisation of power means that one controls everything offering someone little space for one's own initiatives as project coordinator, it is certain that this is not exactly an exercise of sharing power. However, it is a starting point for future change. “The director let us develop some initiatives as executives but he always knows very well what we are doing” (Executive of DAH).

In any case, there was always the danger of the director abusing his power, which could strongly challenge the legitimacy of his institutional position. Generally speaking for all the LDAs, the national external evaluator of LEADER+ reported that risk: “The LDAs have gradually become autonomous [...] .The directors of the LDAs have been transformed to local key persons who change the established power balance without having the relative legitimacy. They can now intervene politically more and, in many cases, they compete against mayors, especially in cases when they are from opposite political parties”. During interviews, there were indirect comments made by the partners for this kind of behaviour displayed by the DAH director. “He sometimes exceeds the limits of his power; personally, I do not care because I do not wish to have a leadership position, but there are some people who are annoyed by this” (EQUAL II partner).

Besides the centralisation of the director’s power, the president also liked to control everything starting from complicated issues like the preparation of the agenda to simple things like publicity and other administrative processes. A DAH executive continues by saying that “There is nothing the executives have done that the president does not know about it. If I send a letter to X, it is ok but for more important tasks either the simplest ones like the publicity of a programme proclamation or more complicated ones like what we are going to discuss in a meeting, I have to meet him or call him”.

The centralisation of power was also accompanied by authoritarian ways of power exercise. When I recall the interview with the director, I am thinking of him as a dynamic person who was trying to keep a balance between stubbornness and diplomacy. He was certainly a man with temperament who could easily blow up and make decisions right away. As a DAH executive recognised: “Many times, the tempers become frayed, he causes that because he is irritable and temperamental and the situation is getting tense. But because of that, he says what he has to say, he does what he has to do and then he approaches the other person with diplomacy”. In this way, leaders’ centralisation of power obstructed the collaborative spirit of partnership.

Conclusions

Agency played a crucial role in both partnerships. As reported by the EQUAL II coordinator “the role of the individual is very decisive for the success of an institution”. Two main groups that of institutional entrepreneurs at national and local level and that of established local leaders impacted on partnership altering the power relations between formal and informal rules.

Regarding institutional entrepreneurs, they played a key role in the partnership development either by their efforts to get their organisation in the partnership or by their personal engagement in the implementation of partnership goals. In regards to the latter, they have used many techniques like interpreting and adapting formal rules to the Greek reality, motivating others to follow and making things happen with their own personal work.

Regarding leadership type, the formal partnership rules have been pushed forward to three main shifts. First, given the principle of partners’ egalitarianism (at least in papers) and the independence of partners with regards to the implementation of activities, leadership moved towards a more sharing leadership. Leadership was not vested in a single individual but it was dispersed among a number of individuals who influenced partnership development in different time frameworks and in different ways. In this context, the traditional hierarchy of mayor – followers gave its place to a process of emergent leaders who shared the responsibility of influence and direction in partnership.

Second, the formal rules led to a more facilitative and less authoritarian leadership style regarding influence and direction of partners as a result of the partnership collaborative culture. Both shifts are also supported by the literature, especially by the work of Vangen and Huxman (2003) who refer to the collaborating leadership in partnerships and networks. Third, the technocratisation of partnership management changed the relations of mayors with chief executives. Mayors depended more and more on the expertise and the managerial tools at the disposal of chief executives who in their turn

became more and more involved in policy-making, getting less dependent on the political interventions made by mayors.

Regarding leadership formal rules enactment, the director and the president supported and facilitated partnerships to the extent that they managed to sustain a successful collaboration always in relation to other parts of Greece where collaboration had generally been difficult to sustain. In particular, the director did that by practices such as ensuring consensus building, making things happen and selecting partners. The director played a role of “honest broker” (Ansell and Gash, 2007) among others too; as a result all the partners could eventually trust and respect him. The building of trust by the leadership implied also the maintaining and reinforcement of some formal rules like the transparency and stability ones. Moreover, the director and the president shared a common vision for local development, which supported collaboration and a managerial policy-making.

Additionally, the role of executives came to the front. It appeared that the DAH executives guided by the director opted for the opportunity offered by formal rules to introduce new managerial practices to the established political practices of mayors and gradually to the established way of local policy-making. This practice had created a competition against mayors who were finally forced to follow due to the new circumstances created by partnership formal rules but also due to their own personal attitudes for modernisation of local policy-making.

Nevertheless, the director as well as the president did not use the new opportunities of formal rules for community participation in the same way. Their focus on the accomplishment through planning and control of the prescribed partnership goals led to the support and empowerment of partners in an instrumental way for outcome achievement.

Furthermore, while there was a shift in leaders’ practices from a less authoritarian behaviour to a more influencing and relational behaviour towards partners, the traditional centralised and hierarchical authority remained the key

tool to run politics. In many cases, when the negotiation processes failed, the director intervened in a direct and authoritarian way shaping the agenda of the partnership in his effort to move forward the collaboration for having tangible results. Or, the limits between the role of the facilitator leader and the role of the directive and authoritarian leader became diffused in favour of the latter.

Concluding, it would be interesting if I could compare the impact of agency on policy-making in Greece with other western European countries. My assumption is that in Greece, the activity of an agent has more significant influence on policy-making than in other countries since the over-regulation and the confusion followed by it or the institutional vacuum in many policy areas leave room to the agent to support or change the existing combination of formal and informal rules. In the interviews, it has quite often been reported that such and such people achieved this in public organisations or influenced in a right or wrong direction the operation of their organisation. As the EU officer, who is Greek, emphasised: “In fact, when one refers to Greece, it is a matter of the persons”.

Conclusions

The research data has revealed the dynamic relation between formal/ informal rules and actors' strategic behaviour within political institutions. I propose that an institution can neither be analysed merely as a set of formal rules nor as a set of formal/ informal rules but as a totality where formal/ informal rules and actors' strategic behaviour interact. This totality operates in a specific spatial and temporal context that impacts upon it, and in turn, leads to (gradual) institutional change.

The key issue here is to identify the power relations between the three constitutive elements of the institution - rules, agency and context - to reveal their interconnections and to articulate explanations. For instance, the operation of the "civic participation" formal rule depends sequentially on established and contextually specific practices, the operationalisation of these practices inside the partnership, and finally the meaning that strategic actors give to civic engagement. Moreover, the institutional manifestation of these different, even in some cases conflictual, rules and behaviours depends on the established power relations and opportunities for change offered by the context and agents' intentionality.

The conclusions are structured in four sections. In the first section, I will briefly outline each chapter's content. In the second section, I will summarise the main findings of the case study research. The third section will consider the distinctive contribution of my study to knowledge and the limitations that I have identified in the course of the research project. The fourth section will propose new areas of research.

1. Summary of the chapters

The **first chapter** reviewed neo institutional theory and concluded that the study of institutions should include the configuration of formal/informal rules and agents' strategic action. Starting from this proposition, it further mapped the relationship developed among these three institutional components and the contextual factors that influenced this relationship. In doing this, it applied a synthesis of different NI and sociological theories. Regarding rules, research recognises that institutional rules could be formal and informal and their relationship could be complementary, substituted or conflicting. In the case of conflicting rules, changes could occur due to particular factors such as the redistribution of resources and changes in beliefs and expectations.

Regarding the agent/rules relationship, the research starts from the normative NI assumptions about the norms and values of institutions that define an appropriate behaviour in individuals. But, following critical realism and its arguments about structure/agency, the research acknowledges the capacity of individuals to integrate knowledge into their activities and pursue their own goals strategically. On the one hand, the degree to which the rules allow for individual freedom and structure power relations enables/constrains particular individuals in following their motivations. On the other hand, the agents' capacity to use/transform the available power resources directly and indirectly in order to respond to their intentions could preserve or change the rules. The power relation between rule/agent is the central point that defines the degree of institutional change.

Finally, it is argued that these dynamic interactions are not developed in a contextual void. Four contextual factors have been identified as most influential in the development of the institution: 1. the socio-economic context; 2. the institutional legacies; 3. the institutional configurations; and finally 4. the culture (political culture and social capital).

The **second** chapter aimed to relate this NI theoretical framework to the operation of local partnerships through a review of three theories of urban

politics: a) urban regimes, b) urban governance and c) existing NI approaches on local partnerships. From the theories of urban politics, I have identified the following key issues that have been related to my research: a. the significance of a learning process and the purposive role of ideas in collaborative activity; b. the resources' interdependency and complexity of actors' motivation; c. the interdependency of agent/structure in urban politics, and finally d. the critical analysis of the partnership capacities regarding problems' coordination and legitimation.

Additionally, the review of neo institutional approaches to partnerships pointed out that partnerships are processes governed by informal rules, dependent on other institutions at local and national level and embodying a dynamic character where "old" and "new" coexist. Moreover, since the partnerships under consideration are EU funded, I also borrowed concepts and empirical evidence from the Europeanisation theory and in particular the analytical categories of EU policy features and the role of mediating domestic institutions and entrepreneurs' practices in promoting/ preventing the adaptation to EU programmes' requirements.

Finally, the chapter reviews theories of urban leadership from management and political science in order to understand agents' purposive behaviour in partnerships. It is argued that partnership leaders embody a tension between the exercise of strategic direction and generation of collaboration and consensus among partners. However, their behaviour is still dependent on the formal/informal partnership institutional rules. Moreover, it is stressed that the partnerships' requirements for management and planning had led to an overlapping leadership role between politicians and chief executives.

The **third** chapter focused on the research methodology. This research adopted the critical realism stance, which acknowledges a reflexive approach to reality and the researcher's active participation in data interpretation. Due to the complexity of the partnership processes and the limited previous research in the Greek context, I have selected an embedded case study strategy in which the in-depth research can provide a comprehensive picture of all the variables.

So, I follow Ostrom's (2005) argument about the avoidance of generalisation in institutional analysis and the support of case-by-case study of an institution.

Regarding research methods, I have applied a triangulation approach by using different methods like interviews, questionnaires, storytelling, observation and documentation. Finally, data analysis, following the adopted epistemological approach of this research recognised alongside the critical realism approach, the cyclical and reflexive procedure of data analysis. Techniques like data reduction by coding and matrix, data display and pattern matching have been used in order to explain variables' interconnections.

The case study findings were presented and analysed in the next four chapters. The fourth chapter offered a short description of the case study and analysed the specific socio-political Greek context in which the partnerships under consideration have been developed. It tried to explain the way that the local socio-economic, institutional and cultural context had enabled or prevented the development of collective action in partnerships. The fifth chapter focused exclusively on the formal rules of both partnerships while the sixth chapter explored the power of informal rules and their relationship with the formal rules. Finally, the seventh chapter looked at the strategic behaviour of established local leaders and "institutional entrepreneurs" and their impact on the preservation/change of rules. The main findings from the empirical chapters are discussed below.

2. Summary of findings

2.1 The dynamic configuration of formal/informal rules

The analysis demonstrated that the formal rules of the partnerships do not always determine what actually happens in practice. It is the configuration of formal and /informal rules that provides a deeper understanding of partnership operation. Regarding this configuration, I concluded that some elements of the formal rules have been effective, such as openness of decision-making and good management, although with variations. Other elements of the formal rules have mostly remained on paper, like community participation, decentralisation and innovation. In these cases, it is the informal rules that have shaped how formal rules have been interpreted.

Based on Lauth's (2000) typology about the distinction of processes and outcomes in formal/informal rules configuration, I present in the following table the respective configuration for my case study partnerships. This table summarises the findings of formal/ informal rules configuration in a parsimonious way for offering to the reader the possibility to understand in a comprehensive way the type of their relationship. In each vertical colon, I identify the formal rule and the relevant informal one while in the horizontal colon I explain what it was expected to be done by the formal rules, what is was actually done by the informal rule and the type of their relationship.

Formal rule (FR) /informal rule (IR)	Processes	Outcome	Type of relationship
FR: Openness of decision-making Networking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversity of local partners 2. Partners' assemblies with equal footing 3. Consensus and argumentation outside the official channels of local government 4. Thick learning 5. Strong identity 	Efficient outcomes for partnerships: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability of the partnership 2. Implementation of all actions successfully 	Complementary
IR: The domination of a centralised and mayoral local government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local authorities domain 2. Hierarchical power relations 	Efficient outcomes for partnerships: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability of the partnership 2. Implementation of all actions successfully 	
FR: Empowerment of local authorities Networking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegation of financial management 2. Supportive and well staffed MA 3. Institutionalisation of DP 4. Alternative solution for LAGs 5. Development of relationships with other local authorities 	Autonomy of local level: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowerment of DAH and other inter-municipal cooperations 2. Integration by consultation of local authorities and NGOs to national programming 3. Development of local poles of growth 	Conflictual

IR: Centralised and highly politicised state Attitude of dependence	1. Strong political and bureaucratic control 2. Vertical informal network	Dependence on local level	
FR: Participation and empowerment of local community	1. Participation 2. Empowerment 3. Capacity building	Democratic governance (balance among all three types of legitimation)	Partially complementary Conflictual regarding input legitimation
IR: Dissemination of information to the local community	1. Information 2. Soft consultation	Output legitimation	
FR: Good management	1. Programming 2. Monitoring 3. Evaluation	Effective organisation and implementation of programmes	Complementary
IR : Technocratisation of policy-making	Recognition of management knowledge resources by partners	Effective organisation and implementation of programmes	
FR: New policy goals	Innovative actions in local integrated development	Enhance local entrepreneurialism and innovation	Conflictual
IR: Stability and secured results Attitude of dependence	1. Secured results 2. Low risk practices 3. Fear of responsibility	Prevent local entrepreneurialism and innovation	

Table 23: Formal/Informal rules configuration in EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnerships

First, the formal rules of openness of decision-making and good management have been implemented even though they were new for the Greek context. The redistribution of resources to partners and beneficiaries through EU funding appears to be critical for the partnership formation, confirming in this way the theoretical propositions of North (1990) about the resource redistribution as key explanation of institutional change in a context where conflictual rules exist. On the one hand, local authorities had economic problems due to limited state financial subsidies and on the other hand, there was a flow of money from EU followed by clear and consistent EU rigorous funding rules. Both factors obliged partners to participate in a collaborative process and to rationalise policy-making in order to reassure the unhindered flow of funding. The logic was simple: if they wanted the money, they had to cooperate and implement the rules in an effective way.

Moreover, these EU programme management and partnership requests were also accompanied by a policy discourse circulated through policy papers and managers' practices which affirmed that partnership is something "good" that creates opportunities for development and benefits in policy-making. This discourse has been so deeply embedded within political actors and executives' behaviour that it was "politically incorrect" to argue that a partnership was not always the most appropriate tool of policy-making. Nevertheless, although the outcomes of the rules-in-use were the desired ones (i.e. efficiency, sustainability and local development), the processes were different from the desired ones.

In the case of partnership rule, the mayors' informal network played the most important role in decision-making while the other partners had not participated in an equal way due to a low level of organisation in civil society. In regards to the management rule, there was an excessive privilege of technical expertise in policy-making by the domination of chief executives who possessed management knowledge. This has pushed mayors to share their power in decision-making with chief executives.

In the cases of local authorities' empowerment and of formal rules of community involvement and innovation, the relationship with the informal rules appeared to be conflicting, leading to different results than those expected. In the case of local authorities' empowerment, the CIs were considered as projects that enhanced local autonomy in terms of actions and targets definition. However, the state remained centralised allowing for "controlled freedom" to local authorities. Central political design and control over specific objectives and targets, as well as intensive auditing and evaluations of spending and targets, squeezed the locality's discretion for strategic policy capacity. By contrast, there was an emergence of local bureaucratisation and managerial processes in policy-making. As Davies (2001) argued regarding the features of intergovernmental relations in local partnerships in UK, the latter finally have been developed under "the shadow of hierarchy and relations of dependence".

Regarding community engagement, this was more concerned with information and "soft consultation" rather than direct decision-making. In this way, input legitimisation remained low and was realised only through the traditional means of elections. Finally, new creative ideas and practices have been abandoned in favour of stability and guaranteed outcomes. Persisting domestic national values and practices, as well as specifically local legacies, have been embedded in informal rules and made them more powerful vis-a-vis the formal ones.

For the Cretan case, democracy was an "obligatory" way to arrive to effective outcomes because the programmes asked for that. For partners and coordinators, citizen and beneficiary involvement had been included within the management function in order to secure delivery of the required programme activities. So, funding and efficiency appeared to be more powerful principles than bottom up collaboration and democratisation.

Finally, although in this research, the two CIs are treated methodologically in a complementary way, there are some interesting points drawn from their comparison. As already stated in the last section of Chapter 6, the different policy sector that these partnerships supported, the economic policies versus

social policies and the different size of their budget had an impact on the articulation of power relations in policy-making processes. In particular, the EQUAL II programme remained closer to formal rules than the LEADER+ programme in terms of partners' equity in decision-making processes and diversity in their selection. This happened because EQUAL II had a lower budget and it coped with a policy sector, that of social policy, which did not belong to the immediate priorities of the Mayors. In this way, the coordinators of the programme felt free to implement the programme more independently from political pressures and established political practices that enhanced the dominance of informal rules.

2.2 Agents' strategic behaviour

The research has illustrated that resource redistribution, change in beliefs regarding partnership, and finally the stronger enforcement of formal rules are not the only explanatory factors for institutional change. In contrast to less successful partnerships in other parts of Greece, which have suffered from the same economic pressures, the sustainability of my case study partnerships has confirmed Goodin's (1996) proposition about the decisive role of intentionality in institutional change. The power of the agency appears "from another door" by the interpretation of the formal/informal rules. Although EU rules were clear and consistently applied through auditing and evaluations, not leaving much room for deviations in pursuit of actors' interests, some actors finally managed to serve their intentions.

In Greece there is in general a loose implementation of formal institutional arrangements due to the dominance of many informal rules that come to shape the formal rules, alongside a "free rider" attitude that allows illegal behaviour. Consequently, agents tend to have more opportunities to exercise strategic behaviour. These opportunities are further enhanced by the fact that the introduction of "foreign" EU rules creates an intermediate period during which old and new rules coexist. In this context, the agency can act strategically to influence the direction of change and exercise indirect power upon the other partners.

Two categories of actors, the “institutional entrepreneurs” and the established local leaders (politicians and executives), have influenced the configuration of formal/informal rules by sustaining some formal rules, which serve their individual/collective interests, while reproducing some informal rules. In terms of institutional entrepreneurs, they have exercised their powers by taking advantage of the partnership rules regarding management and planning. Political leaders took advantage of their established power position in the local society. Three strategies have supported their intentions: 1. they have selected and reinforced stability, clarity and publicity rules that restricted agents’ freedom, 2. they shared values and practices of efficiency and trust with the members of the partnership and finally 3. they provided a positive and enabling partnership context for the smooth introduction of the formal rules. Nevertheless, the way in which power was exercised remained authoritarian; the participatory discourse and actions have been downgraded in favour of efficiency and management.

2.3 Contextual variables

The case study findings showed that there is a number of contextual variables which have facilitated or discouraged the implementation of formal rules. These variables related to the “starting conditions” in which the partnerships have emerged (Ansell and Gash, 2007). Some of these variables were quite broad and related to the national and local Greek political system in general. Other variables emanated exclusively from the local context in which the partnerships were developed. Some of the variables, like the local socio-economic context and institutional legacies, had enabled partners to participate and sustain collaborative activity; others like individualist culture, lack of trust and localism had blocked the collaborative process. However, since partnership is not a linear process, these latter contextual variables have then created internal demands within the partnerships for commitment and fairness, to which local leaders have responded through specific strategies.

In particular, one main institutional legacy, which is worth mentioning, is that of the previous experience of local actors in European funding programmes (Getimis & Demetropoulou, 2004; Bache et al, 2011). Their engagement with

EU partnership programmes in the context of ESF's two funding periods and CIs opened up a learning process of new practices and attitudes regarding collaborative activity and programming. Additionally, it created a stable network of cooperation to which the project coordinators came back and looked for partners.

2.4 Institutional change

Institutional change is a concept that infuses the current research because change processes were mentioned by the partners as something that happened by their learning in previous collaboration and thematic networks, as something that was realised during the partnership development by the exercise of agency, and as something that would happen in the future due to partnership rules and the impact of agency on other national and local institutions.

Regarding the latter, Ostrom (2005) explores the interdependence of institutions and argues that changes in one rule could open the way for changes in other rules. This process looks like the "Aeolus' bag". Once it was opened, adjustment and changes started to spread in all directions of the political processes; either directly because the programme required it or indirectly by additional adjustments needed to achieve the programme's goal. These processes led to an "Europeanisation a la grec", as one executive of the LEADER+ Monitoring Authority reported.

So, change appears in relation to the past, present and future, and as an ongoing process that gradually alters the existing situation. Although some formal rules were not effectively applied e.g. community participation, because they were relegated by the power of respective informal rules, they left behind them "traces" of something new and different that destabilised existing institutional practices. Finally, as one moves to lower territorial levels, the changes were more and more significant, creating a chain of interactions; but when one moves upwards, at the state level, the changes were less and confronted greater resistance. One explanation could be the fact that the state was responsible more for the design of programmes and less for their implementation. On the contrary, at the local level, implementation and resources management allowed for easier experimentation.

In the rest of the section, I present the main changes that resulted from the partnership operation.

2.4.1 Policy-making through the development of partnerships and networks

The Community Initiatives have changed local policy-making. They have created new possibilities for the participation of new actors in the local policy-making process and the establishment of networks. Additionally, they have changed the attitudes of mayors and the local community towards collaboration and trust. As the Director of KOINOPOLITIA had underlined “Executives and mayors were gradually trained in procedures of collaboration and they got used to that”. This has not happened overnight but it has been the result of a learning process in which all the involved actors came to appreciate and recognise their opportunities, and their mutual interdependencies. For instance, while at the beginning of the partnership, partners’ financial motivations appeared to be critical to the success of the partnership, other motives have gradually emerged, such as resource independency and collective interests. In other words, since the first networks were established (i.e. LDA’s network), a step by step process of networking development has started (i.e. ZEUXIS network), in many cases, through the initiatives of the original networks.

In particular, the mayor was not anymore the king of their locality and he/she had to challenge his/her power on local policy-making. New players won a more active role in the public space (DAH, local society organisations, associations, informal network of LDAs), the independence of the old players has increased (inter-municipal cooperation) and political parties’ dominant position has weakened. As shown in the following figure (17), even if the mayor still made the final decision, his/her own personal view was restricted by a number of other actors’ positions. Additionally, the degree of power that the new actors were able to influence decision-making depends upon the policy sector. For instance, in the LEADER+ economic development projects, mayors’ political decisions were more decisive in the agenda setting than in the EQUAL II social policy projects.

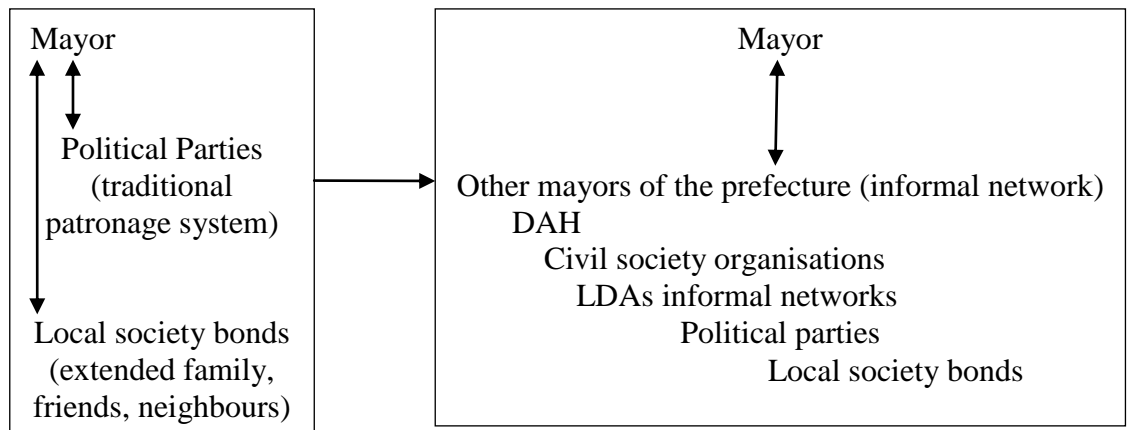


Figure 17: Changes in actors involved in the local policy-making

However, most changes have been identified in the internal administration of local authorities rather than in their relationships with the private and civil society sector. In particular, there was a rebalancing of the relationship between mayors and DAH executives in favour of the latter, through the emergence of a local bureaucracy. The presence of a high degree of formalised regulations of programming and management by the EU and the Greek state alongside the partnership principle has impacted upon the local policy-making by the rationalisation of planning and management. This new procedure led to re-evaluating the position of managers towards the political decision makers. Moreover, there was increasing inter-municipal cooperation which facilitated the development of informal policy networks among mayors. This new situation has led to a political mix where single local government hierarchies coexisted with less hierarchical networks like that of LDAs.

2.4.2 Local development becomes both a local issue and a global one

These programmes have also changed the local policy agenda by increasing the activity of local authorities in policies like economic development and social economy. The Mayor of N. Kazantzakis and president of DAH stated the shift of mayors' attitudes in a clear way: "Now, the new role of local authorities is directly related to a vision of development". So, on the one hand, the local authorities felt more responsible for the development of their area; on the other

hand, the local community realised that local authorities could provide them with advice and suggestions for local investments and funding projects.

Moreover, participation in national and international networks offered to local authorities a vision of a global treatment of local problems, in which solutions to their problems should be based upon a common platform with other local authorities in Greece and in member states as well as with the EU policy. The development of more holistic approaches to the issues addressed helped the local authorities to feel part of a bigger community, which shared the same concerns and common solutions through weakening in this way the domination of the state.

All these processes reduced the central state's position by creating new possibilities for broadening local authorities' autonomy. For instance, the integration of policy proposals, developed by local authority groupings inside the thematic national networks, in national legislation has increased the local authorities' visibility and empowerment. The same happened with the transfer of the acquired knowledge of local executives to ministries regarding EU programmes' implementation. Speaking 'with a common voice' about local development, local authorities could more easily exercise political influence at the higher level. "The participation of DAH in local development plans has empowered local authorities' role not only in local community but also in the state too" (Mayor of Gorgolainos).

2.4.3. Building a civil society: Re-evaluation of NGOs and local vulnerable groups position

First, the implementation of the partnership principle, especially in the EQUAL II programme, has initiated and/or stimulated the involvement of local organisations with knowledge of specific target groups. This has led to their capacity building in terms of participation in programmes and to the improvement of target groups' knowledge in a more systematic and concrete way. Additionally, the local organisations gained credibility among their members and in the local society because they became more visible to citizens

by undertaking successful project activities. As the director of ZEUXIS reported: “Our position towards our members has been reinforced because our members have seen real results. We have also evolved our management practices and we have been standing next to big public institutions; all these offer us credibility and prestige”.

Second, there have also been direct results in terms of empowerment of vulnerable groups who have been marginalised or forgotten by policies and institutions “EQUAL has widened the opportunity for vulnerable groups to benefit from project’s actions designed especially for them” (Executive of the LDA AKOM). The creation of new employment opportunities for people facing difficulties in the labour market, such as the women’s cooperatives, the disabled people or even the wine producers has not only supported them economically but also socially; these groups saw that their social position has improved. Women or disabled people had got out of their home and had become active entrepreneurs, engaging in business, thus becoming less marginalised. “The women’s cooperatives have now increased their presence; you come across their products everywhere” (Executive of NELE). Moreover, the creation of clusters between these groups gave to the participants the opportunity to exchange views and ideas and to develop joint actions in order to address and solve common problems.

All the above procedures have enhanced the vulnerable groups and the NGOs. In this way, the gradual building of a civil society has started, which could impact on the re-balancing of local authorities/local community relations.

2.4.4 Increase of social capital

A number of practices based on Community Initiatives principles like bottom-up participatory development processes, partnerships and networking can be seen as investments in local social capital. Although these rules have not been implemented fully, even their narrow implementation has step-by-step strengthened the degree of collaboration in local communities, with the building up of values of shared trust and reciprocity in order to achieve mutual benefits. Some of the Community Initiatives positive effects on local social capital are: a. the participation of excluded social groups in programme

activities, b. the development of collaborative learning processes (trust building and sharing understanding) which had resulted from the participation in partnership and in national and transnational networks, and finally c. the strengthening of local ties and identities. A municipal councilor and partner of LAG discussing the partnership's benefits stated that: "I gained experience in understanding the other person, my perspectives have widened and I became more sociable".

In relation to the findings of other studies on the governance effects of EU cohesion policy in Greece (see chapter 4, section 2.2.2), it is argued that this research has identified more deep and extensive changes in (local) governance. These changes are not only restricted to the administration system regarding managerial efficiency at state level (Andreou, 2006, 2010) or to a "thin" learning of lessons from abroad or from previous failures regarding partnerships (Paraskevopoulos, 2005). These changes are deep but gradual (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010); there is a profound dynamic process of change in social norms and individual preference at the local level too regarding attitudes and behaviours towards collective action, managerial efficiency, evaluation of local development and the role of NGOs in local policies.

These findings verify the wider literature on the domestic effects of partnership and programming requirements in the EU. Bache (2008) argues that if at the beginning of the implementation of the ESFs, there was evidence of a "thin learning", from the mid-1990s "after several years of a relatively stable structural policy framework-there was greater evidence of "thick" learning in the EU15, in which key actors involved changed their goals and preferences" (Bache, 2008: 154). Regarding in particular Southeast Europe, there is evidence that an Europeanisation process is taking place by reorienting practices and preferences in a way that resembles to EU policies even if these changes are incremental as in my case study (Bache, 2010). However for each case, these changes had their own tempo and time is not always the most significant variable for their activation (Bache, 2008). So, the need for case study research appears once again in order to reveal in each time the dynamics of all the domestic variables.

3. Contribution of the research and limitations

In the research on political institutions, two main NI theories are dominant, that of rational choice theory and normative NI. The main theoretical contribution of the current thesis is the study of institutions through an interdisciplinary approach in which, alongside to political science, sociological and public management theories have also been applied. The sociological theories reoriented the study of political institutions from the configuration of formal/informal rules to the role of agents' behaviour, thus enhancing understanding of the structure/agent relationship. The public management theories enriched the analysis with the study of the purposive agents and particular that of leaders' strategies. The theoretical considerations of the first chapter regarding the contribution of critical realism to the two NI approaches (rational choice and normative NI) was further supported by the empirical evidence from my case study, which showed that an institution is an ongoing process in which formal and informal rules, and agency interrelate in the production of outcomes. Institutions comprise the rules, formal and informal, but also the agents' strategic behaviour, shaped by their socialisation to these rules and the promotion of their interests. Although this proposition could be considered as complex and extended because it included many variables, it goes beyond traditional distinction between calculus and cultural as drivers of action within institutions, acknowledging that actors have the capacity to select, preserve or change rules.

This study has elaborated a methodological design that approaches political institutions at a micro level. It has collected information by going to places and asking people how things had been done on the ground, in the manner proposed by Ostrom; but without adhering to rational choice assumptions. The paucity of micro level analysis of political institutions compared with meso and macro case study analysis (within the normative and historical institutionalist tradition) has enhanced the methodological originality of this work. This methodological design also involved a systematically reflexive and comprehensive analysis of a political institution. Since the theoretical framework comprises so many variables, causing a relative complexity in data

gathering, I have tried to provide a clear and detailed account of the way in which I have designed and conducted the research project.

Additionally, my reflexivity in relation to the selection of theoretical approaches has also been incorporated into the methodology by taking into account the agents' interpretation of reality. This practice not only facilitates the identification of the hierarchy of explanatory variables but also the neglect and/or discovery of new ones. Finally, being so close to the case study as events unfolded offered me the opportunity to recognise the complexity of the institutional processes and to distinguish in a more clear way the formal and informal rules.

The research has enriched knowledge about partnerships in Greece and to some extent in Southern Europe, since both share common socio-economic features and historical factors. With regards to Greece, the institution of partnerships, and particularly local partnerships, has not been not systematically studied. Although many of the research conclusions are often discussed informally among executives and politicians, they have never been recorded and documented in an integrated theoretical and methodological way.

Furthermore, the study revealed the significant role of some contextual factors like social capital and political legacies in support of collective action. It has also shown the dynamic role of leaders in contexts where previous weak institutionalisation and institutional shifts left space for agents' different behaviour. These conclusions could carefully be applied to other countries in Southern Europe in order to inform future comparative studies.

Finally, the case study could offer lessons and policy guidelines³⁷ in respect of the EU cohesion policy, the dynamic relationship between efficiency and democracy of partnership as a policy tool and finally the significant role of both budget size and type of policy sector in policy-making.

³⁷ Instead of the term generalisation, I prefer to use the term lessons and policy guidelines. Following Yin's (2003) argument when the researcher applies a single case study, they could only use the findings for "analytical generalisation" and not for "statistical generalisation" (see also chapter 3 on methodology).

In relation to EU cohesion policy, I argue that the design of more adaptable and flexible to domestic features' programmes that allow the capitalisation of each country's particularities is needed. In particular, the policy makers should take into account that the convergence agenda of the EU follows the dominant principles of policy making of the West European countries persistently. The result has been the increase of "misfit" of EU rules between the Western and Southern countries. It appeared from the case study that for instance the partnership rule had a greater difficulty to be implemented in the Greek context where cooperation especially with the private sector is rare as compared to the Nordic context for instance where the cooperation had a long tradition.

In this context, the implementation of partnership in Greece conditions a high probability of failure even from the beginning since it does not fit well into the existing organisation of private and public space. As the EU evaluator of CIs stated accurately in the interview "the LEADER programme worked better with the private sector in the Nordic countries which were used to this type of cooperation; it is a matter of culture. In other countries, like Greece, the private sector was not particularly involved, there were many difficulties".

On the contrary, in Greece, there are many semi public institutions supported by the state for which the CIs programmes could foresee their participation from the beginning. Consequently, special attention should be given to each area of policy implementation because each area is a unique entity with special characteristics, different institutional and political traditions, a different environment of policy making with varying institutional learning and adaptation capacity. This means that different mechanisms should be used in different cases for promoting adaptation to the EU requirements.

Moreover, the engagement of political leadership in policy-making is important in Greece and without it, the implementation of a programme could be loose or even unsuccessful. So, an additional question is raised about the extent to which the establishment of the new networks supported by the CIs replaced or

even destroyed the old ones creating in the local society a gap between old and new types of social coordination. Instead of trying to put aside the established system of coordination like the strong public sector or the significance of leadership, it would be more useful to integrate them by clarifying in a more detail way their level of involvement.

Regarding partnership as a policy tool, I conclude that the national and European policy makers should re-evaluate the democratic and efficient credentials of partnership and network and rethink them as not the unique “successful solution” to policy problems and coordination. Additionally, it is also suggested that checks and balances processes that ensure the actual implementation of democratic practices should follow their operation. In particular, networks and partnerships as promoted by EU policies appeared to be powerless forms of policy-making in which conflicts are replaced by consensual agreements and hierarchical relations by equity and openness to other partners. In this way, these political forms affirm that partners and local people could have the same opportunities to influence decisions, that policy making is something “neutral” without interests’ conflicts and solution to problems could be smoothly realised. However, as it has already been demonstrated in my case and in other research projects too (Davies, 2010), in reality, unequal relations as well as interests’ conflicts do exist and implementation has not always responded to the initial policy goals. So, this consensual style of governance appeared not to be successful at all times in producing social coordination by rearticulating the power relations and the way that problems are articulated and solved.

Regarding the budget and policy sector, policy makers should be aware that the budget size and the type of policy matter. Both could strongly influence the type of membership, the mode of cooperation and the degree of efficient outcomes inside collaborative activities. In this context, different designs and controls should be taken into account for counterbalancing or further supporting their specific features.

Alongside the contributions of this research as described above, there are also limitations. Doing a small project imposes limitations in terms of time and resources. However, as the work for the research project progressed, I have understood that there were some issues that could fine-tune the research design if I had the chance to do the work again or advise another researcher in a similar position. First, some of my research questions could have been addressed in more depth. The research was designed to study many aspects of the partnership institution and, in this way, many variables had to be analysed. The problem is that addressing so many questions in a small-scale research project could not give complete answers to them all. I suggest that the relationship between agents' behaviour and rules- in- use could have been more thoroughly studied, through additional work in terms of both concept formation and data collection.

In relation to the methodology, as already mentioned in the relevant chapter, the questionnaire was administered to a small number of participants; in future research, a bigger survey addressed for instance to all the citizens of the locality would be more appropriate. Regarding data collection, further data could have been gathered regarding the relationship between mayors and local corporate interests, and the degree to which the EQUAL II and LEADER+ partnerships embedded this relationship and underlying power relations. Finally, another potential source of evidence would have been data from actors who were excluded from partnerships, like opposition mayors and potential beneficiaries, in order to consider how processes and outcomes could have differed.

4. Issues for further research

The analytical and methodological framework of this study could be applied in other political institutions, beyond local partnerships. Especially in a country like Greece where institutional change is a complex process, due to powerful and resistant informal rules, the study of political institutions is a challenge for the researcher.

Moreover, in a period in which the Greek policy context is in transition due to severe social and economic problems, there are new research opportunities for studying the implications of these changes for the actual relationship between efficiency and democracy inside collaborative settings like partnerships, and in the leverage of social capital. Additionally, it would be interesting to map the direction of change. How do informal rules work in this new context? How deep and permanent might these changes be, after the implementation of new institutions?

Further research could be done on the study of the relationship between actors' behaviour and institutional rules. In my research project, many questions have arisen about the way in which the researcher could distinguish between actors' behaviour and informal rules, or the degree to which actors' interpretation of rules overcomes the reproduction of established norms and involves strategic behaviour for the pursuit of their goals. The combining of insights from the methodological tools of rational choice and the theoretical principles of normative institutionalism could profoundly help in addressing these new research goals.

Regarding new research areas for partnerships in particular, one is the emergence of comparative studies of local partnerships in other parts of Greece (and in Southern Europe) which share common socio-economic features, in order to understand better the impact of contextual variables upon partnership operation. More specifically, an appealing research project would be an analysis of the relationship between social capital and partnership rules, i.e. in which way the level of social capital infuses formal and informal partnership

rules as well as partners' behaviour. For instance, when the researcher identifies low level of trust or high level of civic engagement in society, what does this mean in terms of specific rules and behaviours inside a collaborative activity? The development of an analytical framework concerning the relationship between trust and institution could offer the opportunity to learn more about the ways in which social capital and institutions mutually affect each other and evolve over time.

Finally, the following up of the case study partnerships could offer useful insights into the conditions for partnership sustainability. It is interesting to identify the extent to which the established networks will continue to cooperate for the realisation of common goals after the end of the official projects. Is the value of the partnership so strongly embedded in the behaviour of EQUAL II and LEADER+ partners that they could mobilise their networks in future initiatives? Which contextual variables shape their potential for sustainability over time? Which features of the network have remained stable and which have changed?

So, the neo institutional analysis is likely to continue to stimulate new research questions about innovation in local governance, and to generate propositions that can inform policy development.

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Appendix A

Interview questions

Study: Explaining institutional dynamics within local partnerships: the case of EQUAL II and LEADER + in Crete.

Researcher: Despoina Grigoriadou.

A. Interview questions for the **members of the partnerships**

1. Could you please describe what your role is in the partnership?

Prompts: obligations, rights, resources, activities, relation with the representative organisation

2. Why have you been involved in the partnership?

Prompts: motivation, goals, level of goal achievement, negotiation of initial objectives

3. Explain how decisions are made?

Prompts: who sets the agenda, who participates in the official processes, negotiation procedures, conflicts and ways of resolution

4. How would you characterise your relationship with the other members of the partnership?

Prompts: cooperation versus conflict, problem solving

5. Are there some members with who you seat together in the table and you exchange views and opinions?

Prompts: networking, influence, common framework of thinking

6. In your experience, who are the most influential people in the partnership and why?

Prompts: resources, behaviour

7. In your opinion, who is the leader of the partnership and what makes him/her leader?

Prompts: leadership resources, behaviour, conflicts for the leadership position

8. Could you describe how you get informed about the partnership events?

Prompts: procedures of communication, access to information, problem solving

9. During your partnership involvement, did you have the opportunity to change or break the ordinary way of doing things?

Prompts: influence, change

10. Do you have any previous experience in partnerships? If yes, how has the previous experience influenced your way of doing things in this partnership?

Prompts: cooperative culture, empowerment, management knowledge

11. In your experience in previous partnerships, in which areas is this partnership different?

Prompts: new and old established attitudes, policy making, membership

12. To what extent has your participation to transnational thematic workshops changed your way of thinking and doing?

Prompts: only to the members of the thematic workshops

13. In which way, has your participation in this partnership made a difference in your role in local community and local politics?

Prompts: empowerment, change of attitudes, influence

The following questions will be addressed exclusively to the project coordinators additionally to the interview questions for the members of the partnership

1. Could you please explain how the partnership started?

Prompts: How did the action start? Who were the initiators and what was their contribution? How were the needs identified? How were the partners identified and involved? Which partners were excluded?

2. What were the mechanisms for getting the target group involved in both design and implementation of the project and what was the interaction with the target group like?

Prompts: goals of involvement, strategies, access, problems/conflicts

3. Did you disseminate information about the action and its results to the public?

Prompts: goals, strategies of communication, access to information

4. How well is the project working?

Prompts: How were the actions managed? Problems of management, methods, changes in regards to the initial planning and for what reason

B. Interview questions for the beneficiaries of the partnership

1. Could you please describe the activity?

Prompts: activities, problems of implementation

2. Describe how things got started

Prompts: how you get informed, selection criteria

3. Have you been involved in the design and implementation process of the activity?

Prompts: methods of consultation/participation, problems/conflicts, solutions, priorities and needs integrated in the design

4. In your experience, have all your propositions been finally integrated to the activity?

Prompts: which propositions have been excluded and why?

5. How do you characterise your relation with the partnership board?

Prompts: previous networks, types of advice and support, conflicts/difficulties and how they have been solved

6. Do you have any previous experience in similar projects (partnership with the involvement of target groups)? If yes, how has the previous experience influenced your way of doing things in this project?

Prompts: cooperative culture, empowerment, management knowledge

7. In which way, has your participation in this project made a difference in your role in local community and local politics?

Prompts: empowerment, change of attitudes, influence

C. Interview questions for the **leaders** of the partnership

1. Could you please explain how the partnership started?

Prompts: How did the action start? Who were the initiators and their contribution? How was the need identified? How were the partners identified and involved? Which partners were excluded?

2. As a leader, could you describe what you are trying to achieve in this partnership?

Prompts: vision, goals, level of achievement, difficulties

3. What were the mechanisms for getting the target group involved in both design and implementation of the project and what was the interaction with the target group like?

Prompts: goals of involvement, strategies of empowerment, access, problems/conflicts

4. Describe your role in the partnership board

Prompts: obligations, rights, resources, activities, relation with the representative organisation

5. Explain how decisions are made?

Prompts: who send the agenda, who is participating in official processes, negotiations procedures, conflicts and ways of resolution?

6. How well are things going with the other members?

Prompts: cooperation versus conflict, how the problems are solved

7. Did you try to develop networking or did you facilitate it?

Prompts: Why? How did you go about doing this?

8. How did you keep the various partnership members involved throughout the project's life?

Prompts: Leadership behaviour

9. During your partnership involvement, did you have the opportunity to change or break the ordinary way of doing things?

Prompts: influence, change

10. Could you please describe your relation with the ministry?

Prompts: cooperation, types of support, political interventions, resistance, legal framework (simple and clear)

11. How has your previous experience in partnerships influenced your way of doing things in this partnership?

Prompts: cooperative culture, empowerment, management knowledge, new and old established attitudes

12. In your experience, which challenges and dynamics open this partnership to the local community and local political system in terms of attitudes, practices and power relations?

Prompts: empowerment of new groups, cooperative culture and management, established networks, change of relations between politicians and managers, change of politician attitudes

13. In your opinion, is there a future for this partnership?

Prompts: sustainability, networking

D. Interview questions for the Greek MAs and Brussels officers

1. In which way has the implementation of EQUAL or LEADER been facilitated in Greece?

Prompts: institutions, key persons, resources redistribution, political culture

2. What has the role of the Greek state been?

3. How would you characterise the principles and rules of the programme?

Prompts: clear, simple, new

4. To what extent has the EU facilitated the programme implementation?

Prompts: legitimisation, physical presence, monitoring and control, thematic networks, learning processes

5. To what extent has there been a resistance to CIs principles and why?

Prompts: established norms, civil society, interest' groups, party politics

6. How do you assess your cooperation with the Greek state and the MAs? (for EU officers only)

7. According to your opinion, is there an Europeanisation of local policy-making after the implementation of EQUAL and LEADER CIs?

Prompts: new practices, new attitudes, new institutions

8. In relation to the implementation of EQUAL and LEADER in other countries, which are the main differences with Greece?

Prompts: role of state and parties, institutions of implementation, local culture, local policy making

List of interviewees by job title and role in the partnership

a/a	Job title	Role in partnership	Date of interview
1	Executive of DAH	EQUAL II coordinator	17/03/2008
2	Director of DAH	EQUAL II partner	18/03/2008
3	Mayor of N. Kazantzakis- President of DAH	EQUAL II and LEADER+ partner	19/03/2008
4	Mayor of Episkopis	Member of DAH board	14/04/2008
5	Ex-president of KOINOPOLITIA- Municipal Councilor	EQUAL II partner	18/03/2008
6	Director of ZEUXIS	EQUAL II partner	16/04/2008
7	Director of EDAP-ETEK	EQUAL II partner	14/04/ 2008
8	Director of KOINOPOLITIA	EQUAL II partner	16/06/2008
9	Executive of NELE Rethymnon	EQUAL II partner	16/06/2008
10	Executive of OADYK	EQUAL II partner	22/04/2008
11	Consultant of Port Authority of Heraklion	EQUAL II partner	23/04/2008
12	Executive of the LDA AKOM	EQUAL II partner	23/04/2008
13	Director of the LDA Lasithi	EQUAL II partner	17/06/2008
14	Executive of the LDA Lasithi	EQUAL II partner	17/06/2008
15	Executive of the LDA Sitia	EQUAL II partner	21/04/2008
16	Executive of DAH	LEADER+ coordinator	19/03/2008
17	Municipal councilor of Archanes	LEADER+ partner	20/05/2008
18	Mayor of Arkalochori	LEADER+ partner	20/05/2008
19	Mayor of Gorgolainos	LEADER+ partner	21/05/2009
20	President of the Industrial Park of Arkalochori (BIOPA)	LEADER+ partner	20/05/2008
21	Executive of the agricultural cooperative of PEZA	LEADER+ partner	21/05/2008
22	President of the women's cooperative of Zakros	EQUAL II beneficiary (storytelling)	9/07/2008
23	President of the women's cooperative of Krousaniotissa	EQUAL II beneficiary (storytelling)	7/7/2008
24	Owner of a tourism accommodation	LEADER+ beneficiary (private investor) (storytelling)	8/7/2008
25	President of winery cluster	LEADER+ beneficiary (private investor) (storytelling)	8/7/2008

26	Consultant of private company	National external evaluator of EQUALII	15/09/2008
27	Consultant of private company	National external evaluator of LEADER+	23/10/2008
28	General Secretary of the EQUAL II Greek M.A.	EQUAL II Greek M.A.	16/10/2008
29	Executive of EQUAL II Greek M.A.	EQUAL II Greek M.A.	19/09/2008
30	Executive of EQUAL II Greek M.A.	EQUAL II Greek M.A.	19/09/2008
31	Ex-General Secretary of the LEADER+ Greek M.A.	LEADER+ Greek M.A.	13/01/2009
32	Executive of LEADER+ Greek M.A.	LEADER+ Greek M.A.	19/01/2009
33	Executive of LEADER+ Greek M.A.	LEADER+ Greek M.A.	19/01/2009
34	EU officer	Head of Unit, DG Agriculture-Unit 3, Rural Development programmes Denmark, Lithuania, Poland	22/01/2009
35	EU officer	Principal Administrator, Rural Development Programmes for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, United Kingdom	22/01/2009
36	EU officer	DG Employment, Social Affairs and EQUALII Opportunities, Unit EMPL/B4, Geographical responsible for EQUALII in Greece	23/01/2009
37	EU officer	DG Employment, Social Affairs and EQUALII opportunities, Unit 03-Evaluation and Impact Assessment.	23/01/2009
38	Executive of the vocational training center DION EPEKA	Coordinator of EQUAL II “Support for entrepreneurialism of Greek Roma”, Athens	05/09/2008
39	Manager of the Thessaly local branch of the “Greek agency for development and local government”	Coordinator of EQUAL I “KEDAVROS”, Volos (pilot)	15/11/2007
40	Civil servant of Volos municipality	Member of the management team of EQUAL I “KEDAVROS”, Volos (pilot)	15/11/2007

Appendix B

Questionnaire

(Questionnaire for the local partners and selected beneficiaries of the partnerships)

Thank you for taking part in this study, which aims to explore the institutional dynamics within the EQUAL and LEADER partnerships in Crete.

This questionnaire should take about 10 minutes to complete. Please return the questionnaire to the researcher or send it by e-mail to the following address:

des_grigoriadou@hotmail.com.

1. Generally speaking, could you please tell me whether the statement “most people can be trusted” represents people’s behaviour in your community?

A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all

2. Overall, would you say that trust between social and economic groups in your community is strong or weak?

Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak

3. Overall, what would you say the level of cooperation between local authorities and local associations is?

Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak

4. Overall, what would you say the level of cooperation between local authorities and business is?

Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak

5. Could you please tell me whether the following statements represent people's behaviour in your community?

- a. People are always interested only in their own welfare

A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all

- b. Most people from the same social and professional environment are willing to help each other.

A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all

6. Which of the following statements do you think represents best citizens' behaviour in your community?

- A. Citizens stick to their role of electing leaders and holding them electorally accountable.
- B. Citizens participate actively in the process of setting the local political agenda and important local decision-making.

Clearly prefer A	Prefer A	Equally prefer A& B	Prefer B	Clearly prefer B

7. In your experience, when there is a decision to be made in a group, how does this usually come about?

- The leader decides and informs the other group members
- The leader asks group members what they think and then decides
- The group members hold a discussion and decide together
- Other

8. Overall, how effective is the group's leadership?

Very effective	Somewhat	Not effective at all

9. Overall, in your experience, are the same people members of different groups or is there little overlap in membership?

- The same people
- Little overlap

10. Do you think that citizens can influence decision-making affecting their local area?

A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all

11. Which of the following statements best describes the relation of citizens in your community with the local government?

- They feel responsible for what the local government is doing
- They are interested in the part that concerns them directly
- They are indifferent of what the local government is doing

12. Do you agree or disagree that political parties are playing a significant role in local politics?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Job title:

Town of employment:

Town of home address:.....

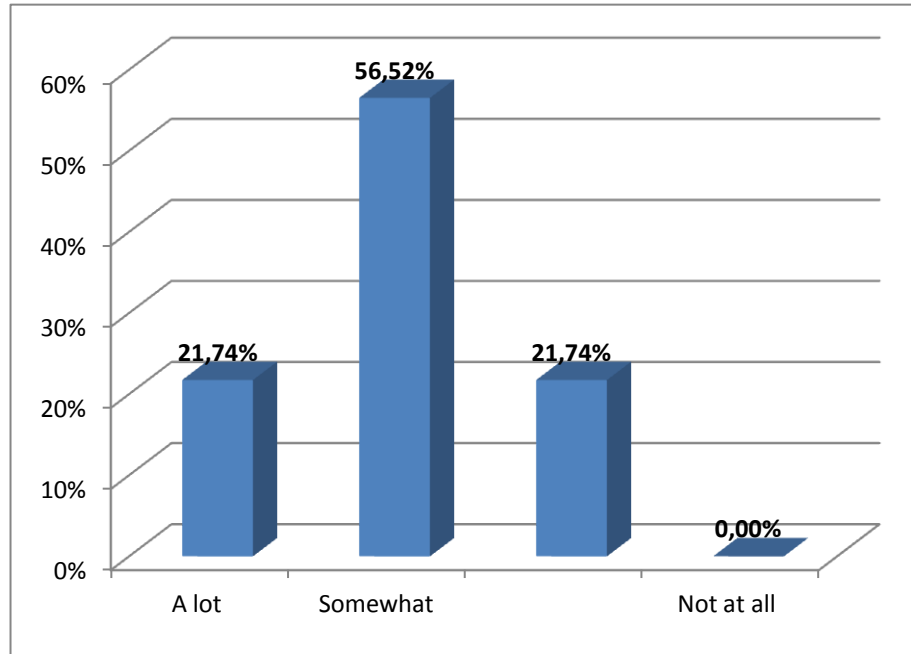
Role in partnership:

Thank you for your participation.

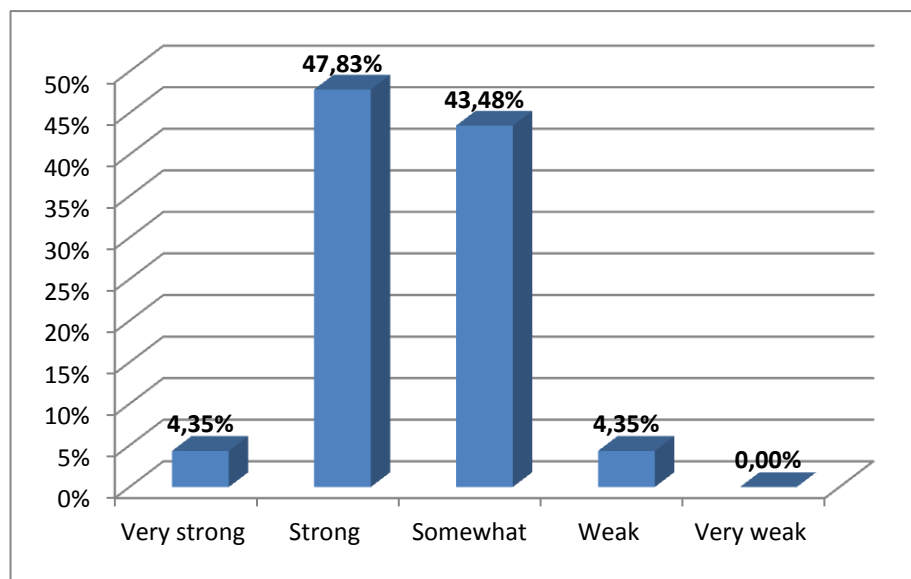
Despoina Grigoriadou
PhD student, School of Politics and International Relations, Nottingham
University

Responses

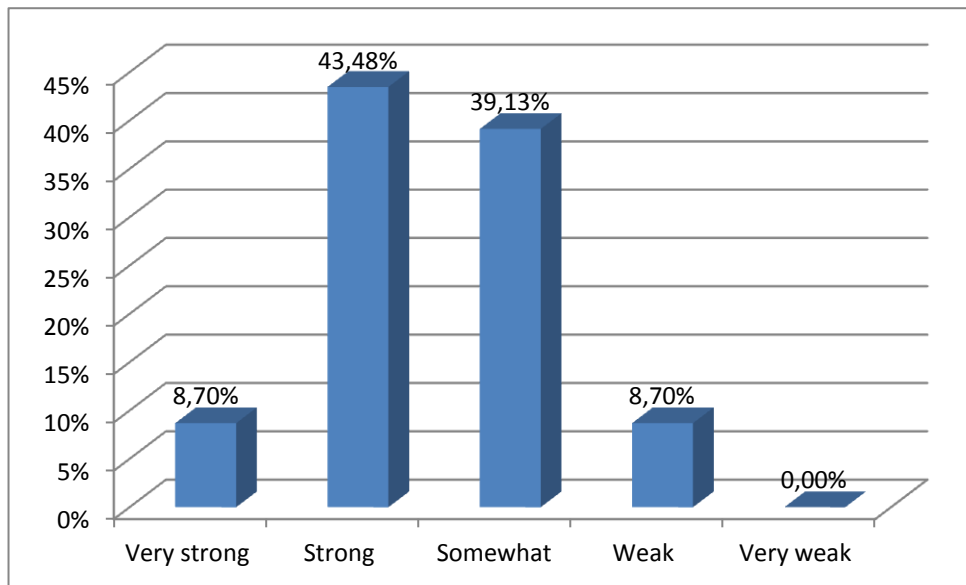
Q1	A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all
	21,74%	56,52%	21,74%	0,00%



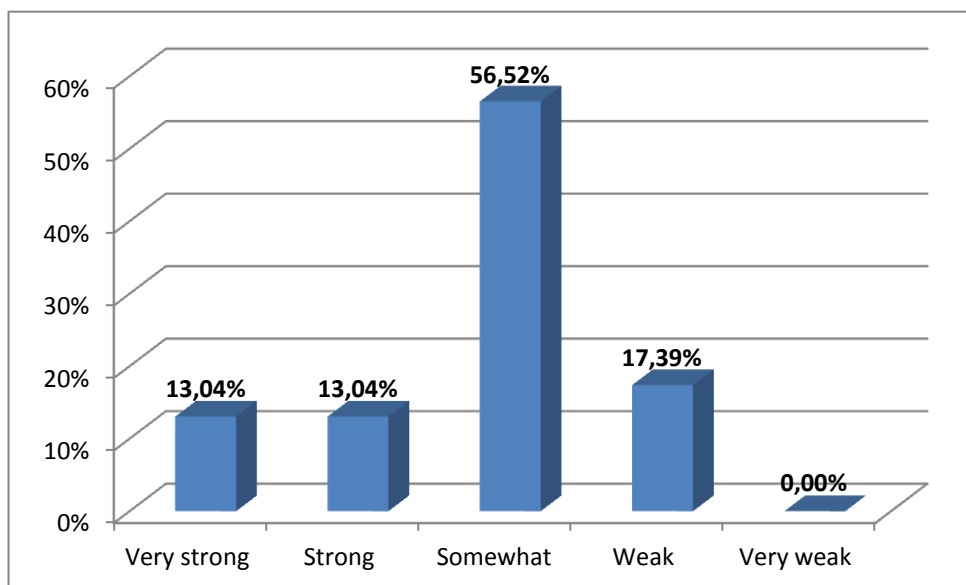
Q2	Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak
	4,35%	47,83%	43,48%	4,35%	0,00%



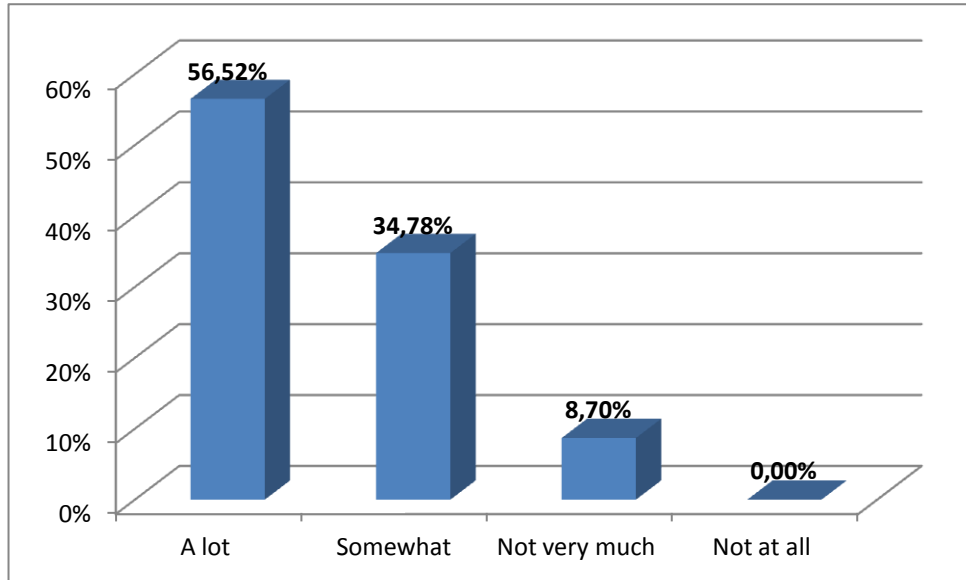
Q3	Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak
	8,70%	43,48%	39,13%	8,70%	0,00%



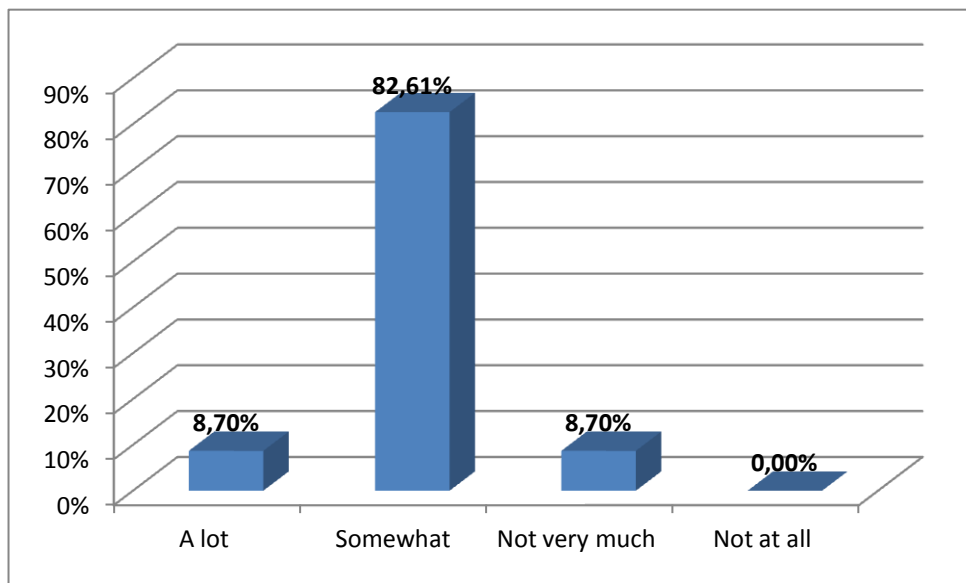
Q4	Very strong	Strong	Somewhat	Weak	Very weak
	13,04%	13,04%	56,52%	17,39%	0,00%



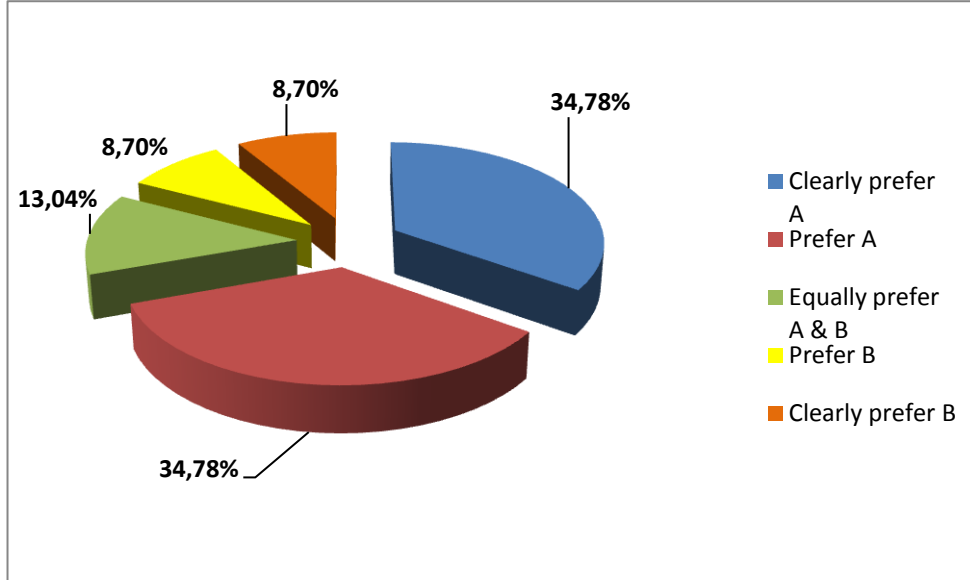
Q5A	A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	
	56,52%	34,78%	8,70%	0,00%	



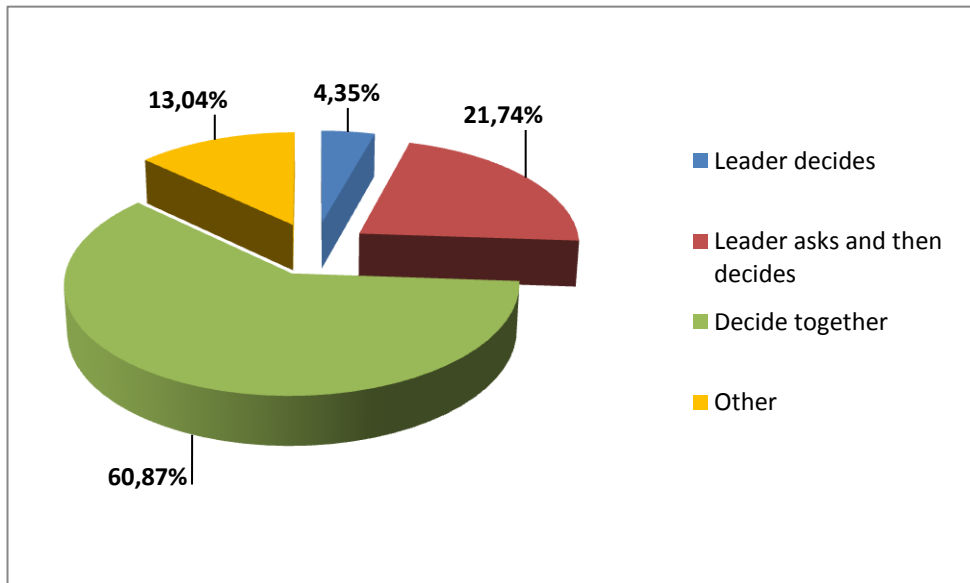
Q5B	A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	
	8,70%	82,61%	8,70%	0,00%	



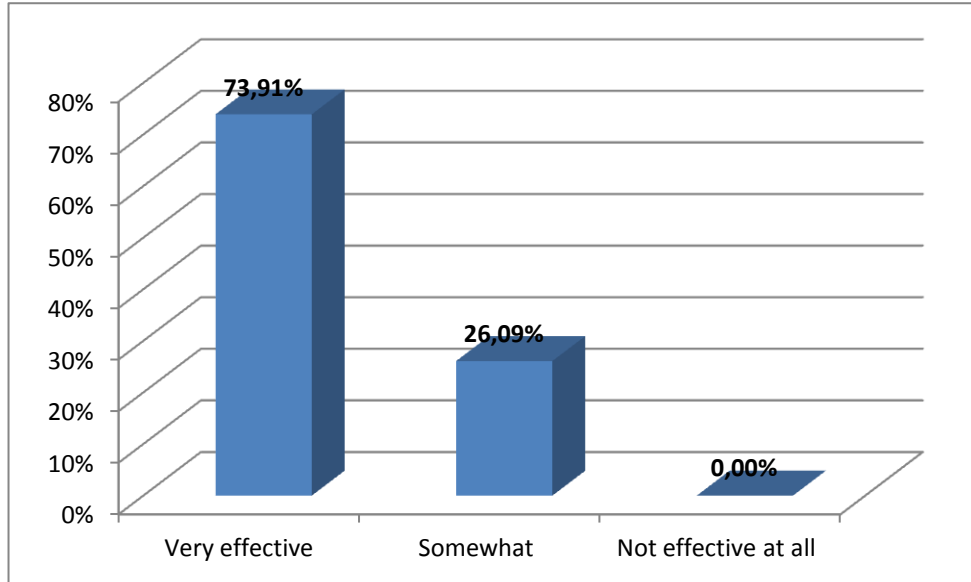
Q6	Clearly prefer A	Prefer A	Equally prefer A & B	Prefer B	Clearly prefer B
	34,78%	34,78%	13,04%	8,70%	8,70%



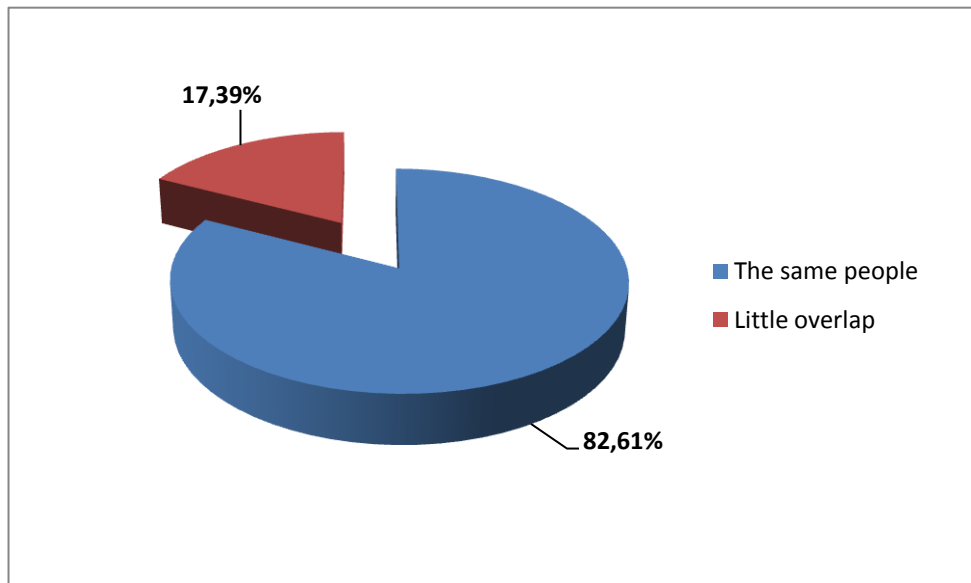
Q7	The leader decides	The leader asks and then decides	Decide together	Other
	4,35%	21,74%	60,87%	13,04%



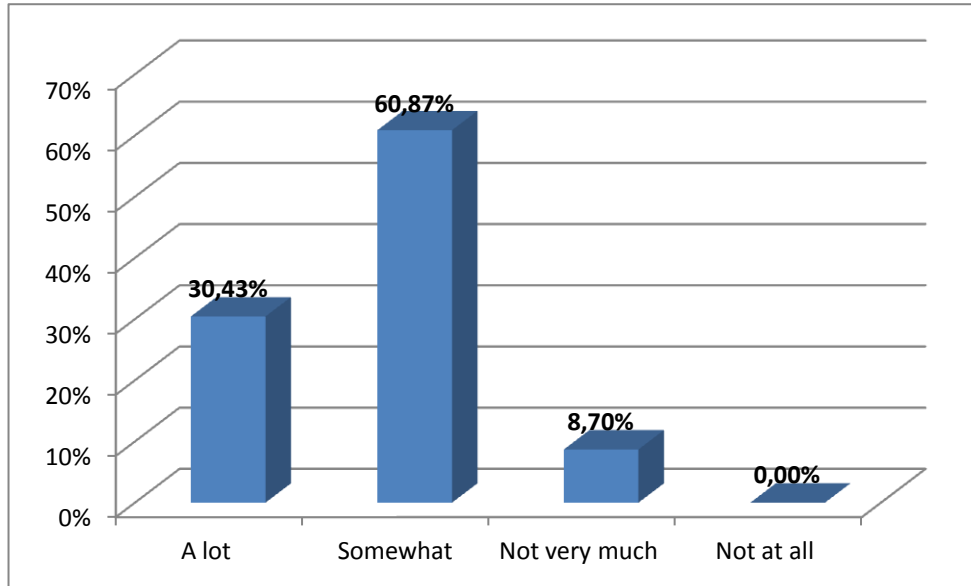
Q8	Very effective	Somewhat	Not effective at all		
	73,91%	26,09%	0,00%		



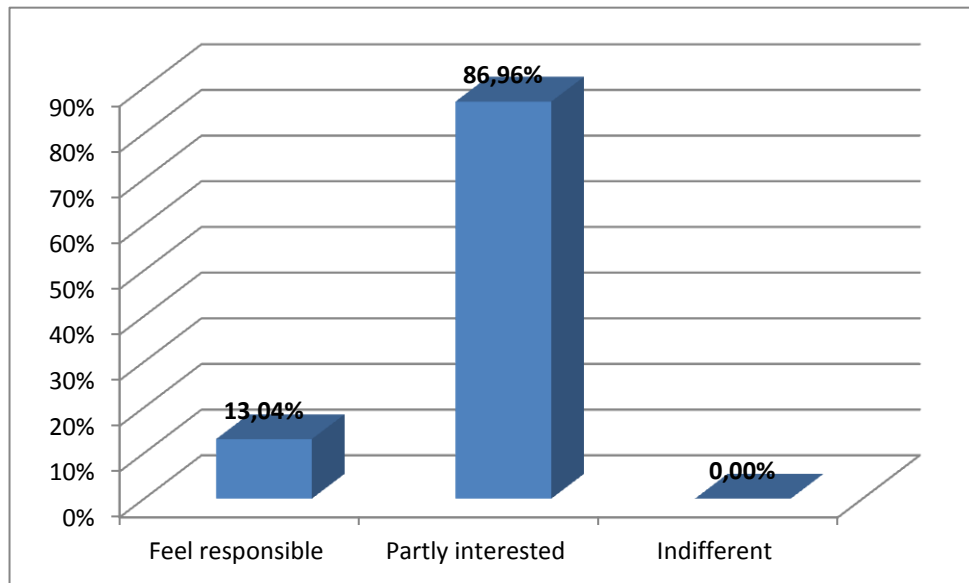
Q9	The same people	Little overlap			
	82,61%	17,39%			



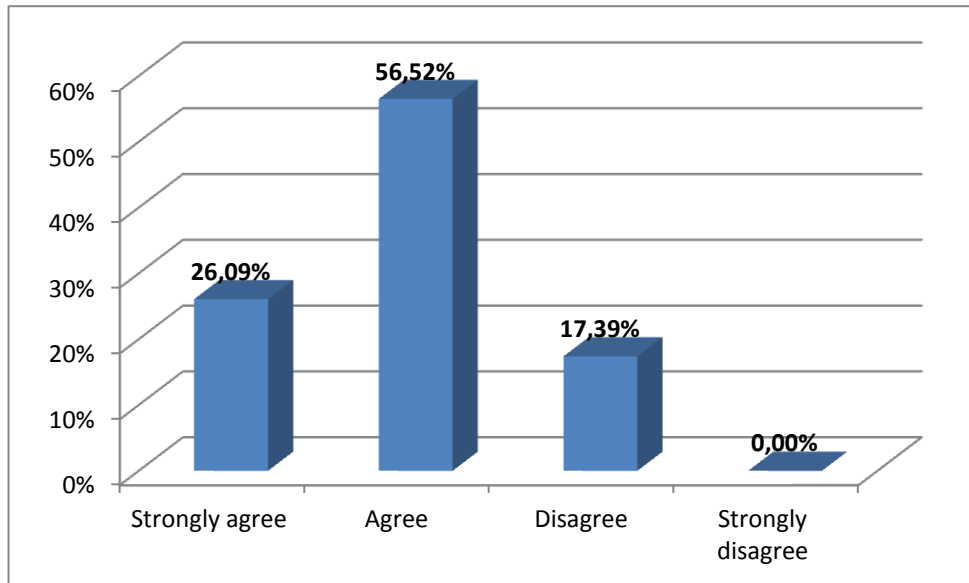
Q10	A lot	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	
	30,43%	60,87%	8,70%	0,00%	



Q11	Feel responsible	Partly interested	Indifferent		
	13,04%	86,96%	0,00%		



Q12	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
	26,09%	56,52%	17,39%	0,00%	



Appendix C

Maps and Photos



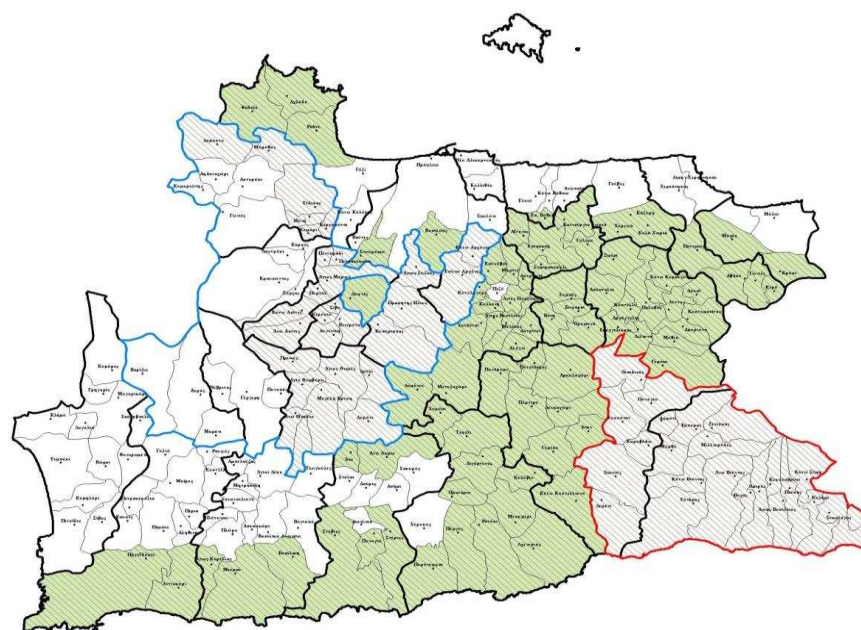
Photo 1: Municipality of Archanes



Map 1: Crete



Map 2: Heraklion prefecture



Map 3: Intervention area of the local C.I. LEADER+



Photo 2: Tourism accommodation of Katalagari



Photo 3: Winery cluster of Heraklion



Photo 4: Women's cooperative of Krousaniotissa



Photo 5: Women's cooperative of Zakros