

Title: Sustainability and Governance, Model for Multi-stakeholders and Multi-disciplinary Approach for Sustainable Regional Development

(The impact of global policies into local communities on RCE middle Albania

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Introduction

This research will elaborate that, for Sustainability to be integrative part of development, and balanced with the fast economic growth, innovative forms of governance are needed. Complex models of multi-stakeholders and multi-disciplinary approaches will be linked with theoretical framework to implement sustainability, and explain a path of connection between international policies and global emerging issues and their impact to local communities. Furthermore, governance aspects are taking new responsibilities, in the context of a global changing environment, where not only rigid organization but also new influencers as networks have to be flexible to be effective for fulfilling objectives and their purposes. This proposal by finding an interrelation of Sustainability with Governance, will contribute to the research theme, Socio-Economic Challenges in the Context of Globalization by focusing on the issue of compatibility of environmental and social sustainability conflicting goals and conceivable synergies between ecologically and socially sustainable development, by focusing on the case of middle Albania region. Sustainability is a rather recent concept (country still in transition process, from a centralized system until 90-ties toward strengthening democracy), which makes the examinations more specific due to the unstable circumstances, in terms of economy, society and environment. During the last decades, the need for fast development and unplanned development has increased the environmental damages, at expense of natural resources.

Research question: How can the increase of impact of global policies on emerging issues of sustainability, affect development in local communities?"

Hypothesis: (a)In order that Sustainability to be integrative part of development, and balanced with the fast economic growth, innovative forms of approach and structures, related to flexibility, inclusiveness, and interaction encouraged by new forms of governance, are needed (b)Multi-stakeholders and multi-disciplinary networks under the framework of international objectives, in an horizontal governance can impact sustainable development.

The objective of this study is to find a correlation between sustainability and new forms of governance, in the need for implementation of global sustainable development goals. Firstly, by identification of factors that change sustainability balances, in the pressure of global changing

environments and local circumstances. The region of middle Albania due to the political social and economic changes, after the end of isolation in 90-ies, accompanied by free movement of population, free investment of capital, changed significantly its physical space and economical space. Nowadays almost half of the population is living, in this region. A set of indicators of sustainability will be identified for this specific region, to be the basis for the change response. Secondly, by explaining a path of connection between international policies and global emerging issues and their impact to local communities, with the purpose to create the theoretical basis for experimenting new forms of modern governance, by using the multi-stakeholder (a diversity of organizations) and multi-disciplinary (three sustainability pillars) approach, as crucial for sustainable regional development. Increasing the inter-play between actors and blurring the boundaries between organizations, allows the required flexibility in order to influence development and achieve sustainability objectives, by being involved in innovative and inter-actives platforms, where networks are the most emerging. An example of an innovative platform that connects global objectives with local communities, are “RCE”, unique in their constellation, which are operating since 2005. To prove the above hypotheses, RCE middle Albania, will be used as a case study, with a potential for comparisons with other RCE-s in Europe or other regions of the world. An adaptation model for evolving development goals, (ex. Post-15 Agenda) will be at the core of the theoretical framework. By combing the Governance concept with Sustainability, it will be proved the necessity and importance of inter-relation of these principles in sustainable development.

Methodology: Data gathering, literature retrieval and empirical observations, qualitative method, (structured interviews for the evaluation of the impact of the RCE-s network, Single case study, RCE middle Albania to apply the Model of inter-action)

Issue background; The characteristics of development in Albania, as uncontrolled urbanization and sprawl urban development are connected with issues as inappropriate land use, illegal buildings, and degradation of environment. “Reasons for change in build environment are common to transitions countries even though each has its one characteristic. In these countries what is happening is a compression into a short period of a process which involved more slowly in developed countries (1)”. Due to the changes in the role of state, private property and planning system, the region was subject to phenomena as strong real estate, migration pressure, and ownership contradicts. Privatization combined with free movement of population caused the uncontrolled and speculative investment of capital. The transition to market economy was accompanied by unforeseen massive migration from deep areas towards the major centers, especially the capital city Tirana, which suffered immediately population growth, and expanded

in the previous agricultural outskirts, with almost no urban infrastructure. Scattered informal mass of buildings in the surroundings of the city became a phenomenon. The particular circumstances and interaction of different social and political movements with physical consequences under very strong pressure and crisis, makes this region an interesting case and furthermore the previous isolation makes it one hand more vulnerable to globalization process, and on the other hand difficult to respond to global emerging problems.

Networks; solving emerging issues of Sustainability and influencing policies appear to be more effective through alliances. The influence and the role that Networks can play in collaboration with other actors of society, remains a challenge. Governance through networks is a new form of modern governance that stresses the blurring of boundaries between public, private and non-profits. “Networks are a typical instrument of what can be called modern governance, while the analytical network concept describes the context of, and factors leading to joint policy-making, the concept of networks as inter-organizational relationships focuses on the structure and processes through which joint policy making is organized. One of the characteristic features of modern statehood is the emergence of the new sharing of responsibilities and division of labor between the state, the market and civil society” (2)

Although in transition countries, it is difficult to create a culture of institutionalized cooperation in the form of networks, due to the lack of traditions, strong informality in many sectors of society, lack of funds and chaotic coordination. But changing the mentality and basing the development of society on the forms of cooperation that are outside the standard and traditional approaches can be a useful tool to attract participation and influence policies. Autonomous actors of networks have different interests and purposes that intersect only partially. Multi-stakeholder engagement is a difficult task, to bring them always together for all the issues. Partnerships for sustainable development, although mostly not institutionalized and far from the rigid organizational structures, can be important players in the regional scale and international level.

RCE-s (Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development), are a practical example of networks and their influences in policies, innovation platforms to implement global objectives to local communities, in the framework of United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development 2004-2014. Connected by the core elements as Governance, transformative education, leadership, they diversify in their specific approach to implement sustainability. “RCE is a network of existing organizations as (Universities, Ngo, Local Governments, Individuals, Businesses, Scientists, Researchers, Volunteers, Media, Students, involved in the spheres of sustainable development such as: Economic growth, Social development, and Environmental protection, with the purpose to contribute to the goal of UN

Decade of Education for Sustainable Development DESD, (2005-2014), by translating its global objectives into the context of the local communities (3)". They embrace learning model, which is a similar characteristic with other United Nations initiatives, as Global Compact, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, etc. It is considered as the most appropriate for this type of initiatives, not underestimated the risk factor of having no direct decision-making over many of the range of issues involved. "Global Compact, to respond the challenges of globalization, has explicitly adopted a learning approach to inducing corporate change, as opposed to a regulatory approach; and it comprises a network form of organizations, as opposed to the traditional hierarchic, bureaucratic form. These distinctive features lead the critics to underestimate its potential, while its supporter to have excessive expectations of what it can deliver". (4)

RCE middle Albania, became part of global network of 136 RCE-s, in 2012, aspiring to translate global objectives into the context of the local community of middle Albania, by coordinating more than 20 organizations (private, public and non-profit), in equal partnerships. To foster sustainable region development and influencing policies with the focus on: Sustainable Architecture and Green Building, Research and Transformative Education, Inter-regional Cooperation, Eco-Tourism, Organizational Strengthening, Innovation, Urban Revival, and Balkan Cooperation. RCE-s are committed to continue their contribution to post-2015 agenda using the accumulated potential in implementing new Sustainable Development Goals.

Governance is the arena of decision-making and setting direction. It applies to the public, private and civil society sectors, and in the case of RCEs as an example of collaborative governance, may cross all these sectoral boundaries. Independent player and leader actors can establish a clear link between global objectives to local communities, creating a new form of interaction that is not constrained to the limits of the country institutions approaches. International policies can be effective in local developments, although contradict opinions exists about impact and role of partnerships for sustainable development, if they advance or not global sustainability governance. For example, in "the systematic assessment of the influence of partnerships in global sustainability governance and how the role and relevance of this new type of global governance remains contested" as it is argued in "The overall effects of partnerships for sustainable development: more smoke than fire?", that the three potential functions that partnerships could address are: Further development of new norms and regulations in sustainability governance in areas where intergovernmental regulations is largely non-existent; To advance sustainability governance by helping to implement intergovernmental regulations that do exists; Expected to assist in inclusiveness of global sustainability governance; have

resulted to not have been fulfilled from many international networks, which end up, trying to keep themselves existing, far from the initial goal of their creation (5)

To conclude, Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept that can be approached in a trans-disciplinary manner. Emerging global problems get different responses according to the particular challenges of the region. To identify theoretical paths and their application in practice, the approach used in the multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary complex constellations will be adopted in the specific region of middle Albania.

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